

CHRISTIAN TREASURY VOLUME 11

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Christian Treasury Volume 11, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

144 Chapters

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Christian Treasury Volume 11

Before Time Was

It is wonderful for the heart to be able to enter a little into what transpired before time was. Before time began, we have the purposes and counsels of God—our God who is love. His thoughts, before time, are very wonderful. Look at Proverbs 8:30-31: "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him: rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men." God is love!

Hebrews 2 speaks about His suffering unto death in order to bring many sons to glory. First Thessalonians 5:9-10 says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Our hearts do enjoy this truth. He died for us that we should live together with Him. His heart of love is set upon us, and at all costs He gave Himself for us that He might have us in the glory in the fellowship of that delight, which He enjoyed with the Father always, and the Father with Him. God is love. How wonderful this truth is!

Editorial: Time: How Much Longer?

The first article for 1996 is entitled, "Before Time Was"; now time has come and we are much involved with it. In 1 Corinthians 7:29 it says, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." An even more remarkable statement is found in Revelation 10:5-6: "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

It is in time that the eternal God creates and prepares a people to be with Himself. For the present time God expresses another desire and purpose in Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

This puts a tremendous premium upon contrition and humility. Do we now value this enough to seek to be of a contrite and humble spirit, and do we desire the presence of the Lord our God dwelling with us? Soon time for us will run out and we shall be in eternity. Will it be in this year of 1996?

In 1 Peter 4, the term "Christian" is used, and in verse 2 Peter exhorts the believer "that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the inks of men, but to the will of God." The next verse speaks of "time past." So there is time—past, present and future. Let us redeem the time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5).

In Mark 13, our Lord teaches about an unknown length of time of service during the Master's absence. The disciples are commanded to watch, for they know not the hour. Here the conduct of the disciples is especially before the eyes of the Lord. Concerning that great day and the hour of its arrival, the angels, and even the Son as Prophet, know not. Jesus must sit at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool, and the time of His rising up is not revealed, In the meanwhile, the servants are left to serve during the Master's absence.

What a very great privilege this is! Four times at the end of Mark 13 the word "watch" is used. Not knowing the hour but expecting His return will keep us alert. The word was spoken to His disciples, but closes with this, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Ed.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith,

quit you like men,

be strong."

1 Corinthians 16:13

Asleep in Jesus

In 1 Thessalonians 5 the word "sleep" is used in three different senses. In verse 6 it is moral sleep, in verse 7 physical sleep, and in verse 10 it is the sleep of death, yet they are all brought together in this chapter.

It is a very precious thing that God speaks to us of the believer who has entered into death, not as being dead, but sleeping. We are all going to be awakened; everyone that sleeps in Christ is going to hear the voice of the archangel, the shout and the trumpet. It will awaken them and bring them out of those graves. It does not make any difference whether they have been there a day, a year, or a thousand years. It is the Lord's archangelic voice. Men try to limit the power of God, but it cannot be limited. Suppose a child of God passes into death in the middle of the ocean and is buried right there. Will that body be raised again? It surely will; every sleeping saint will be raised; not one will be left out—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Paul and all the rest.

Scripture never uses the term "sleep" in connection with the death of the unsaved or ungodly. No, death is never spoken of as steep except of those who are asleep in Christ. It is asleep by, or through, Christ.

In connection with the state of one who is asleep in Christ, we might notice 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That is the body which will be fashioned like the body of glory of Christ as spoken of in Philippians 3, but spoken of here in 2 Corinthians as a house.

"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring [that is our present position] to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (vss. 2-4). Why should the Apostle groan, being burdened? Because the mortal state of the physical body that we now dwell in hindered him from the complete and full enjoyment of the state which was still future. He desired not to be in the unclothed state, but to be with the body which is from heaven, or the house which is from heaven.

The spirits of those who are asleep in Christ consciously enjoy Him while their bodies are in the grave. When they hear the shout and are raised, instantaneously they (and we) will receive bodies of glory, bodies fashioned like the present body of Christ as a Man in glory. Then they will no longer be unclothed

In 1 Corinthians 15:53 it says, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." It is as definite as language could make it. You cannot go wrong on the resurrection of the body unless you do it deliberately, shutting your eyes because you do not want to believe what God says. There is nothing that stumbles the natural heart as much as resurrection. This transformation will be the immediate effect of the shout—yes, and without any difficulty.

Three little words in Philippians 3:21 answer all our difficulties: "He is able." That is all we need. When the shout comes, the bodies of those who have passed away will immediately be changed. It is not a question of where they remain: in the grave, the sea or the air; that does not enter into it at all. All is "according to the working whereby He is able." He will take care of it without any difficulty. The difficulty is all within ourselves; it is not with Him. In the meantime the spirits are with the Lord-absent from the body, present with the Lord.

The saints who pass away now are in the passive enjoyment of Christ. At His coming they will enter into the active enjoyment of His presence.

It is important to see that when the graves are opened and the bodies of the saints arise, they are already changed: they are not raised for glory, but in glory. So the other attributes connected with the resurrection day are already accomplished when they arise from the grave. The company that arises will be no scanty company.

Our present body is sustained by blood. The changed body will be sustained by spirit, and is therefore spoken of as a spiritual body. It is not a spiritual spirit, but a spiritual body—that is, a body adapted to the spirit. It is like the Lord says, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." We could never be in the glory except there was a Man there in the glory before us. Christ became a Man at infinite cost and in wondrous love in order to meet us in our need. He is ascended in resurrection life, the risen Man seated in glory at God's right hand. He was here a Man for us, and He is there a Man for us, and because He is there as the Son of Man, or the glorified Man, we will be there with Him and like Him.

Our hearts are warmed when we think what a dear brother once said regarding the shout. When asked what the shout was for, he answered, "Because He is so happy."

The Eternity of Punishment

I have read a good deal of what has been written on the subject of eternal punishment (of course, not perhaps a hundredth part of what has been written), but I found one passage of Scripture which so quietly and explicitly settled the whole question forever for my own soul, that I would like to show it to you for your consideration also. It was this. In Revelation 20 where the scene of final judgment is foretold, God waits till the thousand years are expired, before the last temptation of the unsaved on earth and the last judgment is set for the final doom of the wicked. Then He raises them. But they are raised in God's eternity and not in time at all. What is raised in eternity cannot cease to exist in time, for if it ceased to exist in time, it could not be raised in eternity. What happens in eternity is, and must be, eternal. The existence of the wicked, raised for and receiving then their doom, remains while eternity rolls on.

A Shipwreck

2 Timothy 4:10 2Ti 4:10

Demas is mentioned three times by the Apostle Paul. In Colossians he writes, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you" (ch. 4:14). In Philemon he terms him, in company with Marcus, Aristarchus and Lucas, as a "fellow laborer." And in 2 Timothy he has to say, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world [age]."

Nothing can be sadder than this closing notice of one who had been identified with such a servant of God as the Apostle Paul. The final break with Paul might have been sudden, but we may be sure that he had been long before in a backslidden state of soul. The very way in which he is mentioned in Colossians after Luke, the beloved physician, would seem to indicate that Paul was not ignorant of his condition. Open failure is always preceded by a gradual decline of spiritual life and energy. It is thus the Lord deals with His people. If they have grown cold and are turned aside in heart from His ways, He permits them sooner or later to be tested that their state may be discovered.

This was the case with Demas. His heart had long been upon the present age, and the captivity of Paul and the consequent "afflictions of the gospel" were but the occasion of its manifestation. A time of persecution is always a time of searching, and Demas could no longer conceal his condition. He therefore forsook the Apostle—the Lord's prisoner—and followed his heart into the world. He might have been a real Christian, not merely a professor, but, lacking courage, he lost the opportunity of fidelity to the testimony at such a solemn crisis. He surrendered himself to the influences of the age, all of which were antagonistic to the truth, and to the devoted servant to whom the truth had been committed.

The "age," as distinguished from the "world," generally has a moral significance; it is expressive of the sum of the influences that are at work around us in the world at any given moment. It is precisely these influences that constitute the danger of God's people, and to which so many, like Demas, succumb and make "shipwreck" of their testimony. It is on this very account that the Apostle writes, "Be not conformed to this world [age]" (Rom. 12:2).

E. Dennett

"If any man will come after Me,
let him deny himself, and take up
his cross, and follow Me."

Matthew 16:24

Deliverance for a Groaning Creation

Romans 8 ROM 8

J. N. Darby

This creation awaits its redemption, but it cannot be delivered and restored until the children of God, in the glory of the kingdom, are ready to take possession of it as joint-heirs with Christ. Christ sits at the right hand of God until these joint-heirs are gathered.

It is a blessed thought that as we have brought the earthly creation under the bondage of corruption, so now it must wait for our being glorified, to be restored and delivered from this bondage (vs. 19). It is not the will of the creature that subjected it to this bondage; we have done it—but in hope, for this condition will not continue always; the creation will be restored. God, however, in the counsels of His grace..begins with the guilty, with those who are most alienated, with those in whom He will in the ages to come show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7; compare Col. 1:20-21).

Creation, inasmuch as it is only physical, could not enter into the liberty of grace; it must await the liberty of the glory of the children of God. When they are delivered, and their bodies which belong to this creation are changed and glorified, and when Satan is bound, then the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption in which it lies enthralled. For we know—we that are instructed in Christian doctrine—that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. We know it yet more because we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, and "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Thus we wait to possess that which is saved in hope; not only to possess eternal life as life—that we have already—but to be glorified by our bodies, which belong to this creation, being changed and we made like unto Christ the Lord, according to the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3:21).

Thus peace is made; our sins are put away, we have a new life, possess the earnest of the Spirit, the glory lies before us in hope, and we shall be like the Lord. But as long as we have not reached the glory, we groan with the creation. For while realizing our glorious hope, we feel the sad condition of the whole creation being connected with it as fallen, by our bodies. Free before God, free from the law of sin and death, filled with the hope of glory, we are led through the knowledge of this glory and of the full deliverance of the creature to groan, which is the expression of its groan to God.

Our groaning is not a complaint, the fruit of discontent, but the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart. The Spirit directs our eye to the glory where we shall have no more occasion to groan, and leads us to feel according to the love of God the suffering of a creation under bondage. We at the same time feel it, because by our bodies we still belong to it. The Spirit of God, which dwells in us, forms these feelings according to God. God searches the human heart and He finds this operation

of the Spirit in the heart of the delivered Christian. The Spirit Himself is there, the source of divine sympathy with a groaning creation (vs. 27).

The eye of the Christian will be, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, directed above to the glory and the rest of God where all is blessing. With joy he realizes what is before him. But as he is still in the body, he feels so much the more the condition of a fallen creation, shares its groans, and thereby becomes the voice of a creation groaning before God. But his groaning is in the spirit of love according to God, because in his relationship with God he is perfectly free.

With regard to his condition, he is saved in hope; but before God his heart is free in the consciousness of His love. He can rejoice in hope—the hope of glory. His conscience is perfect; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. And thus, according to this love, he can sympathize with the universal misery around him. He knows not, it is true, what remedy he ought to look for in his prayers; perhaps there is none. But love can express the needs, and does it according to the operation of the Spirit. And although the Christian does not know what he should ask for, He who searches the hearts finds the mind of the Spirit in his groans, for it is the Spirit that in the depths of the heart gives expression to the feelings of need.

Being ourselves still in the body, and as to our own condition forming part of the groaning creation and awaiting the redemption of our bodies, our sympathy is the more heartfelt. Although we know not what we ought to pray for, yet there is what we know with perfect certainty, namely, that God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, whom He has called according to His purpose.

What privilege is ours through grace—privilege that we enjoy by the Holy Spirit! We are children of God; we know our relationship with God, and can realize it by the Holy Spirit; we cry, "Abba, Father." We are children, therefore heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The Spirit reveals to us our inheritance, and gives us to understand what it is. We shall be like Christ in the rest of God and in His own rest—perfectly to the glory of Christ, and we shall reign with Him over all things. As men upon earth we lift our eyes to the glory of God which is our hope and which we shall share with Christ, there where all is pure conformity to the purity of God.

Looking at this poor world, our hearts are filled with the love of God, in which we share the sufferings of an undelivered creation and that according to God. So that He who searches the hearts finds therein the mind of the Spirit who produces in us this sympathy with the sufferings of the fallen creation in order that we, in our groans, may become the mouthpiece of the creation before God. And as from our lack of intelligence we do not always know what we should pray for, the Word of God comforts us with the assurance that God, according to His own will and love, makes all things work together for our good.

Grace has no limits, no bounds.

Be what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are),

in spite of that, God towards us is LOVE.

Bible Challenger-01-January V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses (Bible quotations with one or more words to complete) will form the word describing the reaction of certain Jewish believers at the time of a great outpouring on those who were Gentiles. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "And the lord said unto him,____, and go into the city." [1]
2. "When He was come into His own country, He taught them in their____." [1]
3. "Then was king Belshazzar greatly____, and his countenance was changed." [1]
4. "Peter continued knocking: and when they had____." [3]
5. "He charged them that they should tell____ what was done." [2]
6. "Did not we cast three men bound____ of the fire?" [3]
7. "I... fainted, and was____ certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business." [1]
8. "Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this____?" [1]
9. "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to____." [4]
10. "He maketh both the deaf lo hear, and the____." [3]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury, R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-00-December Answers to V.11

1. M ultiply Gen. 16:10
2. U nclean Acts 5:16
3. L oving-kindness Psa. 51:1
4. T hree days Matt. 15:32
5. I nnumerable Heb. 11:12
6. T welve Luke 22:47
7. U p to heaven Matt. 14:19
8. D estruction Prov. 14:28
9. E stablished 2 Chron. 1:9

"But as for me, my prayer is unto Thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the MULTITUDE of Thy mercy hear me, in the truth of Thy salvation" (Psa. 69:13).

Jonah 2-Romans 7

JON 2ROM 7

In Romans 7:14-24, we have the past experiences of a delivered man, who had struggled for freedom until he found he was rather getting further from deliverance than nearer the goal. He is now standing on dry ground, so to speak, and describing what he experienced before he was free.

You see a remarkable illustration of this in Jonah 2. He is put into the place where none could deliver him but God alone—in "the belly of hell" as he describes it. Three times over he promised what he would do if he only could get out. He said, "I will look again toward Thy holy temple." No, vows and resolutions will not do. "But," he cries, "I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving." Will this set him free? No! Again he cries, "I will pay that that I have vowed." All is in vain. Promises and vows, efforts and resolves, which are made in such a state, will not do. They all come from "I," and as long as "I" is recognized you have not given up "I" as one in whose flesh "dwelleth no good thing," and turned the eye away to Christ alone.

At last Jonah says, "Salvation is of the Lord." Ah, Jonah, you have found out the secret; you have touched the spring of the lock, and you are standing on dry ground the next moment! How simple, and yet how blessed to have the eye removed from self—hopeless self—and turned in the sense of utter, helpless weakness upon Christ. Then all is done, and we are free!

Forgiveness of Sins

Present, full assurance of soul is the spring of the purest affection and of the most free service. Indeed it is necessary to each of them. The present forgiveness of sins is to be asserted with all confidence.

I ask, What has been the business of the blessed God in this world of ours, if not for the very end of putting us into such a condition? Our sin brought Him here—and then, the putting away of our sin gave Him His history here, after He had come among us. He died and rose from the dead. What do I see in that history of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, if I see not the putting away of sin?

As soon as ever sin entered, He was revealed in this connection with us. Not as a lawgiver or a judge, but as a Savior. He is seen in the very first promise. It was as a Savior, as the purger of sins He was revealed then in the mystery of the bruised heel and the bruised head—and that was His death and resurrection as the Son of God and the Lamb of God, And what, again I ask, do I see in those great facts if I see not the putting away of sin? How can I, with any reason, with any simplicity of mind, stand before the cross of Christ and not apprehend the purging of sins there? If I did not apprehend that, everything would and must rebuke the darkness of my soul. Did not the rent veil, accompanied by the rent rocks of the earth and the riven graves of the saints, tell out that the death of the Son of God, then accomplished, had restored man to God, casting up a highway from the prison-house of him who had the power of death to the bright heavens and the throne of the majesty there?

Did not the empty sepulcher follow in its appointed day to bear like witness and to tell that God was satisfied with the death of Christ and that it had atoned for sin and made reconciliation? And then did not the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit come, in its due Pentecostal hour, to seal the same great fact? And I further ask, What was the preaching, the gospel, the testimony of the apostles immediately afterward, as we have it in the book of the Acts? Surely it is remission, forgiveness of sins, upon the virtue of the blood or death of Jesus to all who will receive Him.

All this is truly and indeed so. And now, our souls are to keep in the foreground this blessed fact that sin is put away. It is not to be treated as something which we might be able to descry in the hazy, misty distance after some anxious scrutiny. It is to be set in the foreground, where the rent veil, the resurrection, the day of Pentecost, the apostolic preaching and the apostolic teaching have already set it, that we may apprehend it as in the very light of noonday and possess ourselves of it with all assurance.

Scripture makes a much simpler thing of the putting away of sin than our religion makes of it. Scripture puts it at the outset; human religion makes it the great attainment. Scripture puts sin in company with the blood of Christ and it disappears.

C. H. Mackintosh

Quistiones and Answers

QUESTION: What constitutes "the church, which is His body," and has it now a corporate existence on earth?

ANSWER: The unfolding of this blessed truth, "the mystery of Christ," was committed to the Apostle Paul. It is in his letters we shall find instructions concerning it. Ephesians 4:4 declares, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

This began at Jerusalem when the promise of the Father was given; the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (John 14:16-17; Acts 2:1-4, 32-33). It could not take place before (John 7:39). It was then that the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place and thus formed them into "one body" (1 Cor 12:13). From that time on God has been gathering into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. The Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles, all who were true believers, were brought into that one body by the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Acts 10:44-45 and 11:15-17 are the bringing in of the first Gentiles into the body of Christ.

This truth is not spoken of in the Old Testament, nor was it given out till Paul received it from Christ in glory; then it was made known for the obedience of faith (Rom. 16:25-26).

It was God's purpose concerning His beloved Son to give Him a body and a bride—companions to share His glory. And all who are called during this present period of grace and know Christ to the salvation of their souls, both of Jews and Gentiles, will inevitably have this place in glory with Him.

This was God's purpose before the foundation of the world and it is now being carried out. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it" when it existed only in the purposes of God (Matt. 13:45-46; Eph. 5:25). It was God's great thought for His Son to have one in whom His affections rested and who would be, through grace alone, the display of His glory through all eternity (Eph. 3:21).

In the meantime the members are being called out—that is, set apart—and cleansed by the washing of water by the Word, fitted for Him as in the picture in Genesis 24 when Rebekah was fitted for Isaac (Eph. 5:26). And then, when the last member is brought in, He will tarry no longer. All shall be caught up, and He will present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. She shall be holy and without blemish (vs. 27). In Ephesians 1:23 we see her in the glory—the fullness of Him that fills all in all—the bride of the Second Man, displaying His glory.

The living Christians now on earth are spoken of as the body of Christ, and it is always complete. In Romans 12:4-5 we see the members working together, each one according to the grace given, ministering according to its faith. In 1 Corinthians 12 it is described in its functional activity. It is plainly here on earth and now. There is no preaching of the gospel in heaven, no suffering for Christ there; all this is on earth.

If we were judging by the frequent behavior of Christians, we might conclude that the body of Christ is not on earth, or just a theory and not a fact, but the Word of God declares, "There is one

body." Outwardly neglected and scattered into denominations, we do not see it as such. If some Christians, in ignorance or in self-will, do not obey the truth or neglect it, the Word still stands, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling," thus giving us all the privilege and putting on us the responsibility of maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We are not asked to keep the unity of the body. The Holy Spirit has formed the body and maintains it by His presence, uniting every believer to Christ in glory. So, till the Lord comes for His church, it is ever true that "there is one body" and faith will act upon it, seeking to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is no scriptural way to gather together and to take the Lord's Supper except as members of the body of Christ in the acknowledgment of this truth. First Corinthians 10:16-17 proves this. The Lord's supper is the external expression of this unity. We being many are one loaf, one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf.

In the cup we see redemption; in the loaf, unity of the body. We, therefore, own every true believer as a member of that body of Christ. At the first, all who believed were together. Now, there are sad divisions, but the "one body" remains.

The first mention of the church in Scripture is in Matthew 16:18 where the Lord calls it "My church." It is composed of living stones, built upon Christ the Rock, in eternal security from the power of death. First Peter 2:5 describes these living stones as a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ—each one a purged worshipper. They are the same saints who compose the body of Christ and here are seen as a worshipping company.

Where men are the builders, the professing church is looked at in responsibility, and there it includes all, both saved and unsaved, who have been baptized (1 Cor. 3:10-17; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; 3:2-5; 1 Peter 4:17; Jude; Rev. 2-3). These could not represent the body of Christ, because the body of Christ includes only believers.

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 10:1-11PRO 10:01-11

1. "The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." Let the father's care in educating his children (especially his son the heir of his family) be equal to the joy he will have in their well doing: and let the mother beware that her indulgence do not spoil them; for they will have the greatest share in the heaviness, which their untowardness will give them.

2. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death." This is more necessary than the care of heaping up riches for them (which many times tempt men to fraud and oppression), for though great treasures be gotten by such means, they will be so far from availing the owners in time of distress, that they will rather expose them to be a prey; when justice and mercy with a little wealth will procure safety and deliverance from the greatest dangers.

3. "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but He casteth away the substance of the wicked." The reason is, the Lord hath treasures in store for the just, especially for the merciful man; and will send him such supplies in his straits, that he shall not starve, but rather have enough: but He will drive the wicked out of their ill-gotten possessions, whereby they think to secure themselves from want.

4. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." And next unto virtue let children be bred up to industry; without which indeed they cannot be virtuous: for both poverty and fraud are commonly the fruit of negligence and sloth; when an active diligence is wont to enrich men, without the help of deceit.

5. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." Especially if prudence be added to diligence and opportunity be not neglected: for as he that makes hay (as we speak) while the sun shines is commended for his provident care; so he that by taking his ease, when he should gather the fruits of the earth, loses all the benefit of his former labors, is a shame to himself, and unto those that bred him.

6. "Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." The blessings of heaven shall visibly descend in great plenty upon the just and merciful man: but their own iniquity shall violently overwhelm those, to their utter confusion, who wickedly defraud and oppress their neighbors.

7. "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." And though envy may sometime cloud a good man for the present, yet after death an honorable mention shall be made of him; and he shall be commemorated with praises: when the memory of the wicked, who now perhaps are extolled, shall either perish or stink and be abominated.

8. "The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall." He that is truly wise will thankfully receive such good advices as these, and avoid the dangers of which he is admonished: but he whose wisdom lies only in his tongue (which moves upon all occasions, and will not let him learn of others) ruins himself, even by his own imprudent prating.

9. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known." He that deals sincerely in all his actions is both safe and secure: but he that relies upon fraud and tricks of deceiving shall find his cunning fail him at the last; and besides can never be secure that he shall not be detected and made a public reproach.

10. "He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall." But he especially, that under pretense of kindness betrays his neighbor, and gives the sign to others, when he would have them circumvent him, is a common grievance; and shall himself, in the end, feel the miserable effects of his falseness: for he is worse than a man, who openly professing his malice rails perpetually, and thereby, sooner hurts himself than others.

11. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." The discourse of a good man (like a perpetual spring of wholesome water) always tends to the profit, comfort, and refreshment of those that receive it: but a wicked man, how fair soever his language be, doth but conceal the mischief, which (like pestilent waters out of a deep pit) he designs to produce when opportunity serves.

"How Many Loaves Have Ye?"

Mark 6:38MAR 6:38

The Lord used what the disciples had. It was only a little—nothing for such a multitude. But when blessed and broken by Jesus, it went a long way. The God who gave life could sustain it independent of means, or multiply the means to make them adequate to the need.

So now, it is what we have that Christ uses. Use what we have in faith and He will make it meet the need of all present. It is the power of God giving efficacy to His Word that makes much or little a blessing, and, without that, plenty is in vain. In ministry, the grand end is getting the soul, through the presentation of Christ, brought into living connection with God. True ministry does this for the poor in spirit; the rich go away empty.

In seeking to meet the need of sinners and to feed the church of God, only by nearness to Christ and as those who have tasted His mercy shall we not faint under the ministry committed to us in serving His people it is our privilege to magnify His name by drawing on His strength in such a way that He alone is the spring and strength and power of ministry. Jesus said, "Give ye them to eat."

Editorial: the Gospel of Material Prosperity

David Wrote, "I was envious at the foolish, when saw the prosperity of the wicked... until I went in to the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Psa. 73:3, 17). There are some that are now preaching the gospel of material prosperity. Another so-called gospel is "the social gospel." God's Word is very strongly against this. To the Galatians and for us it is written: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

A brother from Brazil writes: "In a time like the one in which we live how important it is to be able to preach the plain gospel found in God's Word. 'Far by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph. 18-9). Brazil is undergoing many changes in the religious field. Not long ago this was a very. Catholic country, but now we are living in a very strange and evil country. Even though being a Catholic country in its majority, Brazil has the largest spiritistic population in the world. Most of the Catholic population also attend the meetings of spiritism.

"In Pentecostalism now there is a fast-spreading and most evil form of religion. It uses God's Word, professes the basic doctrines of Christianity, but brings not the gospel of the grace of God. They are preaching a gospel of material prosperity. Multitudes are following those preachers looking for money and a healthy, happy life in this world. 'Jesus Christ is the King' is their banner, and they say if you go to their church you can have anything you want. They try to make the Lord their Servant. No cross, no blood and no forgiveness of sins is offered."

Peter asks, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). We know the answer to this question, even as David learned the answer when he went into the sanctuary and saw the prosperity of the foolishly wicked and their end.

In addition to these things, we believe one of the greatest hindrances for true believers is their being taken up with the desire for worldly prosperity. The consequence is that the Lord does not have His rightful place in their hearts and homes.

Let us ask ourselves if we are seeking earthly gain or the enjoyment of the Lord's presence? Is communion with Him the uppermost desire of our hearts?

There is a scripture bearing on this that is clear and as true now as ever. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). There is another promise that may surprise you. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29). Ed.

What Is Grace?

I remember a person saying once that he "did not like the word grace; the word love meant the same thing and was much better." This is a mistake; grace goes a great deal further than love. Man loves that which is in some way, he thinks, worthy of love, and he thinks God is the same as himself. Therefore he says, "I must turn to God someday and try to be worthy of His love, and then He will love me." Now the grace of God is the very opposite to this human thought. I do not know anything like it in the whole world.

"What is grace?" I asked the other day.

"Mercy" was the reply. Well, it is true the love of God and the mercy of God are both very, very wonderful. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins." Both the mercy and love of God are thus in grace, that is, in pure unmerited favor. Yet this grace of God goes further, yes, far beyond the reach of all human thought.

Let us suppose that a criminal, guilty of such crimes as to make him an object of the deepest abhorrence, stands condemned before the judge. Mercy would be a great thing shown to such a one, but if it were possible in the heart of a human judge to love such a 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. He bears the full penalty of all his crimes and then takes him into his own house and makes him a partner with himself, saying, "As long as I live, all that I have is yours." Ah! tell me where among the cold hearted sons of men was ever grace shown like this? No, the glory of this grace belongs alone to my God. Oh, how shall I tell of His wondrous grace!

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? Has your heart been stirred that God should thus love and pity and show mercy to the guilty? Yes, God sent His own dear Son in sweetest grace to take the place of the lost and guilty and in purest grace to bear all their sins in His own body on the tree! Oh, look at the cross! God in grace met man's utmost need. 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 and spread it all before Him. He will pardon the confessing sinner in faithfulness to the blood of Jesus. Jesus died for that purpose that God might be just, not only in pardoning, but in justifying every sinner that believes.

This is not all: God in pure grace takes the utterly unworthy sinner, now pardoned and justified, into perfect partnership and oneness with Himself in the ever-blessed Lord Jesus. In this grace He met the murderer Saul, and from that moment Paul became a partner or joint-heir with Christ. What a change! From that day he could say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Right well did he know that nothing could separate him from such love as this.

Yes, God in the wonders of His grace can meet a murderer, a drunkard, a harlot, or, worse than all; a deceived and self-righteous Pharisee. Yes, from this moment the days of your partnership

with Satan may be ended. Oh, may God grant it! May this be your happy portion: pardoned, justified and forever one with Christ. This was grace, not only to take the sinner's place, but to give the guilty one an everlasting place with Himself in resurrection glory. This salvation is wholly of God. C. Stanley

Having Christ

If we have Christ, we have all—without Christ we have nothing. You can be happy without money, without liberty, without parents and without friends, if Christ is yours. If you have not Christ, neither money nor liberty nor parents nor friends can make you happy. Christ with a chain is liberty; liberty without Christ is a chain. Christ without anything is riches; all things without Christ is poverty indeed.

Law and Grace

The Law requires good from a sinner, and as a consequence does not find it. It therefore works wrath, and condemns and curses the sinner. Grace works to produce good in the sinner, by imparting something to him, not requiring good where it is not to be found. Consequently, instead of condemning and cursing the sinner, it puts away his sin.

Feasts of the Lord

Leviticus 23LEV 23

The feasts of the Lord were the gathering of the people around Himself. In the Old Testament, God was teaching His people the letters, we may say; now, He is teaching us to put them together. And if you put them together, however you please, they always spell "Christ."

The first feast is the Lord's Passover. In order to understand the Passover we need to read Exodus 12. The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. They were the people descended from Abraham, and heirs of the covenant. But they are in Egypt, sunken to as low a level as the Egyptians themselves, and deserving the judgment of God for their sins as much as the Egyptians, when God heard their cry of oppression. He came down to deliver them, and one plague after another plague was sent upon the land of Egypt to show the power of God, and that the Egyptians had to do with God until the last plague, the tenth, and that was the death of the firstborn.

God told the people to take a lamb on the tenth day of the first month. They were to keep it up until the fourteenth day of the first month and kill the lamb at evening. Then they were to take the blood and dip hyssop in the blood and sprinkle the side posts of their doors and the lintel overhead. They were to stay inside the house that night. God's word was pledged for it that where the blood was upon the door, He would pass over them and the plagues should not be on them to destroy them when He judged the land of Egypt.

That was called the Lord's Passover. He passed over the children of Israel that night wherever the blood was sprinkled on the door posts, but where it was not found on the door posts there death was.

The firstborn of all in Egypt, from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dunghill, man and beast, the firstborn was slain, except where the blood was. And, of course, the significance of that is that for us—Christ being our Passover—we were in the sphere of judgment and deserving the judgment, and having been sheltered by the good of Christ, judgment never can touch us.

This event took place in the land of Egypt, but it was to be celebrated every year at that period as a memorial feast. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. 23:5-7). It is a very serious feast and a very solemn one.

There are three main feasts in Deuteronomy 16: (1) the Passover, or unleavened bread which is in connection with it; (2) Pentecost, or the feast of weeks; and (3) the feast of tabernacles. There is rejoicing in connection with the feast of weeks, and there is rejoicing greatly in connection with the feast of tabernacles, but not one word of rejoicing in the Feast of unleavened bread or the Passover. They are connected here.

Notice in Deuteronomy 16:1-9 that not one word is said of joy or rejoicing. It is more to be noticed because of what you read of the feast of weeks in verse 11, "Thou shalt rejoice." There is a beautiful principle furnished us with regard to the feast of weeks. Not only, "Thou shalt rejoice," but everyone around us is to rejoice too. God's way never teaches selfishness, but enlarges the heart toward every needy one. The widow, fatherless, Levites, servants and everybody are all to be brought into this rejoicing.

In Deuteronomy 16:43-14 it says, "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days... and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast." And then again in verse 15, "Therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." When you come to the feast of tabernacles, it will be all rejoicing.

The feast of the pass-over brings before us the solemn truth of God's righteous claims upon His creatures on account of their sins being answered for, but answered by the death of Christ, the blood of Christ our Passover. What comes next here is Pentecost, but in Leviticus 23 there is something before this.

Pentecost carries us on to the consequence of Christ's death—His work—the giving of the Holy Spirit; that, of course, brings joy to the heart and so there is rejoicing in the feast of weeks. That is peculiar to this present time, and the gathering out of the church. You cannot tell what month this was. It was to be fifty days from the time they waved the sheaf of firstfruits. But the moment the church is completed God begins again to reckon time, and on the fifteenth day of the seventh month began the feast of tabernacles. That will be commemorative of all the wanderings of God's people when strangers and pilgrims. It cannot be celebrated until their pilgrimage is all over, and they are settled and established in full blessing in accordance with the purpose of God. And so it will be all rejoicing; it will be what we call the millennium.

The Passover does not carry us beyond the death of Christ, not even to the resurrection. In Leviticus 23:10-11 it says, "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." It could not be waved before the Lord any other day but the morrow after the Sabbath.

If we let the light of 1 Corinthians 15 shine back here it just illuminates this whole statement. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (vs. 20). There is the anti-type. "The firstfruits of them that slept." You see, casting the seed into the ground, it dies and springs up and bears its fruit, and that is a new crop. When the harvest was ready, the reapers reaped the first sheaf.

Suppose it was Wednesday when they reaped it. They kept that sheaf until the morrow after the Sabbath. What day would that be? The first day of the week. If they reaped it on Friday, they kept it until the first day of the week, and then the priest was to wave it, because it was a type of the resurrection of Christ, that was to take place on the first day of the week—the morrow after the Sabbath. That was given by God to His people nearly 1500 years before Christ died, but was there ever-present to God's mind. How establishing that is to the soul!

You see what we have in the Word of God. As the Lord said, "The scripture cannot be broken." Men will break their heads on it, but the Scriptures cannot be broken, and here you find it actually

carried out to the very letter. So we get Christ's death in the Passover and Christ risen on the first day of the week—the morrow after the Sabbath—in the wave sheaf explained in Corinthians, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Everyone, that is all believers in Him, is a part of that harvest, and every one of us through grace comes in as a part of that crop, of which Christ is the firstfruits.

Notice that in the offerings, which accompany this wave sheaf, you look in vain to find a sin offering. You can find a burnt offering, a meat offering and a drink offering, but no sin offering, for there was no sin in Him. He needed no sin offering. This shows all the more strikingly how carefully the Spirit of God guards the truth of His holy Person.

"And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23:12-14).

It would have been a sin for them to have touched or eaten anything of that crop until the wave sheaf had been presented to the Lord. God must have His part first.

It is important in looking into these passages to see that none but God could have given such an account. Who else could have done that? It shows what a wonderful thing we have in the Word of God. He could see beforehand what has to be 1500 years later. Moses did not understand it, and nobody could understand it until its accomplishment, and the light of the New Testament shines back and fills it with illumination. Then we see whose mind it was that dictated Leviticus and Corinthians. It was one mind running through the whole.

In Luke 6 the Pharisees thought it an awful sin for the disciples to pluck the corn and eat of it on the Sabbath. But the Spirit of God guards this by telling us it was the second Sabbath after the first. The first having past, on the morrow after the first the wave sheaf had been waved before the Lord, and on the second after the first it was no harm for them to take the corn. But had they taken it on the first, it would have been a sin. For them to take of the fruit of the soil before God had His share would have been sin, because it would have been ignoring His rights. The Pharisees were following the tradition of the elders.

The feast of unleavened bread, immediately follows the Passover. What lesson are we to learn from that?

From 1 Corinthians 5, the church is looked at as keeping the feast of unleavened bread, and the reason given is: "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Leaven typifies what is evil—what puffs up and corrupts. It is always evil wherever it is spoken of in Scripture, and it is to be excluded.

The Christian who is under the shelter of the blood of Christ is to pass his whole life on earth with leaven put away.

Among the Jews there is a great searching of the house just before the Passover. Everything has to be purged out for fear a little leaven will be found in their dwelling. The teaching is that as leaven typifies evil, the Christian is to put away evil. The church is to exclude all evil and thus keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

There is no space between Passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread, so that it is the whole of the life from the time we are under the shelter of the blood of Christ until our week is ended or completed. Seven is a perfect number—completeness in spiritual things—therefore it is the whole period of our sojourn upon earth. It is the holiness that becomes the people of God that is set forth by the feast of unleavened bread

Leaven is always evil, but there are a great many classes in Scripture connected with bad conduct and immorality. Fornication in Corinthians is called leaven, and in Galatians false teaching. The Lord warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. They were wrong in supposing it was because they had taken no bread. When He reproves them, they understand He spoke of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. There is danger of Christians getting occupied with a certain class of leaven, so it is important to see we have different classes in Scripture.

There is a lesson for us to learn from the woman introducing leaven in the meal. She was hiding it; it was not a straightforward course. She hid the leaven in the three measures of meal, and she hid it there until the whole was leavened. There is not a woman who, if she made bread, would do that. As soon as it became a little leavened she would put it in the oven to stop its working. When we think of the three measures of meal as the children's food, it was wicked for that woman to hide leaven in it until what ought to be food is poison—corrupted. To eat of it would bring on sickness and perhaps death.

Woman, too, is used in Scripture in that way as a picture of a system. You get a woman very prominently displayed in connection with the false church. That is what is meant in Matthew 13. That evil system has grown up and finds its fullest expression in Romanism that has put leaven into the food of God's children. The Church of Rome will tell you it is by Christ's death you are to be saved. That is truth. But how am I to get it? They will say it is dependent upon the sacraments and the priests. That puts something between me and God and puts me at a distance, and there is where the leaven is put into the truth and spoiled. It makes my faith in the priest and what he does, instead of Christ and what He has done.

Why does it say three measures? Because He wants to give us a picture expressive of what Christ is. I connect it with the fact that God has revealed Himself as man in Christ, but when the full revelation of God comes out, He is three persons in one God.

Look at Genesis 18:1-2, "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him." What did he say? "My Lords"? No, "My Lord." There were three men. "If now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant: let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts.... And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal."

Here three measures of meal is used again. It is to be made into cakes to be set before these wondrous visitors. There is a good deal more to be set before them, but I mention this because the expression "three measures of meal" is used here. Now we think it was God appearing to Abraham in this way, in manhood, but it is three, and Abraham addresses them as though they were one.

It is all the more striking when we look at Genesis 19 and see the contrast. Lot is a picture of the worldly Christian. When He visited Sodom—when He visited Lot—it wasn't as three men, but as two angels. Lot sat, not in the door of his tent, but in the gate. "And Lot seeing them rose up to meet them... and he said, Behold now, my lords." Notice he addresses them in the plural. "Turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night."

Of all that feast there is not one single thing worth mentioning except that unleavened bread. Abra4, 'Feasts of the, Cord ham had three measures of meal made into cakes, a calf tender and good, and butter and milk, but poor Lot had a most elaborate spread. He was in the city where he could get whatever he wanted, but there is not a thing mentioned but the unleavened bread. And that he had to make-it wasn't ready. There was no tree there either. Of course, the tree makes us think of Peter's words, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." And it is under the tree that God and man meet, as it were.

In Leviticus 23:11, we know Christ as our Passover and the value of His death, and then in resurrection as the triumphant One. That line of things is so needful for the Christian, because so many seem to stop at the death of Christ, saying, "Yes, I know He died for my sins." But the wave sheaf is for us too—Christ in resurrection.

In Leviticus 23:17, notice the two wave loaves were to be baked with leaven. We need to go back a little. First the wave sheaf of the crop is waved before the Lord on the morrow after the Sabbath. We don't know how long it is after the whole crop is gathered in until some is turned into food. Verse 15 says, "Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete."

In James 1:18 we read, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept. Now, we—a kind of firstfruits—are typified by these two loaves that are baked with leaven, because in us there is evil, and will be as long as we are here in the body. But there was no evil in Him. You will find with these two wave loaves there is a sin offering, which covers the evil, as it were, before God.

In verse 19 we get something that is not in the wave sheaf. "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering." When you come to the actual fulfillment of that, counting from the very day that Christ rose, the morrow after the Sabbath, seven weeks till the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, it brings you up to the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ. Look at Acts 2:1—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come."

The meaning of Pentecost is fifty days, and it is just this: Fifty days after Christ rose, the Holy Spirit came down into the world to take out two wave loaves for the Lord. Isn't that most wonderful? To the very day of the coming of the Holy Spirit, it was all foreshadowed 1500 years before.

During the forty days after He was risen from the dead, He told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high and not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise. It would be not many days hence. It would be ten days—not many though. That brings you right up to the fiftieth day, and on that day Acts 2 gives us an account of the Holy Spirit's descent. He forms the saints into one body, and afterward the Gentiles are brought in. I suppose it is the Jew and Gentile that are set forth in the two wave loaves.

Notice what we get in verse 22: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest." When the Lord comes to take us up, the corners will be left, because there will be a remnant that will be taken up too. Some are put to death in two different companies at least, and that will complete the gathering out of those that are left (Rev. 20:4).

What follows that is an entire change. You will notice we have the first month mentioned. There is not another month mentioned till we come to the seventh. What is between is the growing, harvest and reaping, and all connected with the heavenly people till they are completed and out of the scene.

Now on the first day of the seventh month there was to be a blowing of trumpets and that is typical of what will happen after the Lord has taken us up. There will be a blowing of trumpets that will gather Israel back to their land. After they are brought back, the next thing is that on the tenth day of the seventh month they are to have what is called the great Day of Atonement. They are to do no work, not merely no servile work, but no manner of work. It is a day of atonement and they are to afflict their souls. That will be the work of God's grace in the hearts of Israel, bringing them to see their wickedness in having put Christ to death. "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." It is beautiful that in Zechariah we have the full accomplishment of that Day of Atonement.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the feast of tabernacles. Their troubles all over, they are dwelling in tents commemorative of their troubles. Surely they are to rejoice before the Lord, and everything that has breath will praise God in that day. It is pictured in the Psalms too, as well as in the Prophets, because their dwelling in tents is typical of the millennium when all nations on the earth will come up to Jerusalem and keep the feast of tabernacles. It is also set forth in the prophecy of Zechariah. It reaches on from the very beginning through all the dealings of God with us until His rest is reached in the end—the Sabbath of eternity, and no work there—no manner of work.

It is plain from Scripture that when the Lord comes and takes up His people, for those who have heard the truth and not accepted it, there is no more hope. No question about that. It makes it so solemn for those who hear the truth now, because if they do not submit to it, it is because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

The door will be closed upon those who have had an opportunity, but multitudes of heathen will have the gospel of the kingdom preached to them, and on receiving it they will be blessed on earth—not for heaven—during the time of Christ's reign when there will be peace and prosperity.

Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit and earth shall keep her jubilee under the reign of Christ.

Bible Challenger-02-February V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses (Bible quotations with one or more words to complete) will form the word which describes the frequency with which a devoted father sanctified his ten children during their times of feasting. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "And the shame of my face bath_____ me." [1]
2. "Bring unto thee pure_____ beaten for the light." [2]
3. "The fruit of our lips giving thanks to His_____." [1]
4. "My _____ have been my meat day and night." [1]
5. "Every _____ of the thoughts of his heart was only evil." [1]
6. "Without descent, having_____ beginning of days, nor end of life." [1]
7. "Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment_____ the ." [4]
8. "And Saul was yet the more_____ of David." [1]
9. "O Daniel, servant of the_____, is thy God, whom thou servest continually." [2]
10. "Will restore thee all the_____ of Saul thy father." [1]
11. "Offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first _____ day by day" [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-01-January Answers V.11

1. A rise Acts 9:6
2. S ynagogue Matt. 13:54
3. T roubled Dan. 5:9
4. O pened the door Acts 12:16
5. N o man Luke 8:56
6. I nto the midst Dan. 3:24
7. S ick Dan. 8:27
8. H ouse 1 Kings 9:8
9. E nter into the kingdom Mark 10:24
10. D umb to speak Mark 7:37

"And they of the circumcision which believed were ASTONISHED, as many as come with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 10:45).

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 10:12-21PRO 10:12-21

12. "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love coverall all sins." Such is the difference between 'hatred and love, that where all things are in quiet, hatred raises up disturbance and makes men quarrel about trifles; when love pacifies the minds of those that it finds provoked by real offenses, and composes all those contentions, for which there was too much occasion.

13. "In the lips of him that Birth understanding wisdom is pun& but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding." He that would be wise must seek the acquaintance of some intelligent person: but the most knowing person in the world cannot make him wise that is void of consideration; who will never learn, unless perhaps by some great affliction.

14. "Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction." Wise men treasure up knowledge, and reserve it till a fitting opportunity to make use of it: but a fool is always talking, and seldom opens his mouth but that it proves a present mischief to himself or others.

15. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty." Riches are a powerful] defense to their owners against a great many evils, to which we are subject in this life; and naturally raise men's minds and make them confident: whereas poverty exposes men to injuries and abuses; and is apt to depress and deject their spirits.

16. "The labor of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin." Which is a great motive to an honest diligence; but then remember this, that the end of a virtuous man's labors after riches is only that he may provide himself the necessities of life, and that he may do good with them: but the great revenues, which perhaps are left to a wicked man by his ancestors without any pains of his own, are employed to satisfy his sinful lusts and passions.

17. "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth." He that carefully observes, and puts men in mind of these wholesome admonitions, which may teach them to correct and amend their lives, is in the way to make himself and others happy: but he that leaves off to give reproof encourages men in their errors; from which he, who shuns those that are wont to reprehend him, is never like to be reclaimed.

18. "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool." He that dissembleth his hatred, by great professions of friendship before one's face, and then goes and vents it in slanders behind his back, may seem a cunning man; but is really an impious fool.

19. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." Nor are calumny and flattery the only vices of the tongue; but much speaking is rarely innocent: therefore he that is sparing of his words, and considers well both when, and where, and what he speaks, is a truly prudent person.

20. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is Mile worth." The words of such a man are exceeding valuable; because they are both solid and sincere: but let wicked men devise and study what they please, it will be good for little, or rather very mischievous.

21. "The lips of the righteous: feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom." Many are preserved from perishing by the discourses of a good man: but a fool, for want of consideration, receives no benefit by them, and doth not so much as take care to save himself.

When Christ Came

When Christ came, prophecy ceased, because He was there to fulfill all the words that the prophets had spoken and all that had been promised to the fathers. Immediately when He was rejected, prophecy was heard again. Prophecy then divided itself into two subjects. One, touching His kingdom and coining glory—"things to come." The other disclosed the secret of God—the church, Christ's body—His bride; not as of the world, but as given to Him out of the world, during His rejection.

Satan

In heaven Satan is an accuser of the brethren (Job 1; Rev. 12; Zech. 3). On earth he is the accuser of God (Gen. 3) and a persecutor of the saints (Job 2; Rev. 13). A

Stand With Patience

Our passage down here is a time of wars and conflicts, and it could not be otherwise. Now, if the enemy finds us uncovered, if the flesh is active, he can ever harass us. More than this, we must have the whole armor of God to be able to meet him. It is not a question of strength, but of wiles, and God allows us to make the discovery of our state by this means, as in the case of Ai and of the Gibeonites. But in the work there will always be conflict—victory, no doubt, if we are faithful. To stand, that is our business in the evil days.

I am sure that as to evil speeches there is only one thing to be done—to be silent, and bear them, and cast all on God, praying even for those who speak thus. I have been struck with the place that patience has in the Christian life in the New Testament: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power"—what great work is to follow? "Unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness:" "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." The will of man himself, his own spirit, has no place in our walk. Often, even in seeking to do good, we do not sufficiently expect God to act, who alone is able to do good. I hope when brethren are evil spoken of, they will have perfect patience and let God judge their cause. Let them place themselves at the same time before God, humbled on account of the evil, praying God to bring in the remedy Himself, They will need to exercise patience; He will exercise it Himself, and in His time (and it is the best) He will appear for the blessing and to the joy of those who have waited for Him.

Be Still

There is always great danger of our being mere imitators of other people's faith, of copying their example without their spiritual power, or of adopting their peculiar line of things without their personal communion. All this must be carefully guarded against. We specially warn the young Christian against it.

Let us be simple, humble and real. We may be very small, our sphere very narrow, our path very hidden, but it does not matter in the least, provided we are precisely what grace has made us, occupying the sphere in which our blessed Master has set us, and walking the path which He has opened before us. It is by no means absolutely necessary that we should be great, or prominent, or showy, or noisy in the world. But it is absolutely necessary that we should be real and humble, obedient and dependent. Thus our God can use us without fear of our becoming proud and boastful, and then, too, we are safe, peaceful and happy.

Nothing is more delightful to the true Christian, the genuine servant of Christ, than to find himself in that quiet, humble, shady path where self is lost sight of and the precious light of God's countenance enjoyed. It is there that the thoughts of men are of small account and the sweet approval of Christ is everything to the soul.

"Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee" (Psa. 143:8).

Editorial: E-Money and Eternal Riches

Electronic money (E-money) is now in use and has been for decades. Trillions of dollars in bank transactions, trades and currency exchanges move from one place to another at nearly the speed of light. New terms such as cybercash (or cybermoney) and digital cash are now used and they in effect replace hard cash.

In the days of Joseph in Genesis 47:15 we read, "The money faileth," Also our Lord exhorts in Luke 16, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness [riches]; that, when ye [it] fail." It will fail, and here it seems that the Lord forewarns of this.

From the prophetic revelation in Revelation 13 we know that there is coming a time upon this earth, a few years after the rapture, when no man shall be able to buy or sell except they have the mark of the beast. This mark will be in their right hand or in their forehead. We ask, "Is the world now being prepared for this?"

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we should not be alarmed, but rather we are encouraged by such considerations. Also I trust that we are instructed, knowing that all the advancement and progress of man in this world is under the solemn pronouncement of judgment from the hand of the Lord. And yet, while we are here we are interested in changes. We need to learn how to use what the Lord allows us to have, and we should want to use it for His glory.

Moving money electronically has this great advantage: one million dollars in twenty-dollar bills weighs 111 pounds, but it weighs nothing in E-money. Men wonder, however, if E-money is not easily subject to counterfeiting. In history when improved locks and doors have been made, criminals have been able also to improve their ways of picking locks and penetrating doors. Such are sinful creatures and such will they be.

There is wisdom for us in these verses: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20). Next it says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." How much better it is for us to "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" (Col. 3:1-2). Ed.

Faith tested is faith strengthened

if is fn have learned your weakness,

but to have learned the faithfulness of God,

His tender care even in sending the difficulties.

that We may be there with Him.

The Practical Power of God's Glory

F. G. Patterson

It is interesting to trace how much, and in what different lines, the practical power of the glory of God is brought before us in the epistles. The glory is the consummation of His grace to us.

In Romans 5:2, where it enters into our hope, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We cannot be more worthy for heaven, because OUT worthiness depends on what Christ has done, but our capacity to enjoy that glory may and ought to grow. The present sanctification has all the elements of the future glory, and the future glory contains all the qualities of the present sanctification. We are formed by what we make our object.

So Paul gives us the result of his experience of Christ: what he had learned. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." It was the spring of his devoted path of service and self-surrendering toil! "To me to live is Christ," his chief and only aim, that "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 3:8; 1:20-21). Yet the more he knew Him, he longed to know Him more: "That I may know Him."

It says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We all, with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [transformed] into the same image from glory to glory." He says "we all" since it is the common joy of every Christian to gaze upon that glory shining in the face of Jesus, and thus be transformed. The first look was on a lifted-up Son of Man dying on the cross for our sins. But He is not now there. He has left the cross, passed down to death and the grave, risen, and gone on high, a witness that the righteousness of God has been vindicated against sin, and is now displayed.

Do I seek to be like Him? What heart that knows Him does not long to be transformed into the same image? How then shall it be? By studying a humbled Christ and seeking to walk as He walked? No, the power is not found there. Shall seek conformity and likeness to Him by occupation with myself, looking into my own heart to produce what is of Him there? No, that will never do it! How then shall I become like Him? By occupation of heart with Christ in glory: by gazing and feeding upon and engrossing my heart with Him in the sphere of God's unsullied light, where He fills all things, and flesh and self can never come. There I find that a thousand things grow dim, which are not suited to that scene, nor to the heart of Him who is there. Flesh and self wither down to their true place of death. The beautiful lines of Christ are written upon the fleshy tables of the heart by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the moral traits of His glory are reproduced in the deepening conformity of our ways to Him.

Stephen, gazing upon his Lord in glory, meets the stormy waves of a world that hated his Lord before it hated him. The vessel broken by the stones of the multitude only emits the beautiful light of his glorified Lord as he tastes the fellowship of His sufferings. He is delivered to death for Jesus' sake, and the life of Jesus is manifested in his mortal flesh.

Here I cannot pass on without pointing out one feature in which Christ excels—for in all things He must have the preeminence. Stephen first says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he kneels down and prays for Saul and those who were stoning him, thus setting his spirit free. Not so Jesus. First He says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), and at the close of the cross He commits His Spirit to His Father. The order is reversed: Stephen was but man—though blessed martyr indeed. Jesus was the manifestation of divine goodness: Man perfect in dependence before God. He was also God perfectly revealed to man.

In Colossians, too, where we are seen passing through the deep, heart-searching circumstances of the wilderness way, the glory of God is again brought to bear on us. "Strengthened with all might" for a scene where all is against us. What is the measure of the strength? "According to His glorious power" (another rendering is "power of His glory"). What wonderful results will be produced with such strength, you may say. But to what are we strengthened? "Unto all patience!" Is not that a new way of making me patient in this scene—patient amidst its sorrows, trials, temptations and heart-rendings?

Strengthened "unto all... long-suffering," the long-suffering that bears without a murmur every evil work, as it can perform every good work through Christ that gives it strength. Then "with joyfulness" crowns the verse. It is not the heart assuming an attitude of submission with sorrow at the core, which is called resignation (a word unknown in Scripture). But it is the heart's joy springing up to Him in glory, in answer to the resources of His glory that strengthen for the same path of peaceful rest in a Father's love and will that so characterized Him.

In James 2:1 you will again find the glory and its principles presented as a motive and power for conduct here. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." If you have faith—the faith of glory, to which you are heading, do not go on with the spirit of the world, which puts the poor man in the low place and a rich man in the seat of honor! Let the principles of the glory form your ways, so that the spirit of the world may be broken in you.

Again in 1 Peter 4:14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." When I feel that I have been reproached for the name of the Lord, it is as if the skirts of the glory had touched me! The spirit of the glory where Christ is has, so to speak, touched him who has been slighted for His name.

Take it where you will, the power of the glory of God is brought to bear for present sanctifying on our hearts and ways. Whether for hope, or conformity to Christ, for patience by the way, or to deal with the spirit of the world, or with regard to the reproach of Christ, the glory of God as revealed in Christ is pressed upon the soul as the power for the production of what is of Him in the Christian. (See John 17:19.)

Am I Perfect?

My salvation in Christ is perfect, but I am not perfect. How can a man that is not perfect in himself walk according to a perfect position if he is set in it? It is just here where the intercession of Christ, who is in heaven, comes in. Having set us in the perfect liberty of the appreciation of His own work by God the Father, the Lord now on high is occupied in bringing us through the wilderness.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1). From on high He sees our sin as He did Peter's (John 13:38), even before we sin, and as He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Nothing but a living Christ on high could suffice to meet our needs, assure our hearts and cultivate our affections.

Bible Challenger-03-March V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words describing a place of contrition that a great woman gladly took before a prophet upon receiving her dead son restored to life. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of missing words in each answer.

1. "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee _____. " [1]
2. "Speak in thine audience, and hear the words of _____. " [2]
3. "And did wipe them with the _____ of her head." [1]
4. "Saying unto me, Fear not; _____ and the last." [4]
5. "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow _____. " [1]
6. "Let it not be known that a woman came into the _____. " [1]
7. "Distribution was made unto _____ according as he had need." [2]
8. "It is manifest that He is _____ which did put all things under Him." [1]
9. "Besought him with _____ to put away the mischief." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Inspiration

Are the speeches of Satan, the sayings of bad men; and the sermons and parables of our Lord all equally inspired? Undoubtedly. Inspiration applies to what is written, not to what was said or done. Bad men were not inspired by God to say bad things, but the written record of them is inspired.

Then is it inspiration of thought or word that we have in the Scriptures? It is verbal or word inspiration that we insist upon. Now Scripture, or writing, is composed of letters and words, and it is the writing which is inspired, or God-breathed. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." Again it says, "Which things also we speak"—in chosen language of our own? No, but in "words... which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Were it inspiration of thought, leaving it to the writer to employ his own language, then what certainty would we have that we possessed the very truth in its absolute exactness as given by God? It must have been verbal inspiration with the Old Testament prophets, for they wrote, as moved by the Spirit of God, things that they did not themselves understand. Hence they had afterward to search their own writings to find out the meaning of what they had committed to parchment or paper (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Inspiration gives us the certainty of what was revealed. We would not ourselves speak as some do of "the infallible Word." Infallibility, strictly speaking, applies to God alone; inspiration to the Bible. The highest spiritual understanding of an apostle is distinguished from what was revealed by the Lord (1 Cor. 7). This distinction we learn by inspiration.

Some have difficulty in reconciling the human element with inspiration, and thus raise difficulties as to "the style of the Holy Spirit." We see not the slightest difficulty here. The Spirit of God is sovereign in His choice of instruments. He has no style. He has caused the powerful mind of Paul to be reflected in his writings, as also the warm heart of John in his. The Spirit uses the human vessel, holds it, controls it, shapes it, guards it in the certain communication of truth, yet not so as to shut out the individuality and character of the person.

But enough. We are as certain that we have the Word of God in our English Bible as that the sun shines in the heavens. What other book but the Bible can explain the riddle of the moral confusion which everywhere exists? What other book has changed thousands of drunkards, wife-beaters, blasphemers and thieves into God-fearing men and women, turning their once-wretched homes into places of peace and joy? Could Shakespeare do this? Could Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" accomplish these things? No, we will grasp our Bibles more firmly than ever, and refuse, absolutely refuse to part with them at the bidding of men, however learned they profess to be. The logic of facts is against them.

It is the only book which is a revelation of God and from God. It is the only book which meets the longings of our nature, which satisfies and rests the conscience. We know a knife because it cuts; we know the Bible is the Word of God, for it pierces (Heb. 4:12).

The Bible is life's chart through our tangled pathway. It leads us on and on, up to the gates of pearl, yes, inside the jasper walls of the heavenly Jerusalem where we will go out no more forever.

W. Scott

Places

The book of the Acts of the Apostles gives us the account of the establishment of the church and its being called to be the witness for God. This involves the setting aside, from its place of standing before God, of Jerusalem. It was soon after broken up as a place. From then onward, we have no recognition, on God's part, of any places upon earth, as such. Individual persons as forming parts of the church are recognized and churches are recognized in the epistles, but places, as such, are never owned as having, as mere places, any interest in the mind of God.

In the eleventh chapter of Revelation, however, we find a definite place on earth again recognized as the subject of special interest to the Divine mind, and in that chosen place, in spite of all its evil, and in spite of all the evil of the Gentiles, we find a witness is raised and marvelously maintained there.

David

1 Samuel

Let us briefly retrace the history of David. Simplicity of faith keeps him in the place of duty, and contented there without desire to leave it, because the approbation of God suffices him. Consequently, he can there reckon upon the help of God as thoroughly secured to him. He acts in the strength of God. The lion and the bear fall under his youthful hand. Why not, if God was with him?

He follows Saul with equal simplicity, and then returns to the care of his sheep with the same satisfaction. There, in secret, he had understood by faith that the Lord was with Israel. He had understood the nature and force of this relationship. He sees in the condition of Israel something which does not answer to this, but as for himself, his faith rests upon the faithfulness of God. An uncircumcised Philistine fails like the lion. He serves Saul as musician with the same simplicity as before; whether with him or when Saul sends him out as captain of a thousand, he gives proof of his valor. He obeys the king's commands. At length the king drives him away but he is still in the place of faith.

There is little now of military achievement, but there is the discernment of that which became him when the spiritual power was in him, but the outward divine authority was in other hands. It was the same position as that of Jesus in Israel. David does not fail in this position, its difficulties only the better bringing out all the beauty of God's grace and the fruit of the Spirit's work, while very peculiarly developing spiritual affections and close relationship with God, his only refuge. It is especially this which gave rise to the psalms.

Faith suffices to bring David through all the difficulties of his position, in which it displays all its beauty and all its grace. The nobleness of character which faith imparts to man, which is the reflection of God's character, produces in the most hardened hearts feelings of natural affection, and the remorse of a nature which awakens under the influence of something superior to its malice. It is something which sheds its light upon the darkness that encompasses the unhappy sinner who rejects God.

It is because faith dwells so near God as to be above evil that it withdraws nature itself from the power of evil, although nature has no power of self-mastery. But God is with faith, and faith respects that which God respects and invests one who bears something from God with the honor due to that which belongs to God. It recalls God to the heart with all the affection that faith entertains for Him, and all that pertains to Him.

This is always seen in Jesus and wherever His Spirit is. And it is this that gives such beauty, such elevation to faith which ennobles itself with the nobility of God, by recognizing that which is noble in His sight, and on account of its relationship to Him, in spite of the iniquity or abasement of those who are invested with it. Faith acts on God's behalf and reveals Him in the midst of circumstances, instead of being governed by them. Its superiority over that which surrounds it is evident.

What repose to witness this amid the mire of this poor world! But, although faith—in the place it gives us in this world—suffices for all that we meet with in it, yet, alas! communion with God is not perfect in us. Instead of doing our duty without weariness, whatever it be, because God is with us and when we have slain the lion, being ready to slay the bear, and through this more ready still to slay Goliath; instead of faith being strengthened by victory; nature grows weary of the conflict. We then lose the normal position of faith; we debase and dishonor on ourselves.

What a difference between David, who by the fruit of grace draws tears from the heart of Saul, reopening (at least for the moment) the channel of his affections, and then David unable to raise his hand against the Philistines Whom he had so Often defeated, boasted himself ready to fight against Israel and the king whose life he had spared!

My brethren, let us abide in the place of faith, apparently a more difficult one, yet the place where God is found, and where grace—the only precious thing in the world—flourishes and binds the heart to God by a thousand links of affection and gratitude, as to One who has known us, and who has stooped to meet our need and the desires of our hearts. Faith gives energy; faith gives patience. It is often thus that the most precious affections are developed, affections which, if the energy of faith makes us servants on earth, render heaven itself happy, because He who is the object of faith is there. He fills it in the presence of the Father.

Nature makes us impatient with circumstances, because we do not sufficiently realize God, and draws us into situations where it is impossible to glorify Him. On the other hand, it is well to observe that it is when man had thoroughly failed, when even David's faith had been found wanting and, departing from Israel, he had thrown himself among the Philistines, it was then that God gave him the kingdom. Grace is above all failure. God must glorify Himself in His people. J. N. Darby

First John and Jude

In I John it is a question of apostasy, in Jude of corruption. In John the antichrists go out; in Jude the false brethren come in, and with them corruption. In Jude those who separate are like the Pharisees who took the first places. The ungodly are still seen in the midst of the faithful (Jude 4,15).

Cain, Balaam and Korah are the three characters of the evil within. In John it is apostasy; they go out. Such is the character of these antichrists. They deny that Jesus is the Christ; it is Wish unbelief They deny too the Father told the Son; it is unbelief as to Christian truth. The evil of John and that of Jude, antichristianism and corruption, can coexist, just as we may see it in prophecy.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: When it says in Luke 21:32, "Verity I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled," is this the coming of the Son of Man?

ANSWER: Here the apostate nation of the Jews is meant, the nation that crucified Him. When we get Him as the Son of Man, it is in connection with the earth: "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." The Christian has nothing to do with these things of which He speaks, for they belong to another day. They are signs for another people and are signs in connection with His coming as the Son of Man. We do not wait for Him to come as the Son of Man; we wait for Him as the Lord from heaven.

In Philippians 3:20-2] it says, "Our! citizenship has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior." We wait for Him in that character: "the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself" (JND).

The signs in Matthew, Mark and Luke are for another people. The Jews today and the Jews ever since that day are a continuation of the generation that crucified the Lord. And when the Lord comes, "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), not the same individuals, but the continuation of the same generation—the same people.

The Lamb in Revelation

We do not find the believer's calling or relationship with the Father spoken of in the Revelation. We only have the Father referred to five times: twice as "His Father" and three times as "My Father," and always referring to God as the Father of the Lord Jesus. In the Revelation we see God preparing the earth for His Son, the rightful Heir, under whose feet all enemies will be put.

With this book the Scriptures are closed, so that for any man now to add to God's Word is to expose himself to the plagues written in this book. It is addressed by the Lord to the assemblies, and concludes with the thrice-repeated assurance of His coming quickly.

In looking through this blessed book, however hastily, we cannot fail to notice how often Christ is brought before us as the Lamb. Its importance is obvious, for the believer proves in his experience that truth itself, apart from the truth, is rather calculated to amuse the intellect than to warm the heart. It also shows us that God's way of teaching prophecy is not so much by the arrangement of events in chronological order, as it is in viewing everything in relation to Christ Himself.

In the Revelation, the Lamb is the center around which all else is clustered, the foundation on which everything lasting is built, the nail on which all hangs, the object to which all points, and the spring from which all blessing proceeds. The Lamb is the light, the glory, the life, the Lord of heaven and earth, from whose face all defilement must flee away, and in whose presence fullness of joy is known. Hence, we cannot go far in the study of the Revelation without seeing the Lamb, like direction-posts along the road, to remind us that He who did by Himself purge our sins is now highly exalted, and that to Him every knee must bow and every tongue confess.

If the saying of another be true, that then this one feature of this inspired Book should be enough to engage our hearts, and warrant the largest expectations of blessing. And if the frequent contemplation of the precious blood of Christ keeps down the weeds of our flesh, nourishes the inner man and is the wine that cheers both God and man, we may be assured of gathering much profit from reading this book frequently and prayerfully. In this book the Lamb as it had been slain is prominently set forth, and we are so often reminded of the sufferings of Christ and the judgments and glories which follow.

H. Snell

It is Christ's work which gives peace to the conscience;

But it is subdued will, having none of our own,

Which in great and in little things makes us

Peaceful in heart

In going through a world of trial.

“My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness”

2 Corinthians 12:9 2CO 12:9

When God makes:: strength perfect in weakness, the question comes, Who is the doer of everything? This took place in Paul when he was first converted; this was the principle he was first put on: Paul, you are not to trust to your own strength, or wisdom, or anything, but you are to trust Me. Paul got locked up in prison, and despaired of life, but it was not God's thought that His apostle should be stopped. When he was quietly conning over it all, he said, I had the "sentence of death" in myself. Paul had be-tore him the God that raised up the Lord Jesus Christ. (See 2 Corinthians 1:9.).

Was it a great thing for the God who had raised the Lord Jesus and who had shone down into Paul's heart to open his prison bars? Christ was crucified in weakness; He lives by the power of God—strength made perfect in weakness. The expression at the dose of verse 9, "rest upon me," should be "tabernacle upon me." The thought conveyed to my soul is a reference to God dwelling in a pillar of fire, and the cloud keeping company with people all through their tourney in the wilderness.

Paul was to go forth as one who had no strength, but as one whose weakness is used of God for the display of His glory. It was there we find Paul singing a song over Satan: "I rather glory in my infirmities." He finds that he can bear nothing of himself—perfect weakness.

But now he has got the secret of victory from the Lord, and he can sing a song over his weakness and over Satan.

He finds Satan's work has been turned into his good, and the Lord has allowed it all for his blessing.

Now the question is, Will Christ's arm be always underneath me? Will He always tabernacle over me? Will He never fail me? Shall I be always able to sing this song? This is the principle of resurrection which quiets and gives peace. Paul was to wear it inside him all day long through his whole course. Resurrection must be applied to our every circumstance. "Crucified with Christ," "quickened us together," "raised us up together, and made us sit together." Through all his life Paul was to take this principle into his bosom: resurrection, strength made perfect in weakness.

I have often thought of the wilderness through which God brought Israel. His eye was on the wilderness. He prepared it. In substance He says, I have made the place for a particular purpose in connection with My people; I have arranged it long ago. The wilderness was no accident; it was the very place God had prepared. There were no resources to nature; absolute dependence upon God was there. And God has made and marked out your circumstances, and has so made them that you cannot go through them without Himself. Some may say in reference to their path that this thing came upon me through the sin of someone else. Never mind that; it came from God. Neither divine wisdom nor power could have added anything to the wilderness to have made it more

impassable to nature or more easy to God.

He allows a quantity of things in our circumstances to make us feel we cannot go through them without Him. What an immense difference in saying that this thing comes from God and He has put it there, and saying all this is against me. If it is God and myself there is no difficulty, but if we leave Him out, the way is impassable. Which would you rather have: a life without difficulty, or a life so full of difficulty that the blessed Lord Jesus is obliged to show His face every day? Yes, every minute He is obliged to keep close to me all day long.

God so ordered the course of the Apostle Paul that it was impossible to get on without the Lord Jesus who raises the dead. This does not merely apply to moral difficulties, but to everything. There is someone sick in the house; who do you turn to first, God or the doctor? When the doctor thinks it a serious case, you take it as a decision, but the question is not what the doctor says, but what is God's purpose? Means may be used, but the Christian is not to use anything apart from God—the Lord first in everything.

Praise never comes forth from us so purely as it does in connection with what is disagreeable. When we give thanks for mercies, it is not so pure as when able to praise for what we do not like. We should be dropping the sweet into the disagreeable. When we think of the Lord's love in it, it sweetens what is bitter.

The life of Paul was a wonderful life. "To me to Live is Christ." The way he did run his course brought out the fellowship of the life of Christ. He had in Caesar's court the very life the Lord Jesus had on the Father's throne. It is wonderful, and all on the principle of "My grace is sufficient for thee."

G. V. Wigram

Bible Challenger-02-February Answers V.11

1. Covered Psa. 44:15
2. Oil olive Lev. 24:2
3. Name Heb. 13:15
4. Tears Psa. 42:3
5. Imagination Gen. 6:5
6. Neither Heb. 7:3
7. Urim and the Thummim Exo. 28:30
8. Afraid 1 Sam. 18:29
9. Living God Dan. 6:20
10. Land 2 Sam. 9:7
11. Year Exo. 29:38

"And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job CONTINUALLY" (Job 1:5).

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 10:22-32 PRO 10:22-32

22. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." It is not merely men's industry and provident care, to which they owe their riches; but the blessing of God prospering their endeavors: which when He favors, wealth flows in apace upon them; and is enjoyed also without anxious thoughts and labors.

23. "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief but a man of understanding bath wisdom." A senseless sinner makes a jest of the most horrid impieties that can be committed by himself, or others: but a man that weighs things wisely considers that this is no laughing matter; and takes that pleasure in doing well, which fools take in mischievous wickedness.

24. "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted." Yet there is none so wicked but he is sometime afraid; and since this will not amend him, he shall feel what he fears: but this is the comfort of righteous men, who have reason to hope, that they shall at length obtain their desires.

25. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation."

Though the wicked, like a whirlwind, may bluster terribly, and overthrow all that stands in his way, yet he quickly vanishes, and destroys himself by his own violence: but the righteous, as he is fix and settled in his virtue, which is peaceable and quiet and makes no disturbance; so he enjoys the solid fruits of it in a durable and immovable felicity.

26. "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him." Vinegar is not more offensive to the teeth, nor smoke more vexatious to the eyes, than a remiss and negligent minister is to him that employs him, and relies upon him in a weighty business.

27. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." The best way to prolong life is religiously to observe the laws of God: but wickedness generally (both by its own nature and by God's righteous judgment) brings men to an untimely end.

28. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish." And what a lamentable case is a wicked man in, when he finds himself unexpectedly undone? for this is another difference between a good man and a bad; that the hope of the former concludes in a joyful possession of what he waits for: but the other, failing of his expectation, ends his days in sadness and sorrow.

29. "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." Whence it follows also that a faithful observance of the rules of virtue, which the Lord hath prescribed us, inspires the upright man with great courage and undaunted resolution, when any evil threatens him: but the workers of iniquity, being weak and feeble spirited, are terribly shaken, nay broken, with the fear of that destruction which is coming on them.

30. "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth." There is no way like piety, justice, and mercy, to establish a family in perpetual prosperity: but the wicked (how successful soever they may be for a time) shall not be able to settle themselves and their posterity, in the good land, which God hath given us.

31. "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out." The very discourse of a righteous man is so profitable to instruct others in wisdom, and goodness, that it shall be a means to perpetuate him, like a fruitful tree, in a flourishing condition: but he that uses his tongue perversely, to abuse or raise dissensions among his neighbors, shall be cut down, like a tree that cambers [cumbers] the ground.

32. "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness," The righteous knows very well, how to speak those things (and accustoms his mouth unto them) which are grateful to men, and yet not displeasing to Almighty God: but the wicked are odious to both; because they are skilled altogether in lying and flattery, fraud and calumny, and such like subtle, but detestable arts of doing mischief.

If we look to Him, all is simple; we see our way clearly,

and we have motives that do not leave the soul

a prey to uncertainty.

It is the double-minded man who is
unstable in all his ways.

How God Weans the Soul

The time of weaning is one of great suffering to the soul, but a very necessary time; no one learns true independence of infant helps until he is weaned. It is surprising how many nurses we have, and it is just in proportion as we attain strength to get on without any of them that our age or advance in Christian life is determined. I believe most of us are going through a process of "weaning." And what is it for? Simply that in our given strength we might be able to depend on God without the support of that which betokened our personal feebleness.

The suffering of weaning arises from the deprivation of something with which we connected the blessings of life, and this evidently may occur in many ways. Satan, no doubt, thought Job could not be weaned, for he said to God, "Touch all that he bath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (Job 1:11). But Job was weaned. The soul is weaned when it worships God and prays for others. I cannot worship unless my soul is engaged with God. I cannot pray for others if I am occupied with myself and the loss of any of my channels of comfort. God must wean us!

Victory Through Christ

One subject we find in the Bible is the history of the battle between God and the devil. This one thing runs from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. It is not merely a question of man, but of Satan working by man to dishonor God. The earth was the place where the battle was fought. The first Adam comes, but he falls. All the history of the Old Testament records the failure of the first Adam With promises and predictions of the triumph of the Last.

Then the New Testament comes; the battle is over, the triumph is won. We (believers) are put with the Last Adam, and Christ wants us to be victorious. But we are never victorious except so far as Christ is our Object, when He is before our eyes at each moment, in each difficulty or trial that comes before us here below.

When are we happy? When Christ is before our eyes—not when we are looking back to the happiness of yesterday. Satan would have us look back upon past happiness, and perhaps date our blessing upon such and such a day. But it ought not to be so. I am, of course, to have a joyful recollection of all that the Lord shows me, and I shall certainly not forget the first Moment of blessing from Him. But how Miserable if this only be our comfort and stability now and our assurance that we shall be with Christ! No, it is a living Christ that we have—a Christ that died and is alive again and a Christ that would imprint His own character upon us, making us truly great. It is holding fast what Christ has given us that delivers us from self, and holding it fast in Christ Himself.

Editorial: Is the End That Near?

Efforts to have peace in the Middle East and especially in present-day Israel remind us of Jeremiah 6:14, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." The preceding verse says, "From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."

Interestingly, a succeeding verse exhorts them in this, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." This verse is good and timely instruction for believers today. Oh, that we would stand in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, and the good way to walk therein. Going back to the old paths and the good way, for us in this church period, takes us back to the book of the Acts. May we yet learn to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Struggle and war have continued for Israel and her neighbors instead of peace. In the struggle for peace by the great men in power, Daniel writes this: "These kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed" (Dan. 11:27). It is treachery concealed under the form of a treaty.

Some of the prophetic details have had a partial fulfillment, but God has allowed it to be rehearsed in preparation for what will be seen in the time of the end. This is full of interest to believers who know that God's appointed end draws near. We do not want to overestimate what we are seeing in our time, but we are encouraged that the end is near.

More than 50 of the greatest leaders of the nations gathered last November to pay their final respects to the assassinated Yitzhak Rabin. He was laid to rest by longtime friends and enemies in the city where he was born, and which he recaptured for Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967. The consensus of the leaders is that the pursuit of peace is irreversible. There is no turning back, because of assassination or anything else.

Psalms 122:6 says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." So we can and do pray, but we know they shall not have peace until Christ, the Prince of Peace, brings it, when that people shall own Him and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

When the Lamb opens the first seal of Revelation 6, we see revealed just how the terrible tribulation of seven years begins. "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." This is apparent peace, but most terrible war and destruction follow. We might ask, Are we now in a preparation time that foreshadows this? Ed.

Who Has the Holy Spirit?

G. C Willis

Many true Christians today are not sure whether they have the Holy Spirit or not. Many are praying that He may be given to them. This is the test according to the Scriptures: If a man, convicted of sin and believing on the Lord Jesus as his only Savior, who has finished the work of salvation, can truly say from his heart, "Abba, Father," such a one possesses the Holy Spirit. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear [which the law gives]; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). And again: "Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

The one who reads his Bible and believes it knows that this is true. But those who do not know this from their own Bibles very often do possess the consciousness of their relationship with God; He is their Father, and they are His children. And in the presence of God in prayer, they will from their hearts address Him as "Father!" Such a person may be very ignorant and have much to learn. He may also have much to "unlearn" of false teaching he has received from men, but if he can truly say, "Father," then it is surely the Holy Spirit alone who has taught this to him. This is not simply "conversion." A sinner, as a sinner, cannot receive the Spirit, but as soon as a man truly believes in Christ and His precious blood cleanses his sins, then the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in him.

We see the difference in the case of the prodigal son. He had come to himself; he had owned he had sinned and was ready to perish. He arose and set off to return to his father. He was acting rightly. He was truly converted, but as yet he had not on the best robe, nor the ring, nor the shoes.

As yet he had not met his father. He knew well the wealth and bounty of his father's house, but he did not know if he might enter there. He did not know if his father would receive him. He had not the sense of being a son. He meant to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," for he knew he was not worthy to be called a son. He had not the sense of being a son, although he truly was one. He dared not say, "Abba, Father!"

How many truly converted men and women are in this condition. They are not sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13). We may not be able to explain how we cry "Abba, Father" or why we know we have this privilege. We may know nothing of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (we must know something of the Scriptures to know this), but if we can truly cry, "Father," then we must have the Spirit of God dwelling in us.

There are many who from bad teaching are afraid to say they are children of God, but when they are alone in prayer and in God's presence, they say, "Father." They say this blessed name from the bottom of their hearts. This is the work of the Spirit dwelling in them. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). There is not only liberty in the presence of God, but there is also liberty from the power of sin.

Now look for a moment at the work of the Holy Spirit for us. First, it is the Holy Spirit who convinces (or convicts) us of sin (John 16:8-9 margin). He is not a spirit of bondage but of adoption (Rom. 8:15). We know that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). If we are heirs, then we have an inheritance, but to be in such a relationship to God and to Christ is far more than having an inheritance, which is only the result of this relationship. All this we know by the Spirit.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us (Rom. 5:5). How precious this is. We dwell in love, the love of God, for God is love (1 John 4:16), and by the Spirit, He dwells in us. The proof of the love is that God gave His only begotten Son and that the Son gave Himself for us. But we can only enjoy this love through the Holy Spirit. By His presence the love is "shed abroad in our hearts."

The Apostle John says: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:12-13). Then to show that this belongs to all Christians without any question, he says: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).

It is difficult for one who does not walk with God to believe that we can dwell in God, and God in us. But the Word clearly says: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). He dwells in us, and the one who walks in communion with God enjoys this and rejoices in it with humility and gratitude. The presence of God never makes us proud. He is too great for us to be anything before Him. It was not when Paul was in the third heaven that he was in danger of being exalted above measure, but when he came down to earth again. (See 2 Corinthians 12.)

The Spirit of God also gives us to know that we are in Christ, and Christ in us (John 14:20). There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Not only are our sins forgiven and we are justified before God, but we are acceptable to God in our Jesus who is the beloved, for we are "accepted [taken into favor] in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Here we see the believer's perfect acceptance and also his responsibility. Before God I am perfectly accepted in Christ. But if I am in Christ, Christ is in me as life and power, and I am responsible to manifest this life before the world. Christ is for us before God, and we are for Christ before the world.

By the Holy Spirit, therefore, we know that we are in Christ and Christ in us. What a wonderful fact that the Spirit of God dwells in us! This is the result of Christ's perfect redemption. But what a responsibility this is also for the Christian! God did not dwell with Adam, even when he was innocent, before he sinned, in the Garden of Eden. God did not dwell with Abraham, though He visited him, and Abraham was called "the Friend of God" (James 2:23; Isa.41:8)

As soon as Israel was redeemed by the blood of a lamb, even though this was but a type of the true redemption, then God came to dwell in the midst of His people and sat between the cherubim in the tabernacle in the holy of holies. Now that the true redemption is completed, He comes to dwell in believers individually and in His people gathered together by the Holy Spirit. His presence in us is more than conversion. The persons washed in the blood of Jesus become the dwelling place of God. They are thus sealed for glory by means of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

To Learn His Love

Christ never makes a breach except to come in and connect the soul and heart more with Himself, and it is worth all the sorrow that ever was, and more, to learn the least atom more of His love and of Himself, and there is nothing like that, nothing like Him: and it lasts.

The Holy Spirit

H. H. Snell

"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?... Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4).

At a Bible reading some time ago the question was asked, "Where is the devil?" Someone immediately replied, "In hell," And when another question was asked, "Where is the Holy Spirit?" the answer given was, "In heaven." Now it need scarcely be said that neither of these answers was correct.

The fact is that persons, even Christians, are often accustomed to think and speak about spiritual things without considering what the real truth is, as revealed by God in His Word. As a result, the most unscriptural and extraordinary notions are widely circulated, which are not only wrong, but sometimes dead against the truth of God.

As to Satan, he is not yet shut up, but he will be. Instead of being under confinement, he is going to and fro in the earth. He is not omnipresent, but "walking up and down in it." Peter says, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Yes, he is still "the accuser of our brethren," which deceives the whole world and "the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep."

A Divine Person

As to the Holy Spirit, though He is a divine Person and therefore everywhere present, yet nothing is more clearly revealed in Scripture than that He came down and took up His abode in God's people on earth on the day of Pentecost to abide with us forever. And the more we search the Scriptures on the subject, the more we shall be assured that the gift of the Holy Spirit, consequent upon an accomplished redemption, is a characteristic truth of Christianity.

Is it any wonder, then, that it should be so perverted and denied by our subtle adversary? Is it not most distressing to hear of some denying that He is God, of others praying that He may be sent down? There are others pleading for a greater measure of the Spirit, a fresh baptism and a Pentecostal blessing. All these points and many more concerning the Godhead, personality, indwelling and operations of the Holy Spirit we hope briefly to consider. But we are assured that most of the other errors arise from not knowing Him as a divine Person, coequal with the Father and the Son.

In the verse at the beginning of this article, He is distinctly and unmistakably called God and a Person capable of being lied to. Hence He is sometimes called "the Spirit of God," and the things of God knows no man but "the Spirit of God." He is "the eternal Spirit." Before the earth and the heavens were formed, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the chaotic waters, and we are told that "by His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13). Who could be truthfully said to be "eternal" but "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"?

Eternal

Is not eternal one of the attributes of the Godhead? In truest harmony with His Godhead qualities, and coequal with, and acting together with the Father and the Son, He is called "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father," and also "the Spirit of His Son" Cohn 15:26; Gal. 4:6). Besides, the Spirit is constantly called holy which is a term emphatically applied to God: "I am holy" (I Peter 1:16).

Again we read in 2 Peter 1:21 concerning the Old Testament scriptures that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul also declared, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet." and yet we are told that it was "the Lord God of Israel" who "spake by the mouth of His holy prophets." In Isaiah it says that it was the Lord (Adonahy, Lord in plurality of persons) who gave him the word to say. Is it possible to have clearer testimony to the Godhead of the Holy Spirit?

Omnipresent

We read, too, of His omnipresence, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? if I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [hades], behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me; and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139:7-10). His omnipresence is further shown by His dwelling in every child of God all over the earth, and giving to each, in every part of the globe, access unto the Father through the Son. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). And again, "For through Him we both [believing Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18).

His omnipresence is also clearly set forth in Scripture where we are told that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). Who but a divine Person could search the deep things of God? Again, who would be competent to teach all things, unless he knew all things?

Omnipotent

His omnipotence is constantly witnessed in raising sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, into spiritual life, as it will be when "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Who but One who is Almighty could take of the things of Christ and show them to every child of God, and help to minister the truth by even- gifted servant of the Lord continually? Who but one of Godhead qualities could be said to abide with us forever, to guide into all the truth and to bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said? And of whom could it be said but of one acting in conjunction with the Father and the Son, "All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:15)?

Sovereign

Sovereign actions are further characteristics of "the only wise God," who acts according to the good pleasure of His will. It was the Holy Spirit who said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.... So the being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed" (Acts 13:2, 4). Again, they "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.... They assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6-7).

In relation to certain spiritual gifts, they are distributed by the Spirit's sovereignty. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit.... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (I Cor. 12:8-9, 18).

We trust that enough Scripture testimony has been brought forward to show the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, so that we can easily understand why those who had connected themselves with God's assembly and had said what was false were spoken of as having lied not to men but to God. For before this, the Holy Spirit had come down, and the assembly was the habitation of God through the Spirit.

Bible Challenger-04-April V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses will form three words which explain how, at the close of the tribulation period, many men from other nations will be persuaded that God is now with the Jews. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of missing words in each answer.

1. "And said unto the woman, Now, _____ not because of thy saying." [2]
2. "We ought to give the more _____ to the things." [2]
3. "Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb, Physician, _____ thyself." [1]
4. "Within three days I will build _____ made without hands." [1]
5. "And they said unto him, From a _____ thy servants are come." [3]
6. "Which we have seen with our, _____ which we have looked upon." [1]
7. "Put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our _____." [1]
8. "Which was preached to _____ which is under heaven." [2]
9. "Christ _____ forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up?" [1]
10. "He said unto them, Hove ye _____ the Holy Ghost?" [1]
11. "The Lord _____ up the water of the Red sea for you." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

The Man of Sorrows

I adore the love that led Him to be made sin for me. There was the full testing of the love that carried Him through all. It is deeply instructive, though very dreadful to see there what man is. What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him and fled! In a judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood, and gives Him over to the people! In a priest? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, "Away with Him, away with Him" Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that one Man was not only right, but in divine love He was going through it all!

Present Possession of Eternal Life

Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that the believer on the Son of God has present possession of eternal life and that he should know it. Let us simply hearken to what God says to us about it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I-le that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment]; but is passed From death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me bath everlasting life" (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).

And again it says, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life." Observe: "hath given to us eternal life"—"and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son bath life; and he that bath 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" (1 John 5:11-13).

And further it says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shalt appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:3-4). The activity of this life which is given us is also spoken of, as for example. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).

Now we ask, Can any language more forcibly convey the truth that the believer on the Son of God already has the present possession of everlasting life? It is not a mending of the old nature, but receiving from God a new nature—eternal life. There is no uncertainty as to this. "God hath given to us eternal life," and we are to know that we have it.

If it be said there are scriptures which contradict this, we cannot for a moment admit the statement. That there may be difficulty in the minds of the uninstructed in divine things, in explaining some other scriptures consistently with this view, is another thing, but Scripture never contradicts itself. It is God's Word, and to those who wait on Him to reveal His own mind by the Spirit through the Scriptures, the apparent contradictions become only the occasions for the Spirit of God to unfold more fully and profitably to our souls "the deep things of God."

If it be said that eternal life is looked at in Scripture as that for which we hope, no one could contradict it; for we read, "In hope of eternal life," and Timothy is admonished to "lay hold on eternal life," as if our having eternal life was an entirely future thing. And so it is, as to our bodies, when the fullest accomplishment of it is the question. For we are objects of God's grace and salvation as to spirit, soul and body. Now by faith our souls are the sphere of divine and gracious blessing, so that, as to our souls, we have eternal life, present salvation and redemption. But as to our bodies, we wait for the Savior to change our vile bodies and to fashion them like unto His glorious body. We look forward, then, to have "the redemption of our body." It is in this sense we understand our having at "the end everlasting life.

If, then, Christ is your life, you have eternal life. This is not merely being sure of it at some future time, but as to your soul, you are born of God; you have the present possession of everlasting life.

Ever- lasting surely does not mean for a day, or a year, but forever. It is Christ in you, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Faith lays hold on eternal life and is conscious of having to do with what is eternal, in contrast with that which is temporal. Timothy was therefore not only enjoined to flee from the love of money and such like, but to "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

C. H. Mackintosh

Bible Challenger-03-March Answers V.11

1. A ll Matt. 18:29
2. T hine handmaid 1 Sam. 25:24
3. H airs Luke 7:38
4. I am the first Rev. 1:17
5. S ervant Rev. 19:10
6. F loor Ruth 3:14
7. E very man Acts 4:35
8. E xcepted 1 Car. 15:27
9. T ears Esther 8:3

'Then she went in, and fell AT HIS FEET, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out" (2 Kings 4:37).

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverb 1683

Chapter 11:1-10 PRO 11:1-10

1. "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight." It is not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat their neighbors (though it be only in a little matter) but extremely hateful and detestable to the great Lord and Governor of the world: as on the other side, exactly just and equal dealing in all our commerce one with another, is highly pleasing to Him.
2. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." Do not entertain an haughty conceit of thyself, nor insult 'gloat] over others; for the folly of this appears, in drawing along with it that contempt and disgrace, which above all things such men would avoid: therefore be humble and modest; the wisdom of which is manifest, from the universal respect which it gains everywhere.
3. "The integrity of upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." The integrity of those that uprightly observe the rules of Virtue, is their highest prudence, and safest guide, through all manner of difficulties and dangers: but the crafty wiliness of perfidious men, who will be tied unto no laws, is mere folly; and shall be so far From preserving them, that it shall prove their certain destruction.
4. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." Heaps of wealth, amassed by extortion or covetousness, shall as little avail as subtlety and cunning, when God in

His righteous displeasure shall punish the world by a common calamity: but justice, accompanied with mercy (as hath been observed already), will befriend him that hath constantly practiced them, and rescue him even when there is no hope of safety.

5. "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness." Remember this (and be not nauseated at the repetition of it, for it is a weighty truth) that there is no surer guide to direct men in the plain way to safety, or any other good, than a sincere and impartial observance of all God's laws: but that the wicked shall perish by those very impious courses (of lies, breach of promises, perjuries, and oppression) whereby they think to greatness or to secure themselves.

6. "The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness." Remember it I say (for it cannot be too often inculcated) that the virtue of unfeigned and entirely upright men shall be their preservative when they are in danger: but they that are governed wholly by their own depraved desires and interests, shall be entangled and inevitably perish in their own naughty contrivances.

7. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth." Do not imagine therefore that they have the advantage of others, who are loose from all laws. They may seem so to have for the present; but beside what I have now said, it must be considered that death (and how suddenly doth that sometime overtake them) utterly destroys all their projects and hopes: whatsoever they expected to accomplish by their riches, or their power, or their friends, it perisheth together with them.

8. "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead." Nay, before that it is frequently seen, that a just man is unexpectedly drawn out of those straits and difficulties wherein he was perplexed, and the wicked (who perhaps brought him into them) takes the place which he hath left; falling into those very distresses, from which the just is happily freed.

9. "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered." And more than this, a good man hath this advantage by his wisdom, that it sometimes instructs many how to evade those snares, which the profane hypocrite, with counterfeit professions of friendship; lays to destroy his neighbors.

10. "When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting."

We see also in this how amiable virtue and how hateful vice is, that the inhabitants of a city generally leap for joy when good men prosper and are advanced unto power: but are so far from pitying the downfall of the wicked, that they shout when they behold them tumbling from the high places to which they were raised.

The Holy Spirit makes us feel the love of the Father,

He brings us into liberty

by showing us not that we are little,

but how great God is.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the importance of the words, "Lay hold on eternal life" 11 Tim. 6:19)? And what does "this commandment" refer to in verse 14?

ANSWER: This passage can be read, "Lay hold on what is really life." It is in contrast with the mind being set on present things. From verses 17 to 19 those who are rich are addressed to not let their minds be set on their riches, nor trust to their riches, but to the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. It shows their privilege to use their money in view of eternity. By this means they will lay hold of what is really life in the sense of real enjoyment of life in communion with God.

Verse 14 refers to the good confession Timothy had confessed before many witnesses. He is to keep it without spot and unrebukable, so that in the day of Christ's appearing, the day of manifestation, it will have His approval.

He Loved Them Unto the End

W. Potter

These precious words are found in John 13:1, "Jesus...having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Most of us know that "to the end" there means on and on, through every day_ That is, He has loved and loves us with a love that nothing can stop; nothing can make Him cease to love us. We are loved with a love that will never cease to love us!

It is a little remarkable too, in that connection, that we find a passage in Hebrews 13 which says, "Let brotherly love continue." What does that mean? Just exactly what it says: that it is to continue—never to cease. Our brethren cannot act worse toward us, nor we toward them, than the disciples did toward the Lord. "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). This means that we are to love our brethren in the same way—the same manner—on and on, through and through in spite of everything, The way in which this love has to manifest itself, of course, has to do with the way in which others conduct themselves we find John lying on the Savior's breast, and we find Peter denying Him with oaths and cursing. He loved them both with the same love, but that love had to manifest itself according to the ways of each. I speak of the principle now. Of John it is written: "He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?" (John 13:25). Here is communion.

What about Peter's denying Him with oaths and cursing? Is there communion there? Oh, no. The cock crows and he remembers the words that Jesus spake unto him, and their eyes meet. What is the result? The poor failing one went out and wept bitterly. The Lord's love to Peter was not one bit less

when he was denying Him than at any other time.

I was thinking a little of Martha's service to the Lord; it had become a burden (Luke 10:40-42). When service to the Lord becomes a burden, it loses its worth in His sight. And when does it become a burden? When love to Himself is not the spring, so we hear Martha saying, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." She wants help. Her service has become a burden, because He is not known as He should be. Though in a sense He is the object of service, nevertheless it is a burden.

Then there is that wonderful servant of God, Elijah. It is very interesting to note when we first meet him and when we leave him. He comes before us first directly from the presence of the Lord. Out of a hidden place he comes forth to speak; no one ever heard of him before, according to the record given in Scripture. He comes before us in this way: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1). A passage from the New Testament tells us he had been in communion with God about it (James 5:17). It was his love to the Lord's people and his love to the Lord that led him to say, in substance, "Lord, if nothing else will bring the people to their senses—to a sense of their

sin—withhold the rain." It was a hard thing to ask, yet it was love that led to it. He got the answer.

Elijah goes on, and after a while we find him leaving this world, and oh, what a departure! He is carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Next we see him, not going to heaven, but in the glory itself, and there with the Lord and with Moses (Matt. 17:3). But what preceded his going to heaven that way? He was a man overcome with evil. What! you say, a man that went to heaven in a chariot of fire and was seen on the mount of glory and was in the glory with the Lord and Moses was overcome of evil? Yes, he was, and there is nothing more easy than for a godly heart to be overcome of evil if there is not the continuance of love. How was he overcome of evil? What do we find him doing? Making intercession against Israel (Rom. 11:2-3)! "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." Then he asked to die. He was overcome of evil in that way.

We are told not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21). That love with which we are loved and the love with which we are to love is the love of Christ—it never can be overcome of evil. Do we not feel the danger of being overcome with evil, of being cast down when we see evil coming in like a flood?

Now in John 13 it says, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Then what did He do? He laid aside His garments, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He had girded Himself. Instead of being all carried away with the thought that now he was going to leave the world and depart to the Father, He was thinking of them. He says, as it were, I know I will be up there, but I will not be happy without their fellowship and communion, and without My services I cannot have it, so I will just suit Myself to their need. I will take a position—an attitude—toward them that will maintain them in fellowship with Me while absent from them, until they need not that kind of service any more.

His is a love that never for a moment forgets its object. Oh, what a humbling, blessed truth! How we feel more and more our utter unworthiness of it! Nothing humbles like grace—like love. That is the love with which we are loved.

After He had rendered them that service—a type of the service in which He is now engaged in order to sustain us in communion with Himself, which His love cannot do without—He sat down. All this took place in that upper chamber.

This is the only place that I remember that the Lord calls the attention of the disciples to the fact that He is their Lord and Master. "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:12-14). Never had He said this before. Then He says, "If ye know these things"—what? "Happy are ye"? No, it does not say that. There is a little word of two letters in there that is important: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Do what? Wash one another's feet.

Now we all know, if we know what communion with Christ is, that there is no such thing as going on with Him without His doing for us what He did for His disciples. It is utterly impossible for us to restore our souls. "He restoreth my soul." We are dependent on Him for the restoration of the soul as well as for its salvation. We cannot get on without this service—we cannot get on without the

Lord. There is another thing: we cannot get on with one another without knowing how to do it with one another.

He says distinctly, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." And how often have we felt the communion broken—a cloud between. How is it going to be removed? There is just one way, and that is to put the feet into His hands. That is all. We will never get the cloud removed in any other way. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Just so, unless there is this service one to another, there is no going on with one another. Think of the love with which we are loved: the love of Christ.

What the heart feels the need of is personal communion with Christ. What He looks for and values above everything else is personal devotedness to Himself; no amount of service can ever compensate, can ever make up for a lack of communion with Himself. If there is devotedness, there will be communion; if there is communion, there will be service.

Love Directs Itself to Its Object

The disciples indeed had their joy in Christ while He was down here, but when they saw Him ascend, He drew their spirit after Him. As the compass needle always points to the north, so love directs itself to its object. We are to set our minds on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and where together with Him we are partakers of the heavenly calling.

When the Lord passed forty days on the earth after His resurrection, the disciples may have been agitated and unsettled not knowing what He would do, but when He led them out to Bethany and they saw Him ascending to where He now is—to the presence of the Father—the scene of their joy was plainly in heaven. Knowing what had occurred, they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." What was the secret of their joy? Was it in anything on earth? No indeed, and so it is now with each one of us.

The path where our Savior has gone,
Has led up to His Father and God,
To the place where He's now on the throne,
And His strength shall be ours on the road.

Editorial: Who Is Lord of My Life?

There are two races of man. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). All are of the first race, that is, born of the first man. Those who are born of God are in the race of the second man. Notice this verse, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1).

Are you there? In Peter's first epistle he tells us how to be born again. He writes, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"

(1 Peter 1:23).

Peter both confessed his sins and confessed Jesus (the second man) as Lord in Luke 5:8. Also in Luke 23, one of the malefactors who was crucified beside Jesus turned and said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." When Paul was converted in Acts 9, he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Today, all those who have confessed Jesus as Lord have the blessed, precious privilege, position and responsibility to continue each day to own Him as Lord in profession, obedience and service. In this service we are not alone, but rather we have many fellow servants, and each of them is under the same Lord. Our solemn responsibility is not to judge the servant of another, nor to interfere between his conscience and his heavenly master (Lord). "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

As servants of our gracious Lord, we can commit the judgment of our stewardship and service to Him. Paul could say, "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:4-5).

In keeping the unity of the Spirit in this day of so much ruin, we must own the lordship of Christ. "I therefore, the prisoner, of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

As to Christ's lordship over all and His riches toward all for salvation we read, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12-13).

In this year of 1996, as another millennium is winding down, what a privilege it is for us to own Jesus as Lord by confession and in practice. It is still the day of grace and He is such a gracious Lord. Peter's first preaching to the Gentiles showed the importance of this as he proclaimed:

"Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36).

It is written, "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). Ed.

Christ

We are the present companions of a rejected, absent, unworldly Christ. We recognize the world around us (which has seen and hated Him and His Father, as the Lord Himself says) as morally incurable, awaiting the judgment of His coming day. We look to meet Him in the air, when the hour of His good pleasure to that end shall come, and when that is to be we know not. And we reckon upon returning with Him, first to the execution of judgment, and then to the sharing with Him, in manifestation, the glory of His dominion in the world to come. These things form and define the proper attitude of the saints of this dispensation. It is easy to apprehend this, but to realize it we need simple energetic faith in the power of the Holy Spirit—the faith that cherishes single-heartedness to Christ, and the love for Himself that ever keeps a welcome for Him in the heart. J. G. Bellett

Divine Love in the Gospel and in the Believer

J. N. Darby

The Apostle in 1 John 4:7 returns to the great doctrine of the whole Epistle. It is not here so much the great truth that sets the soul before God, but the communion we have when we are there. We see the difference between Paul and John and that while Paul sets the church as in Christ before God, opening out the counsels of grace, John brings out the nature of God in the saints. It is not so much the ground of that which brought the soul to God—righteousness (although he does speak of this too), but the character of the life that is communicated, the life which is in God the Father, derived through the Son. It is first given in Christ, and then to be manifested in the saints. The traits of God are brought through the Christian, and this is what is particularly shown in John.

There is also another thing—not only a nature and capacity to enjoy God, but the Holy Spirit dwelling in us gives us the power of enjoyment that there may be no vacillation or uncertainty. He grounds the testimony on the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the capacity of enjoying the source of the life is by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

God is love, and this is first openly seen at the cross of Christ; then in the new nature we have a capacity to enjoy that love. But the fear must be taken away, because fear has torment, and torment is not enjoyment, and thus he shows what removes the fear: "Perfect love casteth out fear." If it be asked, How do you know God loves you? Oh, I reply, have a certain and constant proof of that in the gift of His Son; and then besides that I have the daily and hourly enjoyment of God as my Father, and I know it because I am enjoying it. I may prove to another the love of God by certain acts, such as the gift of His Son, which is an open manifestation of God's love. But this does not take away from the daily enjoyment of God, the capacity for which I get in the new nature and by the power of the Spirit.

It is remarkable how the Apostle guards from mysticism by bringing the mind back to the plain statement of the gospel: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." In the seventh verse he begins by saying, "Beloved, let us love one another." Here we have the Love of God in exercise in the new nature, and the characteristic of this nature is to recognize it in another. If I have got this divine nature, I cannot but love it in another. I may have many prejudices to overcome, but there is the attractive power in the thing itself. I do not speak of it as a mere duty; it is there in the nature, and being divine, it is much above angels, although they are higher as to creation.

We need something more than the new nature, because the new nature is a dependent nature and therefore wants something else. Christ, when down here, lived a dependent life in one sense ("I live by the Father"). The old man sets himself up and pretends to be independent, but all the while he is under the power of Satan. But the new nature is a dependent nature and says, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Life in Christ leans on God's power and delights to do so. The Holy Spirit is the power, "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," and that is the full

blessing both in the individual and in the church of God.

Although we have the new nature, we want also the power of the Holy Spirit to remove the obstacles to its display. Labor will not do. You may labor on the cold snow, but the sun must shine before it melts. So the Holy Spirit is needed to dissolve the thick ice of our hearts and melt away that which is in us to obscure and hinder its fuller manifestation. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

When I have got this nature, I am born of God; I am brought into a position to refer everything up to God. For the nature we get from God has God for the object of that new nature to act upon. When I see the traits of this new nature, I say, The man is born of God. I see love in natural affection, but here it is in a divine sense. In natural affection selfishness is basically the ground of it all, but in the saint he that loves is born of God.

While selfishness is the spring of everything outside of God, we find in a soul that is born of God another principle which takes a man clear out of himself. A man makes himself a fortune by some new invention that makes the world more comfortable, and what is this but selfishness? Now all that gives an impulse to the progress of the world is selfishness, and here is the difference, because we are in a world where all have to follow our various occupations and callings. In a Christian it is not selfishness but love. He is born of God, and love is the principle of God's nature. It may be very feeble in me, but am I to be satisfied that it should remain so? No. Whatever is born of God came down from God and returns to God again, therefore be ye "followers of God, as dear children."

This perfect love came down from God that it might return to God again, for who did Christ come to glorify in this but His Father? All that Christ did returned to God a sweet-smelling savor or else it would have been lost. There are many beautiful qualities in a creature of God, but do they return back to God again? No; then it becomes a sin. I get a good thing; I enjoy and leave God out and this is man's sin.

It may be a great deal of selfishness under that which outwardly appears like liberality. But you will see a Christian help his brother and look up to God as doing it to God because he loves God. But if he helps him and says to himself, I have done well, it is not love it is self-righteousness. The new nature has God for its source and God as its object; the new nature acts in us like God, so that others can see it, but then it knows God: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," and it is a great comfort to say in everything I have found God.

Then mark there is something else in verse 8. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." There is a knowledge of God, but without the possession of the nature of God, there is no power to apprehend His love. You may see His works and say, There must be a God, but is this knowing Him? I must have God's nature to know Him, because none can know love but by loving, and he who thus knows Him will apprehend Him.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us." This is no abstract notion about love; it is not said merely, "In this was manifested the love of God," but, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us." Man's mind cannot measure God; mind can measure mind or thoughts, but mind cannot measure love, for love is only known by being loved. If man's mind were a competent judge of what God should be, God would not be God. And how must this love be found? In a most

humbling way (and so much the better).

The soul must come in as wanting this love, for if it can in any other way come in, it does not want God. The moment any soul finds its need of God, there and then God is waiting to meet its need. It was so in the case of the Syrophenician woman. What brought forth that word of the Lord, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt"? The great faith is knowing my great need, and counting on God's power to meet it. It may be vague; it was so in the woman who came into the house, but still there was faith.

When I find that manifested in God which meets my need, and receive it as a poor needy one, that is faith. I never get into the place of God's meeting my need, till I know God is God, and I am a sinner. When we are in our place, we shall find God acting towards us in His. When I am brought down to the sense that the only thing I have is sin, then God can act. "When we were yet with strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." God acted in due time.

God being the doer, He does it in the perfectness of His own love and time. I can stand before God and talk to sinners and say, I know God in a way that angels do not know Him, which things angels desire to look into: God's love is toward us. I do not say "me," but "us," taking all in who believe the love. That little word "us"—how it rings on our ears, by the power of the Holy Spirit putting us in the full consciousness of the favor of God toward us that we might live through Him. It was manifested when we were dead. Not only was God's love manifested where it was needed, but at the time it was needed, when we were dead.

Nothing of man was needed to add to the perfectness of this love and of its manifestation. If I examine my own heart, I cannot find it out. I know more of God's heart than of my own, for mine is "deceitful above all things." The best man upon earth will be the first to own this. But God has manifested His love; not only is it there, but it is manifested. I do not get the full character of God to my soul till I see it in the cross. For what was in man was nothing but sin, and there that sin was met; there was none between God and His Son. And if He was alone in His work, this is a proof of what God has done in my circumstances of death. He sent His Son that I might live through Him, but my sins being all forgiven, I see there is eternal life for me. He being the propitiation for sins, I find all mine are gone and life is come.

After such a manifestation of God's love, let us not be thinking of our love to God. Who am I that I should be coupling His love with mine! The moment I begin to think of my love to God, that moment it ceases; it is gone like the manna that had worms and stank.

Heaven will be when I have entirely forgotten myself and am filled with God. That very same love which will fill heaven was manifested in the cross. God's love is not exhausted, though my need is great and my failures many.

In verse 11, the Apostle, having given the proof of God's love, goes on to the exercise of it in us while down here. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." And this principle we find in other parts of the Word (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). I cannot know God by seeing Him, but (John 1:18) the only begotten Son, the One who knew what God's love was, has told it out. The Son who dwelt in the Father's bosom, who knew Him in the intimacy of Son, and who enjoyed His love without alloy tells it to me as He knew and enjoyed it in Him.

In the Epistle of John, he goes a step further; it is communicated livingly to us—true in Him and in You. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," such is the source of it; the enjoyment is by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not my love perfected in God, but His in me, and I know (being in Him that is minute) that I can never get out of it. It is not that I am infinite, but that I am in Him that is so.

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." Here it is communion, not merely power; the qualities of His nature are, as it were, wrought in me. Angels know not this joy. Why is this? Because they have not the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. But God has given us of His Spirit because we are members of Christ, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

In verse 14, observe here that the Apostle gets back to the person of the Son, but it is in a more advanced state of soul as knowing Him who sent the Son. "We have seen and do testify." It was a known and enjoyed love. While Paul gives us the church and counsels of God, John speaks of the nature in which God is known. And what is the effect of this? Worship, because the highest thing we ever enjoy is the knowledge of God, as the little hymn says, "What joy 'twill be with Christ to reign."

Look at the scene in Revelation: God is on His throne and the elders are on thrones around. Can anything be higher than this? Yes! they fall down and worship before Him that sits upon the throne and cast their crowns before Him. Then, when the Apostle realized the privilege of getting up to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, he returns to the very simplest truth. "The Father sent the Son... the Savior of the world." Thus the true saint who knows most the heart of God is the best evangelist. The father in Christ will be the most careful to take account of the weakest babe in Christ.

Oh, the littleness of our narrow hearts! What difficulty we have in believing what He is, and just because it is so simple! May our hearts be like wax to receive the impress of Him every time He speaks to us, if we cannot learn all about Him at once.

In the Garden

In the Garden of Gethsemane we have a threefold picture of man:

- In the disciples, of man in his infirmity.
- In Judas, of man in his hatred and wickedness.
- In Jesus, of man in perfection.

Time in the New Testament

We believe there is no question but that Roman time was reckoned the same as ours now. What might appear a discrepancy as to the hours of the crucifixion is in perfect harmony, supposing John to give Roman time and the others Jewish time. Indeed there is much to favor the thought that John usually used Roman time. In John 4:6, "the sixth hour," or 12:00 noon, would be a most unlikely time, but 6:00 p.m. (Roman time) is much more probable.

Then in verse 52, had this been 1:00 p.m. (Jewish time), there would have been time for the nobleman to return from Cana to Capernaum. But if it were 7:00 p.m. (Roman time), this accounts for the nobleman's remaining all night.

If, then, John, who wrote his gospel so much later than the others, used Roman time, the case stands thus: the trial of our blessed Lord was concluded about the sixth hour—6:00 a.m. (Roman time and our time; John 19:14). He was crucified the third hour, Jewish time—our time would be 9:00 a.m. (Mark 15:25). There was darkness over the land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour (Jewish time), or from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. (our time), as recorded in Mark 15:33-34; Matt. 27:45; Luke 23:44. Thus, the trial closed about 6:00 a.m.; the crucifixion was at 9:00 a.m.; the darkness was from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

It is not stated what took place from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., but if we compare John 18:28 with ch. 19:14 it appears that our blessed Lord was waiting to be crucified While the Jews kept the very Passover feast that pointed to Him! Truly they knew not what they were doing. B. F. Pinkerton

The Lamb's Wife

by G. V. Wigram

In the Revelation, the Lord is much spoken of as "the Lamb" —a title which suggests the thought of suffering and atonement. But in this book of the Revelation, He is neither suffering nor doing the work of atonement. All that is over and perfected as we know; He is rather exercising Himself in His strength, judging and conquering. This may, therefore, at first surprise us that He should so generally, in the progress of the action in His book, be called the Lamb." Like all else in the oracles of God, this is only beautiful and perfect in its way and season when considered a little.

Redemption is conducted by either blood or power. The blood of our Redeemer, or our kinsman, acts toward God, as I may express it; His power acts against Satan. The blood of Christ ransoms us from the righteous judgment or demand of God; the power of Christ rescues us from the captivity of Satan.

This is sure and simple, but then, there could be no rescue or deliverance from Satan if there had not been a ransom given or paid to God. Hence it is that our Redeemer gets His title to go forth and deliver from the blood which He had shed to atone: thus in the Revelation where He is acting as our Redeemer by power, He is ever kept in sight as "the Lamb."

We are all familiar in our thoughts with such truth as this. The cross of Christ sustains the inheritance. The inheritance is a purchased thing as well as a rescued or delivered thing. There is no recovery or regeneration of this ruined scene, except on the ground and title of the expiation accomplished at Calvary. In a purer sense than perhaps it was once said, we may say, "No cross, no crown"—in symbol of which the royal rights of Christ were written in every language of the nations on the cursed tree.

In the action, therefore, of rescuing the inheritance from Satan, the usurper, and then reigning over it as regained or delivered, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as "the Lamb," the One who had already made atonement. Or as redeeming by power on the ground of having redeemed by blood, He is introduced at the opening of the action of this book in the combined characters of "the lion of the tribe of Judah" and the "Lamb as it had been slain" (ch. 5). But further, the Lord Jesus in this book is judging the nations as well as rescuing the inheritance from Satan. He is visiting the world for its iniquity and unbelief.

Such an action as this He is to conduct as the One who had been once despised and rejected. Scripture abundantly tells us this. It is the refused King that is to call forth the rebel citizens to have them slain before Him; it is the disallowed stone that is to fall and grind to powder (Luke 19; Matt. 21). Jesus is to be honored where once He was put to shame; He is to be rich where once He was poor; He is to be enthroned in strength where once He was crucified in weakness. The despised Son of Man is to judge, to avenge and to conquer.

All this is clear, sure and simple in the light of the oracles of God. Therefore, we may say that as far as the action of this book is upon man, judging him (though Jew or Greek) or visiting him with wrath or plague, the action is conducted by the rejected Christ. As far as the action is upon Satan, redeeming the inheritance out of his hand and quelling his power in this scene of his usurpation, it is conducted by Christ who made atonement. The Lord does not judge man because He had been the Lamb slain for sinners, but because, as the righteous witness for God in the world, the world had rejected and crucified Him. But He does overthrow the might of the great enemy and rescues the inheritance out of his hand, because He had paid the ransom price of that inheritance by His precious blood.

All this the wayfaring man may read in God's own perfect and sufficient Book. All this gives the Lord Jesus, in the Revelation where He is judging man and answering the way of the usurper, that title which at once expresses Him to us as the rejected One and as the atoning One, for we find that His title "the Lamb" in this book at times connects itself with the first of these ideas and at other times with the second of them. (See chapters 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9-10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9.)

This may easily and naturally remind us of that well-known chapter, Isaiah 53, where the Lord Jesus is looked at as "the Lamb," but at times treated there as the victim whose blood cleanses. And at other times He is looked at as the One whom man was hating and despising.

As we find the Lord as "the Lamb" in this book, so do we find the church as "the Lamb's wife." If I recollect aright, it is the only title in the course of this book which is given to the church. And no doubt there is a correspondence in these titles. He is "the Lamb" and she is "the Lamb's wife." This latter title is to be interpreted according to the same rules which have already led us to interpret the former.

We have seen the Lord is "the Lamb" as having made atonement to God and as having been rejected by men. Accordingly, "the Lamb's wife" is the church as connected with the virtue of the blood of Christ and also with His rejection in the world. It tells us that we are purchased, saved and reconciled, but it tells us also that we are strangers in the world and a rejected, heavenly people, companions of a despised Jesus. Had we but affections, we might surely say that this is both comforting and serious truth.

Our character as saints, according to this truth, is lost when we practically deny either the one or the other of these things. That is, we do not in living power present the due image of "the Lamb's wife" when we either live in the bondage of the rudiments and ordinances of a fleshly, worldly sanctuary, or when we affect citizenship in the earth, forming alliance with the kingdoms of the world or in acting according to the course of it. By the first of these things we practically deny that we are purchased and saved by Christ: by the second We refuse the thought that we are rejected with Him. We do not show forth our union with "the Lamb."

Had we but affections, again I say, how we should value such a calling! Great dignity, moral dignity is conferred on the church by giving her, after this manner, association with Christ in the day of His rejection. She will be the companion and associate of His glory and power by and by, but she is now joined with Him in this age of His rejection and weakness in the world. This is something of a deeper character, as our hearts one with another so well understand.

Supposing one were to come to us in the day of gladness of his heart and ask us to rejoice with him, we should feel at once that he was treating us with a measure of confidence that was very gratifying to us. But supposing that another were to come in the day of his sorrow and seek from us that we would feel for him and enter into the secret of his trouble with him, we should be very sensible of this that he was treating us with a still larger measure of confidence, and we should be still more gratified.

The heart knows all this very well. And thus it is with Christ and the church. The church is called to be the companion of the Lord in that age of the world which is marked by His scorn, rejection and weakness in it. This is her characteristic. She knows the reconciliation perfectly and has peace with God, but she knows Christ's place in the world that has refused Him in the midst of a generation that has mistaken Him and His glory altogether. She is called to know Him in His sorrow and rejection. When we consider who He is, this is the highest moral dignity that any creature could sustain. It is just as her place and condition in the system of coming glories will be the loftiest and richest that any creature could fill, such is the bride, "the Lamb's wife." I mean characteristically, not assuming to speak her worth and honors in detail. But such she is in the character of her calling.

We may catch the bright idea of such a calling and marvel and adore the grace and wisdom that have designed it. But while doing this we may feel that we have to look out beyond the measure of our own poor heart for capacity to prize and enjoy such a mystery, We have to look far beyond our own poor ways for anything like a worthy image or reflection of it in the joy and power and service which ought to accompany the faith of it.

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 11:11-20PRO 11:11-20

11. "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrow by the mouth of the wicked." Men of unbiased virtue make a city flourish by the blessings they procure for it from heaven, by their prayers, by their prudent advice, their pious admonitions, and their constant study of the public good; but the wicked, by their blasphemies, their evil counsels, their pestilent maxims, their impious doctrines, whereby they corrupt men's manners, utterly subvert the good estate thereof.

12. "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace." It is a great weakness to speak contemptuously of any man, or to render him ridiculous (for no man is so mean but he is sensible of desposal, and may find ways to show his resentment), therefore a thoroughly prudent person, whatsoever he thinks of others, saith nothing to their reproach.

13. "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." A man whose trade it is to ingratiate himself by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have entrusted him: but a man whose mind is steadfastly fixed to be true and faithful to his neighbors, will study (though they have not desired him) to hide those things, which being known may prove injurious to them.

14. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Where prudent counselors are wanting a nation goes to wrack, as certainly as a ship cloth without a pilot: nor is one sufficient; but then a country is safe when there are many wise men to govern affairs that if one fail, there may be enow [enough that] still remain; or what one or two sees not, others may be able to discern.

15. "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure." He is in great danger to be undone who stands bound to pay the debts of another man, especially of a stranger whose ability and honesty is unknown to him: and the way to be secure from that fear is not only to avoid such engagements oneself, but to abhor to see other men enter into them.

16. "A gracious woman retaineth honor: and strong men retain riches." Beauty and virtue in a woman advances her to honor; as formidable strength and power in men advances them to riches: and as their principal care is to keep their treasures, so hers should be to preserve her reputation.

17. "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh." He that hath an heart to be kind and bountiful unto his neighbors, will have this advantage by it, among many others, that he will not deny what is fit and convenient to himself: whereas the covetous and hard-hearted, as he hath no regard to his nearest relations, so he pinches his own flesh by his sordid way of living.

18. "The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." He thinks perhaps hereby to raise himself, or his posterity to greatness, but like all other wicked men, will be deceived in his expectations; for the event of his actions never answers the design: but virtuous men shall infallibly reap the fruit of their pious, just and charitable labors.

19. "As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death." Thus God orders it in His providence, and thus it is in the nature of things that virtue tends to make men happy: but the more eagerly any man pursues an evil thing, the more he is bent upon his own destruction.

20. "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are His delight." Of all other men they are most odious to the Lord who pretend to justice, kindness and truth; but study and devise how to compass their ends, though it be by the wickedest means: as on the contrary, they whose exact observance of the rules of righteousness in the whole course of their lives, testify the integrity of their hearts, are highly in His favor and love.

Bible Challenger-05-May V.11

The first letter of each of the Following responses (Bible quotations with one or more words to complete) will form the title which Jehovah of the Old Testament often used in referring to Himself as the all-powerful One. Answers will be found in the book of Zechariah. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.

1. "Joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore _____ and peace." [3]
2. "Come to pass, if ye will diligently _____ of the Lord." [3]
3. "I will _____ of that land in one day." [3]
4. "They shall _____ with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise." [3]
5. "There shall yet _____ dwell in the streets of Jerusalem." [5]
6. "I was jealous for her with great _____." [1]
7. "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My _____ shall be built in it." [1]
8. "According to, _____ so hath He dealt with us." [2]
9. "Behold, I will _____ from the east country." [3]
10. "Execute, _____ and show mercy and compassions" [2]
11. "Into the house of him that _____ by My name." [2]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-04-April Answers V.11

We believe John 4:42

Earnest heed Heb. 2:1

Heal Luke 4:23

Another Mark 14:58

Very For country Josh. 9:9

Eyes 1 John 1:1

Heads 1 Kings 20:31

Every creature Col. 1:23

Abide John 12:34

Received Acts 19:2

Died Josh. 2:10

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for WE HAVE HEARD that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23).

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the scriptural meaning of the word "prophet"?

ANSWER: The prophets of God did not necessarily predict future events. Some did so, notably Isaiah, whose Spirit-given predictions are exceptionally rich and full. But many others such as Elijah dealt exclusively with existing conditions among the people. It is a simple rule in Bible study to examine the Holy Spirit's first mention of any matter, for we thereby learn its general significance throughout the Book of God. Someone has said: "God graciously hangs up the key just inside the door."

We first meet the word "prophet" in Genesis 20:7. It is applied to Abraham! In the teaching of the New Testament two antediluvian witnesses—Abel and Enoch—are called prophets (Luke 11:50-51; Jude 14). But it is nevertheless true that the first man specially called a prophet in the Old Testament is Abraham.

Let us seek to understand the Holy Spirit's use of the term. Apart from divine guidance, Abraham went down to sojourn in the Philistine city of Gerar. To avert possible danger to himself he said of Sarah, "She is my sister." Abimelech the King, attracted by her, took her into his house, but God intervened, saying in a dream, "Restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for

thee, and thou shalt live." Remarkable, certainly, for the whole story suggests that at that time there was more pious fear of God in the mind of Abimelech the Philistine than in Abraham the Hebrew—"the friend of God." Yet Abraham was a prophet, and possessed intercessory influence such as Abimelech had not!

Incidentally, we may learn from this that even when our spiritual condition is low, our privileges as saints and priests are not withdrawn from us, although for the time being we are not in the enjoyment of them and are unable to exercise them for the blessing of others.

Abraham neither spoke nor wrote predictive matter, so far as Scripture speaks, although when in normal condition his spiritual vision enabled him to look far ahead and see with joy the day of Christ (John 8:56). A prophet was simply a man who had the mind of God and was able to utter it. Thus in Psalm 105:15 other patriarchs are called prophets as well as Abraham. They were men in touch with God and could give forth His mind as no others could in their day.

The words of the woman of Samaria in John 4:19 will help us here. She said to the mysterious Stranger who was conversing with her, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." Yet He had not spoken to her either of future glories or of coming judgments, but His unexpected words, concerning her five husbands and the man with whom she was then living, made her feel that He was speaking to her directly from God. Indeed, He was God manifested in flesh, although she had no sense of this mighty fact at that moment.

There were prophets also in the New Testament (Eph. 2:20; 4:11). There was no resemblance between their ministry and that of such men as Isaiah and Jeremiah. It was not the future that occupied them; it was theirs to give forth the mind of God concerning the new wonderful work in Christianity, the Scriptures being not then complete. We even read in Acts 21:9 of four women—daughters of Philip the evangelist—"which did prophesy." But their service would be rendered in private (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence

Proverbs 4:23PRO 4:23

A proud heart

A backsliding heart

A foolish heart

An impenitent heart

An evil heart

A double hear'

A hardened hurl

An obstinate ham

A wicked hears

A deceived heart |OR a contrite heart

OR a rejoicing head

OR a wise heart

OR a faithful heart

OR a dean heart

OR one bean

OR a lender heart

OR a willing heart

OR a pure heart

OR a True heart

|(Psa. 101:5; Psa. 51:17).

(Nov. 14:14; Psa. 13:5).

(Rom, 1:21; Job 9:4).

(Rom. 2:5; Neh. 9:8).

(Heb. 3:12; Psa. 51:101).

(Psa. 12:2; 1 Chron. 12:38).

(Ex. 9:34; 2 Kings 22:191).

(Deut. 2:30; Ex. 35:5).

(Pout 15:9; Psa. 24:41).

(James 1:26; Heb. 10).|

N. Berry

Stand Fast

If ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly minded and divinely taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned, poor and despised, but like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, count for nothing, but works which are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value. But the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within and record the lapse of time. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God path before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Now is the time for works and for overcoming.

Editorial: Practicing Pastors

The privilege and opportunity to be a shepherd, or pastor, at the present time are unequaled in all the past. There are so many growing up today who know so little what it is to be, or even how to be, a Christian in practice as well as profession. "Feed the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5:2.) is very simple instruction which all of us can understand and should try to follow. To protect, to encourage and to guide in the way of the Lord is very important at this time, when the enemy of our souls works so furiously to deceive and pile derision and reproach upon Christ and the Christian.

After Peter had learned that he could not trust in himself, he was ready and graciously given by the Lord Jesus the responsibility to feed and to shepherd His sheep. We, too, must learn not to trust in ourselves. Of what good is it for us to make promises as to what we will do? It is written, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Pray. 28:26).

The giving of one law was enough to expose our first parents, and we are no better than they. Another example for our learning, so that we can better teach and care for others, is given in Exodus 19:8. There a covenant with an "if" attached is suggested to Israel, and all the people glibly promised, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." We know how quickly the law was broken and ruin came in.

Do we need to be discouraged and give up? No, there is One we can trust, and we have His Word. In 1 Kings 8:56 it is written, "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise." Let us press on in shepherd work, which is so very necessary now.

Shepherding carries with its labor a special reward. Here is what Peter writes about that: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre [money], but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Much reward may not come to us here and now, but it certainly will come! We shall be encouraged in pastoral work and see enough to cheer us, and we are pleased when we see our children and brethren grow in grace and in the truth.

Deceit can come from within or without. First, the shepherd must obey the exhortation given to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them" (1 Tim. 4:16). James adds this warning: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Warning of danger from without is given to us in 2 Timothy 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Our textbook is the Word of God. Ed.

Fifteen Days With Paul

W. T. P. Wolston

"When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in [not to] me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:15-19).

What took place in these fifteen days God has not been pleased to record, but we can, from our other knowledge of these two dear men, safely conjecture what that meeting meant. A good deal can be learned in two-weeks residence with a brother in Christ. The time was not long, but surely long enough for the apostle of the circumcision and he of the uncircumcision to mutually get to know and love each other in the Lord.

Possibly Peter, with a keen remembrance of the part Saul had played in Jerusalem at Stephen's death, and the fact that he had been so long in presenting himself at what Peter doubtless regarded as "Headquarters," may have been reserved. That the assembly as a whole was leery of receiving him is clear from Acts 9:26, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."

But Barnabas came to his rescue and heartily commended him as a sincere believer and disciple. When confidence was established, communion was assured. Peter's nature was not to harbor suspicion, and Paul was so simple and straightforward that the former's heart, we may well be assured, was soon gained. That it was so is certain as we hear him speak at a later date of "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Peter 3:15).

How much of surpassing interest Peter would have to tell Paul of the Lord's earthly life, and of all that had taken place up to the date of their meeting. With what interest, too, Peter would listen to Paul's tale of his unique conversion, of his seeing Jesus in glory and of the special commission he held in regard to the Gentiles.

The meeting of these two remarkable men has a peculiar interest to my heart. Neither they nor those about them knew how much was to be connected with their ministry. One thing is certain, that of all the men that then lived these two are the best known today. Others may have had a passing notoriety or possibly a place in the page of history; these two have honorable mention and a marvelous record in the eternal pages of God's Word. Their words and testimony for Christ were the means of the conversion of thousands of precious souls while they lived, and their inspired writings have been the priceless heirloom of the church.

Untold millions in hundreds of languages have had the faith of their souls imparted, fed and nourished by the words of God, which, as His "chosen vessels," they received and indited and

the Holy Spirit has applied. Thank God for Peter and Paul! Their reward will be great in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and a poor outlook has that man who has not an assured place in that kingdom. In face of this, who would not be a follower of the Lord Jesus? The soul who declines this blessing and this honor will have eternity in which to repent of his folly.

The fifteen days Paul spent with Peter were not idle days, for we read, "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him" (Acts 9:28-29). To save his life, the brethren sent him away to Tarsus, his own town.

The conversion of Saul must have caused immense joy, as well as relief, to the Christians, and we can understand how thanks went up to God concerning him, as they said to each other, "He which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:23).

At this moment, under the good hand of God, the persecution against the saints began to lull, and the assemblies throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria, having rest, were edified. Peter thereupon again comes on the scene outside of Jerusalem and passes throughout all parts of Israel (Acts 9:32). This circumstance the Spirit of God relates after Paul's conversion, and before the record of his special work. This is without doubt to show the spiritual and apostolic energy still existing in Peter at the very time that God was calling a new apostle who should bring in much new light and commence a new work. What God had done by Peter and what He was about to do by Paul are thus intermingled to preserve the unity of the church. Although Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, it is Peter who is first instrumental in bringing them into the church.

First we have the peculiar place that Peter occupied in the Lord's work strikingly attested by the healing of Eneas and the raising of Dorcas. There is something exquisitely beautiful in the record of the last few verses of Acts 9, because that which comes before us occurs among the saints and not out in the world as such.

It is noticeable that this title "the saints" is first found here in the New Testament scriptures as applied to believers in the Lord Jesus. Most people when they speak of "saints" think of the dead and are apt to limit the number of those who are worthy of the title to a few bright examples such as St. John and St. Peter. That those who have died are called saints is clear from Matthew 27:52, but in Acts 9 the term is applied three times to the living (see verses 13, 32, 41). It belongs to all who are born of the Spirit and washed in the Savior's blood; all such are set apart to God as belonging to Him by redemption. All through the epistles it is the common term applied to God's children.

I know many dislike to accept the term. Why? Because they rightly connect practice with it and say, "If I were to acknowledge that I was a saint, you would want me to walk like one, and that I know I cannot do." The great thing is to find out what you really are before God, and then to be it practically.

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The First letter of the following responses will form the words of identification that lend dignity and uniqueness to the One who alone could utter them, and assert that there is really none other beside Him. Answers will be found in the book of Isaiah. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "I have not spoken _____, in a dark place of the earth." [2]
2. "Seek water, and there is none, and their _____ faileth for thirst." [1]
3. "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and _____ riches." [1]
4. "I will water it _____ : lest any hurt it." [2]
5. "A covenant of the people, for a _____ of the Gentiles." [1]
6. "A little _____ shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." [1]
7. "I hate _____ for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth." [1]
8. "I form the light, and create _____ : I make peace, and create evil." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Can You Not Believe?

The gospel is God's proclamation of forgiveness of sins to everyone that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. If a person says, "I cannot believe," we reply, "What can you not believe? You cannot believe what God says?" How dreadful! What must be the state of that creature's heart that will not believe God—not believe what He says!

It is quite true that faith is the gift of God and the fruit of the Spirit, but it is also true that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The truth is that those who are so longing for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation have faith in Him. If you ask them how they approach God, they will answer, "Always by the Lord Jesus Christ; of course, I could not think of coming to God but by Him." Now, what does God say of such in His Word? He says that "He [Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost [completely] that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25).

Again, if you ask such if they were conscious that they would not live five minutes, to whom would they look to save them, their reply at once would be: "To the Lord Jesus Christ." These answers show that they have faith. A person should not look at self or feelings, or even to his faith, but to Christ. A man does not know he has eyes because he sees them, but because he can behold objects outside himself. So the proof of a person being a believer is that he looks outside himself and to the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of faith. His confidence is founded on the work of Christ, and the written and unchanging Word of God is his sole authority for faith.

Safety depends entirely on our fleeing to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only escape from the coming wrath.

Assurance is connected with relying only on God's Word, which says that those who believe on the Son of God have remission of sins, everlasting life and are children of God. They have received the Holy Spirit and shall not come into judgment.

Happiness is connected with our walk. If the Spirit is grieved by a carnal, worldly walk, He will have to reprove, whereas, if we are walking in the truth as obedient children, He will fill us with joy and power. C. H. Mackintosh

Tidbits

Liberty of the will is just slavery to the devil.

We often look to get the victory in order to get peace; we must get peace to get the victory.

Be not afraid of consequences if we do right, God will take care of them.

If our walk does not agree with our words, we should say very little.

The Unity of the Spirit

C. H. Brown

In the first three chapters of Ephesians we have the highest point of Christian revelation. It is the Mt. Everest of Christian truth. The Apostle himself is so overcome, as he finished the unfolding under the directive of the Spirit of God of the truth of Christ and the church, that he bursts forth in that doxology that finishes the third chapter of Ephesians: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Having finished the marvelous revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church, he comes down to the question of the practical walk inconsistency with such a marvelous revelation. So he says in chapter 4, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord"—he is talking now about the lordship of Christ—Christ as Lord has authority over our lives. We have obligations to Him as our Lord. So when it is a question of walk, it is in responsibility to One that has a claim over us as our Lord. "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." in order to do that, of course, we have to understand what the vocation is.

That is the reason that it is so important for Christians to be instructed in the truth that we have in the epistles, for only in the epistles do we rise to the height of Christian truth. I am not discounting the authority of any part of the Word of God, but we never learn what a Christian is as to all our privileges, place and walk apart from the epistles. We will never learn what the church of God is apart from the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

The spirit in which we are to walk we have in verse 2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." There is the spirit in which all is to be carried out.

There just is not anyplace in the Christian's program for pride, arrogance, self-esteem and self-importance. In the world, that is the common thing; the world thrives on that kind of thing. How you rate in the world is the big question, and men work, strive and labor, even to point of injuring their health, merely to attain a certain position, a certain influence, a certain fame or greatness. But in the church of God all is in reverse. We find that the Lord says, If you want to be great, become as the least. He also says, "I am among you as he that serveth." That blessed One set the example when He was down here. He was not seeking a place or position; He was seeking faithfully to do the will of Him that sent Him: salt was "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." Oh, how little we know of that gentle spirit of Christ!

"I... beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." How much do we know of it? How much do we manifest it? As you review the transactions with Christians that you had this past week, how do they square up with these qualifications: lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and forbearance? Are those the qualities that characterize you, or were you on the defense of your rights? Were you standing up for number one, as the world says? Oh, how a self-examination like that betrays what spirit we are of! But if we want to follow in the footsteps of that blessed Man of

God, we need to lay aside the old man, the first man, and put on the new man. Christians are viewed as having done that in the Word of God, and so we have, but how often we deny that fact as we give way to the ugliness of the flesh!

In the third verse of Ephesians 4, we are introduced to a new endeavor that was not the privilege of the saints of God in another dispensation: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." Notice verse 13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith." Now we will put these two expressions together, "the unity of the Spirit" and "the unity of the faith." The word "unity" in both cases is exactly the same, and I understand it is nowhere else in the New Testament, just in this chapter.

There always have been saints down here in this world; God has always had children to walk together in various relationships down here. Yes, God had saints in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham and so on down through the ages, awaiting the advent of the Messiah, the blessed Son of God. And when He was born in Bethlehem there were those here on the earth who were waiting for Him. But they knew nothing of the unity of the Spirit and for a very good reason—there was no such thing; it had not come to pass. The unity of the Spirit is a distinct thing that has come to pass in this particular administration. In the ways of God, you and I find ourselves in the highly privileged place of being included in that unity.

As to the saints under the promise made to Abraham, they were looked at as the innumerable grains of sand of the seashore. They were to inherit the promises made to Abraham, but grains of sand are just individual grains at that. Suppose you could take some of those grains of sand from the seashore, assemble them, put them in a great crucible, melt them and form one integral mass from them, and then cast a great reflecting mirror such as is in California on the top of Mt. Palomar. Now where are those grains of sand? They have been fused together to form a new entity, and now in that form it can reach up and catch the glories of the heavens: the sun, moon and stars. They can make them available to the amazement of the astronomer that gazes upon that image made available through the bringing into being of that magnificent, reflecting mirror that perhaps once consisted of innumerable grains of sand down on the seashore. Well, just as the glass is able to catch the glories of the heavens that they might be admired, so in the coming days the truth of God is going to be mirrored in this new thing, the church of God—this unity—this oneness that has been formed.

In Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body." That is the church, and in the coming age the wonders of God's ability, all the marvelous ability that God could display, is going to be seen in the church. We learn that in the Epistle to the Thessalonians.

In connection with the maintaining of that unity here on this earth, we find that the expression is brought in, "the unity of the Spirit." What relation does that expression have to the unity of the body? It is like this. Up until the day of Pentecost all the believers on the face of the earth formed just so many individuals. They were believers scattered here and there, but when that memorable day was come, God took them all, and when He sent down the Holy Spirit He formed them all into a new entity—a new oneness and that oneness was the body of Christ.

God did not entrust that into the keeping of any man, or any company of men. That was something that He did for His own glory. He is the Master Executor of the whole thing, and it was by the Spirit of God sent down to indwell the individual members that formed them all into this one body.

Thank God nothing vital has ever been entrusted to man, for man has made a mess of everything that has been entrusted to him. So when you have man put into a place of responsibility, he breaks down. True, when it comes to the question of baptism, that is given into the hands of man, and men do baptize. But remember there is nothing vital in baptism; it is not going to make a difference of heaven or hell to anybody. When it comes to the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread, it is a blessed remembrance, it is a precious hour, but there is nothing vital connected with it. By that I mean that it has no bearing whatever on the question of my getting life or my keeping life; it is merely that I might be reminded in this scene of the death of my blessed Lord and Savior—that I might show His death in the world that crucified Him and cast Him out.

While, as we said, there is nothing vital committed to man, there are certain responsibilities left with him, and one of them is to keep the unity of the Spirit. That unity had its beginning when the saints were baptized into one body. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we read, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Now that is a definite statement. That is something that God has done and remains unchanged and unchangeable, but when it comes to this point—"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit"—then we are on different ground. If we follow on, after the day of Pentecost, we will see what pains the Spirit of God took that the unity might be understood, that it might be maintained down here in the world. This is the only place where you can keep it; there will be no more keeping the unity of the Spirit in heaven.

If we were to trace on through the Acts, you would find that there was a time when the gospel broke out beyond the bounds of Jerusalem. People down in Samaria received the gospel; they believed and were baptized. But the Spirit of God was not pleased to introduce them into this new thing until representatives from Jerusalem, in the person of Peter and his companions, went down from Jerusalem and laid their hands on them, and they in turn received the Spirit of God. Why was that? God would not permit that any question of nationality should be raised between Jews and Samaritans. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Had the Samaritans received the gift of the Spirit of God independent of the Jews, it almost surely would have been a Gentile church and a Jewish church. In His wisdom God saw to it that Peter, to whom were committed the keys of the kingdom, was on hand to admit the Samaritans down where Philip had been preaching the gospel.

We will go on to where the Gentile was admitted. In chapters 10 and 11 of Acts we find the Gentiles brought in. Peter again appears on the scene with six other brethren, and under his direction the Gentiles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are brought in and under the very eyes of the official representatives from Jerusalem. Can they withhold their sanction when they see the official demonstration that the Spirit of God has received the Gentiles? No, the very circumstance forces them to acknowledge that God has received them, so they sanction the fact that the too, are brought into this wonderful fellowship.

Now we have the Jew, the Gentile and the Samaritan all united, all baptized into this one body in the uniting bond of the Spirit that unites the body together.

How has man succeeded in maintaining the unity of the Spirit? As we look out on Christendom today, we find that everywhere there is the evident contradiction of the whole thing. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit"—how many are doing it? The word "endeavor" is a word that has included in it the thought of a definite striving to do it, the expenditure of effort that it might be so. I wonder how many are making that effort? How Many believers in this world are definitely exercised before God about keeping the unity of the Spirit? Do they know anything about it or have they even heard of it?

There it stands as a challenge across the path of every one that will walk with God; the Word of God has never changed. When God gave us that Book, He gave it to us with the full intelligence of every heresy that would ever rise in the history of the church. When God instituted the church of God. He told us all about it; He told us exactly how it was going to fail in this scene. He told us of the end, and He marked out a path of loyalty and faithfulness for those who would walk with God in a day of ruin.

What a privilege it is to glean in this blessed Book. God is so concerned about you and me that He never allows us to be caught in a situation where we cannot have an answer in the blessed Word of God. If we consult the historic facts as they come before us in connection with the saints in the days of the Apostle, we find that they themselves broke down in the practical keeping of the unity of the Spirit, perhaps not to the extent that the thing is today, but the seeds of it—the germ of it—were there even in their day. Look at 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Nuys' I beseech von, brethren, by the name of our lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak same thing and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Then look at 1 Corinthians 11:18-19: "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." We are at the end of the present period here on this earth. Everything around tells us we are just at the threshold of His coming; our sojourn here is at the end. Oh, that we might be found in the path of His will and be consciously, daily exercising ourselves to do what He has asked us to do: to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

Unity is not union; union is not unity. What a difference it makes. We know that the atmosphere today is just charged with the idea of union. You cannot pick up a newspaper or magazine but what there is talk about unions, and this union and that union, union of labor, union of capital, and all sorts of unions and get-togethers; it is the spirit of the day. But this is not what God is talking about in His Word. Keeping the unity of the Spirit must always be in consistency with that other expression to which I drew attention in our chapter, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith." Remember, they go together, "the unity of the Spirit" and "the unity of the faith," for there can be no unity of the Spirit if the faith of Christ is given up.

What do we follow, beloved? We follow the Word of God. We follow the gracious office of the Spirit of God in making good to our souls the will of God as found in the Word of God. It is not following man; it is loyalty to the truth in the unity of the Spirit and in the unity of the faith, and it will not contradict the Word. God is the One who has the right to instruct us. You and I are just children; we are learners and need to have the Word. We need to have the ear to hear. It is not left to our choice.

God is for us and we have the precious Word of God, the privilege of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace, of seeking so to walk manifesting Christ, and act and live as to contribute to all saints coming into the unity of the faith. Oh, what a precious privilege that is! May we all be exercised about it.

Let us, by the grace of God, strive earnestly to keep the unity of the Spirit, and thus help our brethren on toward that grand climax of all. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," as we will in that day when He takes us to meet Him in the air.

Tidbits

We accomplish much More by what we are
than by what we say.

Throwing dirt on others does not make you
any cleaner.

Nature is of God, but its corruption is not.

Often a healing of a humbling state of things
is sought more than the state of soul which has
given occasion to it.

The Epistles of Peter

There is a difference in character between the two epistles of Peter. I think you will see them to be thus: In the first he strengthens the saints against all kinds of suffering in the second he warns them of all kinds of deceit. He contemplates the enemy, as it were, as the lion in the first, and as the serpent in the second. The suffering may be for righteousness' sake, or it may be in conflict with the evil that works in our own members, or from the assaults of him who goes about as a roaring lion! It maybe suffering, then, of very different kinds, but still what he looks at throughout.

The first epistle is the suffering of the saints—faith cast into the trial, as gold is cast into the furnace, that it may be found unto honor and glory and praise, at the appearing of Jesus. The trial of mind, which he especially commends to the saints in connection with this suffering state, I think you will find to be subjection: he is constantly enforcing that in them. Whatever relationship he addresses, it is still the duty of subjection that he seems to have in mind. There is a moral connection between these things, for if we own this to be the suffering age, we shall likewise see clearly that it is the age for exercising the spirit of subjection, or self-renunciation. I cannot honestly confess that the church is now to anent on trial and sorrow, if I am seeking to please myself or do my own will.

In the second epistle it is deceit that he contemplates. He fortifies the saints against the false teachers and the scoffers, the error of the wicked. The trial of mind, which he seeks to cultivate in them as security against all that, is the diligence of growing in grace and in knowledge, for in that indeed lies their security. If we are not exercising ourselves in the good, the evil will get ahead and find its advantage over us. Thus the moral connection here is as perfect and intelligent as in the first epistle. Growth in grace and knowledge is the security of the believer against the deceit of the serpent—subjection of mind and self-renunciation, our strength in meeting the roaring of the lion.

J. G. Bellett

Divine Guidance

I have no doubt that if we kept close to Christ, His Spirit would guide us in our interactions with others. We are not always conscious of divine guidance even when it is there; but the word comes from Christ to the souls we have to say to, even if rejected. But our part is to keep close to Christ, so that it should be "not I, but Christ liveth in me," and thus He acts in our thoughts and ways without our thinking of Him directly, at the moment; but we always have the consciousness of speaking for Him, and of His presence.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Are the prophets spoken of in Ephesians 2 and 3 the same as those referred to in Luke 24 and Acts 3?

ANSWER: The prophets in Ephesians 2:20 refer to the prophets of the New Testament, as is plainly taught in Ephesians 3:5, where the fact is stated that the "mystery of Christ" (that is, the church) had not been made known unto the sons of men in past ages; but "is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." What is in question is the ministerial foundation (by teaching) of the church; in this building, the church, Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone.

In Revelation 21, where the church is seen in glory as the bride, the Lamb's wife, we read in verse 14, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." This confines the foundations of the church to the apostles of Christ, not as the Messiah, but as the Lamb, that is, after redemption had been accomplished (Acts 1:26)

In Luke 24:27, 44, the prophets referred to are certainly those of the Old Testament. Their testimony is concerning Christ as the Messiah of the nation of Israel, and the church is not in question.

The same is true of Acts 3:18, 21, 24. All these refer to Christ in connection with Israel and have nothing to do with the church. Till the ascension of Christ to glory there could be no Head of the church, and no revelation was given to any Old Testament prophets as to Christ except in connection with Israel and the nations. This only went as far as blessing for man on the earth under Christ as King and Savior.

The church had been hidden in the mind and purpose of God, till Christ, having been rejected by Israel, had wrought redemption and entered into His glory.

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1. Love the truth Zech. 8:19
2. Obey the voice Zech. 6:15
3. Remove the iniquity Zech. 3:9
4. Devour, and subdue Zech. 9:15
5. Old men and old women Zech. 8:4
6. Fury Zech. 8:2
7. House Zech. 1:16
8. Our doings Zech. 1:6
9. Save My people Zech. 8:7
10. True judgment Zech, 7:9
11. Swareth falsely Zech. 5:4

Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the LORD OF HOSTS" (Zech. 4:6)

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 11:21-31PRO 11:21-31

21. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Though the wicked endeavor to strengthen himself and his family by powerful leagues and confederacies, and his successors also have mighty associates to maintain his acquisitions, they shall not be able to defend themselves from the punishment their iniquity deserves but the posterity of the righteous need not be at such pains; but though deserted by men, escape the danger into which the other fall by the help of God alone.

22. "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion." As a golden ring is ill placed in the snout of a swine, which is always muting in the mire: so is beauty ill bestowed on the body of a woman whose mind having lost all favor and relish of virtue, carries her from her husband to wallow in filthy lusts and adulterous pleasures.

23. "The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath." The righteous desire nothing but that it may be well with all men; but the wicked wish for trouble and disturbance, especially that they may execute their malice and wrath upon those whom they hate: and accordingly God will deal with them; good things shall be the portion of the righteous, but His

just indignation shall frustrate the expectation of the wicked.

24. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." You may see by this how miserably they are mistaken who imagine none so wise as the penurious; that you shall find here and there a man who communicates readily and liberally to the necessities of others; and yet his estate is so far from being impaired thereby, that it increases: when others who are so saving that they will part with nothing, no not upon the most just occasions, do not thrive at all, but by one means or other become beggars.

25. "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" Let not him therefore that bestows benefits imagine thereby he shall be impoverished, for it is the certain way to enrich himself: and the larger his charity is, and the more diffused for the refreshment of others, the greater the abundance shall be poured on him, and the abler still shall he grow to do more good.

26. "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it." He that hoardeth up corn in time of scarcity, on purpose to raise the price, shall fall into the popular hatred; and be loaded with many a curse: but he who then opens his granaries and sells at a moderate rate, shall not only have the peoples good word, but the blessing of God.

27. "He that diligently seeketh good procureth favor: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him." He that from the time he riseth, studies nothing but to doe good to others, shall obtain favor both with God and man: but he whose business it is to doe mischief, shall draw upon himself the evil he deigns against others.

28. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch." He whose confidence in riches as the surest support and defense, makes him covetous, unjust and unmerciful, shall fall into decay like a withered leaf: but they whose pious dependence upon God, makes them just and charitable; like a flourishing tree, shall thrive and prosper.

29. "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart." He that makes and cherishes dissensions and factions in his own family (or kingdom) may by making a great bustle and stir, seem to be a notable man; but will not only be deceived in his expectations, but defame his government, and bring his estate to nothing: nay, it is oftentimes seen that he who is thus foolish, loses all his authority, and becomes a servant to him who administers his affairs with a more prudent care.

30. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." The benefit the world receives from a just and charitable man is so great that it may be compared to the fruit of the tree of life; which keeps mankind from being miserable: but he is the greatest benefactor of all who communicates wisdom so charitably and seasonably; that he draws souls to the love of virtue.

31. "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." But who is there so good as to doe or to suffer no evil? And if God do not let the just and charitable men (mark what I say), they who are so useful, and beneficial to the world go without correction; who can think that the wicked, who is good for nothing, but obstinately contemns and breaks all laws of God and man shall escape the just punishment of his evil crimes?

God Himself

Under the gospel dispensation, God has taken to Himself the attitude and title of "God our Savior" toward a world of poor, fallen sinners, displaying His grace in the salvation of the lost on the ground and through the virtues of the sacrifice of His Son. He is not willing that any should perish. His desire is that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

God Himself—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—works to this end. Surely it is blessed to be, in ever so feeble a manner in the channel of divine thoughts and workings. All this, too, is for Christ's glory and His glory is the ultimate aim and object of the divine mind.

The knowledge of God Himself is the highest attainment to which the soul can aim. It is this by which the saints grow and increase so that they become, if learning, fathers in Christ, for they know "Him that is from the beginning." That is, they know Him who has revealed to us the heart and nature of God. (See

1 Thessalonians 3:11 and Revelation 21:3).

Editorial: Do We Fear the Lord?

We are surely "in the last day's" about which Paul wrote in his last epistle, saying, "Perilous rimes shall come." They are lucre! It is evident that men are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Mat does it say for us to do? "From such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:4-5),

The spiritual state of the people is similar to the days of which Malachi wrote in the last book in the Old Testament. They kept the religious ceremonies and offered sacrifices of the lame and torn to God, while they were striving in money-making and procuring divorces to indulge their selfish lusts.

What God has to say to them has a strong and a dear message for us today. We quote Malachi 2:14-16; "Because the lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue [excellency] of the spirit. And wherefore me? That lie might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to Your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that lie hated) putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

Let us be warned, at this time in which we live, by God telling us what He says about divorce (putting away). He hates putting away! Divorce has become, in this century, a very common thing, but God still hates it.

As in Malachi's time, there was a little remnant of faithful ones and there is today also. God encourages them and so He does today for those faithful ones who are here in a great mass of empty profession. "Then 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" (Mal. 3:16).

How very lovely and encouraging this is, but let us ask: Do we fear the Lord? Do we speak often one to another? Do we fear the Lord and think upon His name? If so, He hearkens and hears and writes it in that book of remembrance that is there before Him. Then He promises this: "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

He does not forget us; He remembers. Do you remember Him? In Isaiah 43:26 He says, "Put Me in remembrance." Earlier in the book of Ecclesiastes He gives this exhortation: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1).

Believers can have pleasure in the pathway of obedience, and in walking in communion with their Redeemer and Creator, even in these perilous times of being surrounded outwardly with evil. Ed.

Psalm 23

PSA 23

This is perhaps the most widely known psalm of the entire one hundred fifty psalms appearing in our Bibles. Who can ten how many millions have found comfort and solace in its message when beset with sorrow and trial? How many have been transported through the valley of the shadow of death with a sense of the everlasting arms leading and supporting at this difficult time?

We might wonder where these words with their sublime message came from. Is this the product of man's wisdom? Those who Love the Lord Jesus are fully persuaded that these words came from a source entirely outside of mere mortal man. They came from the eternal God, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, the author and finisher of our faith. They came from the One who endured the cross, preparing the way for our abundant entrance into His everlasting presence.

Now we believe God prepared each of the approximately forty men who became the ones to put into words the comprehensive statement of God's purposes and His plans for all who have been privileged to dwell in one small part of His universe. David was one such. His preparation began in his youth when he had the responsibility of caring for his father's sheep. Here he learned the interrelationship of a healthy, thriving flock of sheep and the constant care on the part of the shepherd, sometimes with peril to his own life.

Later he must feel God's rod of judgment because of his failure in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Yes, David must hear those piercing words, "Thou art the man.... Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house" (2 Sam. 12:7, 10). He must learn the universal truth: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

After bowing to God's true and righteous judgment, he is then ready to experience the parallel truths of God's loving-kindness and tender mercies (Psa. 51:1). He will feel the shepherd's staff gently restoring him to the joy of God's salvation. David is now a ready scribe and able to tell others, "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." In a word, David was "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). God's acceptance of His servant is well documented:

1. Marked out as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).
2. His name duly enshrined in the Bible's hall of faith (Heb. 11:32).
3. Declared to have served the will of God in his own age (Acts 13:36, margin).

The exquisiteness of Psalm 23 lies in the realization that every blessing that is communicated to us was purchased at great cost by the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ. The greatness of our benefit is measured by the greatness of His suffering. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

With this thought in mind, we might wish to appraise each of these several benefits with the critical eye of one who appreciates and values the exquisiteness of goodly jewels, who may himself have been in the heart of the earth, seeking the hidden treasures that lie buried there. His eye is trained to see every precious thing as revealed by the light from his lantern which penetrates the darkness of those secluded caverns. (See Job 28.)

Verse 1: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." The important word is "my." David has responded to those overtures from the Friend that sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). Come what may, he will ever put his confidence in the One that has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). As the Apostle John of the New Testament, David also knew that the Lord loved all His people, but each of these, in their day, dared to appropriate that love in their own lives and make it a personal relationship.

We, too, are invited into that place of endearment and to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). At what price was this wondrous relationship secured for us? We know the answer only too well. He who said, "I will never... forsake thee" must cry out in despair, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me?" (Psa. 22:1). We become rich because He became poor.

Verse 2: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." This is a picture of peace, comfort and serenity, calculated by a loving shepherd to allay the fears of his flock, which may have experienced the effects of a very hostile environment. The sheep will respond to this loving care by a vigorous, healthy growth, which is a joy to behold. The environment surrounding Christians today is very hostile, and evil seems to be accelerating at an alarming rate. What a cheer to hear as Ezra of old heard, "Perfect peace, and at such a time" (Ezra 7:12).

Jesus said to His disciples before He was taken from them, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Here, then, is perfect peace-peace which the world knows nothing about. What lay ahead of our Savior that He was willing to endure for our sakes that we might have peace?

- They laid their hands on Him (Mark 14:46).
- The officers took Jesus and bound Him (John 18:12).
- The officers which stood by struck Jesus (John 18:22).
- They spit in His face and buffeted Him (Matt. 26:67).
- They blindfolded Him (Luke 22:64).
- The chief priests vehemently accused Him (Luke 23:10).
- Herod with his men mocked Him (Luke 23:11).
- Pilot took Jesus and scourged Him (John 19:1).
- The people and the rulers derided Him (Luke 23:35).

This was the price of peace. Mark it well; for it is the price that was paid to "keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

Verse 2: "He leadeth me beside the still waters." The Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, wants to bring us to the still waters. Why? He knows what it is to be in the midst of turbulent waters, and He wants to shield us from such an experience. He cried out: "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto My soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me" (Psalm 69:1-2).

These are prophetic expressions of the feelings of the Lord Jesus as He suffered for our sins under the judgment of God, the Just for the unjust. After those three hours of suffering at the hand of a righteous God, our great ransom was fully paid. Our Shepherd now graciously leads us to the still waters.

Verse 3: "He restoreth my soul." Just four words stated in a matter-of-fact way, but what volumes they convey to those who recognize themselves as "sheep of His pasture" (Psa. 100:3). We have all gone astray because of our willful nature, and we have become dejected and cast down; there seems no way back to the communion we once enjoyed. Perhaps it is then that we remember the invitation to call upon Him in the day of trouble (Psa. 50:15); we lift a silent prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation," and we rest in His promise, "I will deliver thee." How gracious of our Shepherd to meet this need, not just once, but time and again.

What of the Lord Jesus in His great need? He, too, felt trouble and sorrow pressing in on His soul (John 12:27; Matt. 26:38). He, too, prayed that He might be spared from the hour fast approaching. For Him there was no relief as He remembered that "for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27); that the baptism which He was to be baptized with must be accomplished, no matter how deeply it pressed in on His soul.

Of the Lord Jesus it is spoken prophetically, "Then I restored that which I took not away" (Psa. 69:4). Our great Restorer stands ready to bring back His wandering or straying sheep who have gotten into difficulty by not closely following the Shepherd's leading.

Verse 3: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Surely the path of righteousness is the place where God's precepts are known and practiced universally. Such a place the world at large knows nothing about, for we read that "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28). And yet "there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" (Job 28:7-8). This is the path of faith, the path through which the wisdom that is from above leads. It is the path in which our Shepherd desires to lead us.

As a faithful Shepherd, He laid His glory aside and submitted Himself to Satan's wiles in a meaningful display of His care for His sheep. Following the Spirit's leading, He was in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus, who could have dispatched Satan with a simple display of His glory, knew that we would not have this option available to us. Instead, He demonstrated how we can gain the victory over Satan through the Word of God. We, who are no match for Satan, have the same resource available to us, and we can successfully ward off his attacks in the same manner.

Verse 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." This verse introduces a subject which, naturally speaking, is universally feared the world around. Death is often referred to as the "king of terrors" (Job 18:14) and is feared because it seems to gain the victory over every living thing. Man, in spite of all his efforts, has never been able to probe its dark mysteries. Man has forever had an aversion to that which he does not understand. If this were the conclusion of the matter, futile indeed would be the attempts to bring comfort to those who are feeling death's horrible sting. But thanks be unto God, the veil has been lifted, "by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

And so, once again, the sheep of His pasture are brought into blessing because of the sacrificial giving of our Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (John 10:11; Heb. 2:14).

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. 15:57). And now, because of this victory, those who sleep in Jesus (1 Thess. 4:14) can be assured that to depart to be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:23).

There is something more regarding verse 4. At this juncture there is a change of pronouns: "He" and "His" become "Thou" and "Thy." David is speaking on more familiar terms, the terms of communion. It is not, "He is with me," but, "Thou art with me." It is in this relationship that we embrace the language of Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." David in full confidence says, "For Thou art with me." We appropriate the Lord Jesus' final words to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20).

Verse 5: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The physical import of these words is that a caring shepherd is seeking fresh pasture for his flocks. And above all, he wants to keep them safe from their natural enemies—predators, perhaps hiding in dens and caves. The hireling, on the other hand, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming (John 10:12) and abandons the sheep with devastating loss to the flock.

The Lord Jesus was moved with compassion toward those who followed Him in His earthly ministry. He fed them on several occasions, multiplying the five loaves and two small fishes (John 6:11) that were available to feed the hungry five thousand. He Himself knew what it was to be hungry, as we read in Matthew 4:2 and 21:18. In neither case, however, does He satisfy His own hunger by His miraculous powers. He suffered in order to be touched by our infirmities (Heb. 5:8; 4:15), and thus became, not only our faithful High Priest, but also our compassionate Shepherd, attuned to our every need.

Verse 5: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Our anointing is with the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth and joy in our Lord Jesus Christ. We can say with David, "My cup runneth over." This quite naturally leads us to the grand finale of verse 6.

Verse 6: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Goodness and mercy are the two great attributes of God made known to David in his day, and present with us in our day.

- The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord (Psa. 33:5).
- He fills the hungry soul with goodness (Psa. 107:9).
- The goodness of God endures continually (Psa. 52:1).
- How great is His goodness (Zech. 9:17).

Everyone who trusts the Lord Jesus as Savior knows that it was the goodness of God that led us to repentance (Rom. 2:4), and that we have a goodly heritage. On the other hand, there is the sobering truth that failure does come into the Christian's life. We have not yet been brought into a state of perfection, but provision has been made for our failures. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

The second attribute, that of mercy, becomes a wonderful comfort to each of His children. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope... to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

"Because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18), we can with full assurance anticipate that blessed hope that is set before us—dwelling in the house of the Lord forever; being at home in those many mansions of the Father's house that are, even now, prepared for us (John 14:2).

Cultivate intimacy with Him;

It keeps the conscience alive and the heart happy.

The Practical Character of the Church

The first epistle to Timothy furnishes us with some precious thoughts in a short sentence: "The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (ch. 3:15). Here we stand on ground more connected with the practical character of the church upon earth it is the house of God—it is there that truth is found and nowhere else; there alone is it maintained in the world. Let us understand this declaration. The church does not create the truth, but it has been created by it. It adds to it neither authority nor weight. The truth is of God before it is received by the church, but the latter possesses it. It exists because it possesses the truth, and it alone possesses it.

Where, beside in the church, is the truth found? Nowhere. The supposition that the truth is anywhere else would be the denial of the truth fullness and ways of God. The truth can be nothing but what God has said; it is the truth, independent of all church authority of any but that of God who is the source of it. But where the truth is, supposing a body to be constituted by its means, there is the church, and the church which possesses it, and subsists by possessing it, there by manifests it to the world. The authority of the church cannot make that which it teaches tube truth. Truth alone does not constitute the church; that is, the meaning of the word "church" embraces other ideas. A single man holding the truth is not the truth; but the assembly of God is distinguished by the possession of the truth. An assembly which has not the truth, as the condition of its existence, is not the assembly of God.

There is one more passage which presents the church in this complete manner as to its hope and its service. It is that of Revelation 22: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

In this passage we find the Spirit introduced in a very remarkable manner, somewhat analogous to Romans 8. Both passages show how far the Holy Spirit is considered in the Word of God as dwelling upon the earth since the day of Pentecost and as identifying Himself either with the believer or with the church. In Romans it is "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because," it is added, "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." It is our groanings that are spoken of there. Here in Revelation, the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." The Spirit so takes His place with the bride that the sentiment of the church is that which the Spirit Himself expresses. The Spirit is upon earth and animates the church, being the true source of its thoughts. The church being animated by these very thoughts, expresses her own affections under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Had it been only an expression of affection, one might have questioned its legitimacy, and that also of the groans spoken of in Romans 8, but since the Holy Spirit connects Himself with it, this desire of a feeble heart has the power and authority of a divine thought. This, then, is what characterizes the church in her desires and in her hope. She desires that her Bridegroom should come. It is not a question about prophecy; it is Christ, the communicator of the prophecy who presents Himself: "I am... the bright and morning

star." The church knows Him. She will be with Him before the great day of His manifestation comes—she will appear with Him in glory. But when He is thus presented in His Person, it awakens the earnest desire of the Bride that He should come. But there is also a testimony to be borne. It is what follows. She calls upon those who hear, but who have not understood their privilege of being of the bride, to join this cry and to say, "Come." In the meantime, she already possesses the river of living water, and turning toward those who are athirst, she invites them to come and make a free use of it. How beautiful a position for the church—for our hearts! The first affection of her heart is toward her Head—her Bridegroom who is to come like the morning star, to receive her to Himself in heaven, before He is manifested to the world. Then she desires all believers to share this desire, and to reinforce her cry that He may come. In the meantime, she is the vessel and herald of grace, according to the heart of Him who has shown grace to her.

What more blessed position could be thought of, for such poor worms as we are, than that which sovereign and creative grace has given us? If the reader examines John 17, he will find that the object of the chief part of the chapter is to place believers, beginning in a special manner with the apostles, in the same position as Jesus was, they taking His place upon the earth. We well know that He alone by His Spirit can be the strength through which they can accomplish such a task. The truth enables us to apprehend what the true position of the church is. J. N. Darby

Lessons From Genesis 24

GEN 24

Old Testament scriptures like Genesis 24 give beautiful pictures of the church. Abraham pictures to us God the Father who sends the servant (the Holy Spirit) to take a bride for his son (our Lord Jesus Christ). The story illustrates the counsels of the Godhead, for we see in it the Father's mind, the Son's will and the Holy Spirit carrying it out. These counsels of God are eternal. By His ways in time He fulfill Is them, The New Testament reveals to us the mystery of the church, and now we can enjoy the pictures hidden in the Old for the enjoyment and comfort of our hearts. "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). The heart of the Father in taking a bride for the Son is so important that not only do we have brought before us this story, of Abraham, Isaac, the servant and Rebekah, but the Word begins with the provision of a bride for Adam and ends by telling us of the bride, the Lamb's Wife.

This mystery was kept secret in the counsels of the Godhead until the work of redemption was accomplished and the Son had returned to the Father's house, there to remain in quiet patience while the Holy Spirit was sent back into that far country to fetch the bride and bring her home to the Father's house. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish You according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:25-26).

The servant receives his instructions and sets out to seek the bride. He takes with him all that will be needed to fit her for the father's house and to take her safely there. He is perfectly suited to this responsibility, for he "ruled over all that [Abraham the Father] I had" and "all the goods of his master were in his hand." All she needs to be properly presented to the son, he is prepared to give to her. He will fill her heart with thoughts and longings for the son, as they journey together toward her new home.

When he arrives in the far country, the first gifts from his master which he presents to Rebekah, the bride, are the ring and bracelets of gold. She puts them on. She is like the bride, the church, who must first put on the "gold," a figure of divine righteousness. Afterward the servant brings out of the father's treasure chest other jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and garments, giving them to her. So each one who is to be part of the bride for Christ must first be made suited to their place, and then afterward learn to know and value all the treasures brought from the Father's house and bestowed upon them for their blessing and happiness.

The servant was not to take a bride for the son in the land where the father dwelt. He must make a long journey to another land. So, too, the bride of Christ was to be gathered in the place where redemption had been accomplished. She is not gathered from heaven's hosts; she is gathered on earth from among men. Heaven is the Lord's; the earth was given to the sons of men. Each must

be given a life, nature and body suited to the Father's house.

There is in the Father's house no place for man until the Lord as man gets there. The Savior was refused a home on earth, but He went to heaven to prepare a place for man. Before leaving earth, He spoke in prayer to the Father, saying: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:4-5).

As the servant told Rebekah of her home-to-be, so the Son told his disciples of His Father's house and its many mansions (abodes). These words remind us of the abodes in the temple which had a balcony connecting them with the center court. Soon His own are to be gathered around Him in the Father's house. The word "many" denotes no limit. He said, "I will... receive you unto Myself," not to the abodes. We who are part of His bride are not going to an empty house. No place could satisfy the heart of the saint if the Son were not there. We go there to be in association with Himself.

Much talk is heard about the place (heaven), but not enough is heard about the one who makes heaven what it is for the heart. Always in Scripture it is Christ we go to be with. For example, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." In a past eternity He said, "My delights were with the sons of men." These delights will be fully satisfied when His own are forever gathered around Himself in eternity to come.

As they journeyed home the servant did not Occupy Rebekah with himself, but rather with the bridegroom she was going to meet. Together they looked forward to the end of the journey. The Holy Spirit has taken the place of Servant for the Son of plan's glory. He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." He has the interest of the church at heart—Christ's interest and glory.

The servant, bringing before us the Holy Spirit, was faithful from the beginning to the end, presenting the bridegroom to the bride and then taking her safely through every peril all the way home, encouraging and preparing her heart to meet her loved one.

There were ten camels loaded up for the bride. Ten speaks of all the fullness that God can supply. Everything was provided for the journey. We little realize the counsels of God concerning ourselves and the provision He has made to Fulfill them. The camels carried her all the way regardless of the circumstances, hardships and trials of the way.

In John 4 we read of another woman whom the Lord Jesus met at a well. She shows us the need and condition of those who comprise the bride, the church, when the Savior first meets them. In Genesis 24 we see where she was taken to. We little think how precious we are to God and how He thinks of us!

Neither Christ nor this servant, at first, tell these women what they came for. The Lord begins by asking the woman for a drink. Water drawn from the well was to be for refreshment of man. Little did that poor woman know that she was to supply refreshment to the heart of Christ even as He ministered to the needs of her soul, providing her "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Back again in Genesis we learn that Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother. The loss of his mother is a picture of the loss of Israel for the Lord, a loss that was felt by Him. Isaac's bride is

brought to him to comfort him after his loss. In like manner the church is a comfort to her Lord. No one can tell what joy it will be for the Lord to receive the church to Himself.

After Rebekah has on the jewels of gold, she delights in hearing the story of such a man, the one who had been laid on the altar, the one son who was given all that was his father's. Like her, we want to be with our Savior where He is. As his eternal companions, we want to learn more through His Servant, the Holy Spirit, each day of the joys and the sorrows that are His.

"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).

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The first letters of the following responses will form the words which quite naturally follow Joshua's summary statement concerning the good things which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.

1. "He took a thick _____, and dipped it in water." [1]
2. "The angel of the Lord _____ in the flame." [1]
3. "And took great indignation, and _____ the Jews." [1]
4. "When the _____ from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp." [2]
5. "We told you before that we should suffer _____ ." [1]
6. "When Solomon was _____, that his wives turned away his heart." [1]
7. "Now I had not been beforetime sad in his _____." [1]
8. "Because I have _____ him of the Lord." [1]
9. "Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the _____." [1]
10. "In the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor _____ found." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 12:1-10 PRO 12:1-10

1. Whose loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish." It is an excellent sign that a man will be wise and good, who not only patiently bears with those that tell him of his faults, but loves and is thankful for reproof: which he who not only declines but hates, and is thereby in raged, gives way to such brutish passions and desires that there is little hope he should ever be a man.
2. "A good man obtaineth favor of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn." He that studies how to do good to others attracts the good will and blessing of the Lord upon himself: but he who contrives mischievous designs, under a specious show of religion and the public good, shall be judged by Him who knows the heart, to suffer what he deserves.
3. "A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved." For no man, though never so subtle or powerful!, shall be able to establish himself and his family who lays the foundation of his greatness in wickedness: but the righteous, like a tree that hath taken a deep root in the earth, though shaken with storms and tempests, shall remain

unmovable in a flourishing estate.

4. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." A wife that strenuously employs herself in her domestic affairs, and can prudently command her own passions and desires, is a singular ornament and honor to her husband, who may well glory in his happiness: but she whose laziness, or lasciviousness, or other infamous quality makes him down his head for shame, is an incurable grief and vexation, consuming him and all that he hath.

5. "The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit." The designs of good men are managed with exact justice and truth: but the contrivances of the wicked are carried on with fraud, dissimulation, and all manner of deceit.

6. "The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them." Nay (such is the height of their wickedness), they consult one with another, and lay plots to take away secretly the life of those who stand in the way of their designs: but men sincerely good give the best advice they can to deliver such innocent persons from their bloody snares.

7. "The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand." And God befriends them also, who not only defeats those wicked projectors in their designs, but so totally overthrows them and their families that no footstep of them remains: whereas He not only continues, but settles the just man's family in a durable succession (as I have often said), when they that assaulted them are quite extinct.

8. "A matt shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised." True prudence, directing a man to effect his ends by fair and honest means, will procure him the greatest esteem, and the most lasting praise: but he who contrives by fraud, and such like crooked ways, to attain his aim, shall fall into utter contempt, and be scorned by all as a foolish knave.

9. "He that is despised, and birth a servant, is better than he that honoreth himself, and Jacket!: bread." He is far happier who makes no skew in the world, but bath a competent estate; than he who appears in great splendor and pomp abroad, but wants bread to eat when he is at borne.

10. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the lender mercies of the wicked are crud." A good man takes care that his beast be well used, and have food and rest convenient for it; which is more than mere bent upon wickedness will do for their neighbors: for their very kindnesses, being treacherous, are a cruel cheat; nay, the highest expressions which they make of tenderness and compassion (whereby they induce others to repose a trust in them) are intended merely as a cover, for the mischief they mean more securely to do them.

Bits and Pieces

When this fleeting life shall be over, that only
shall abide which has been produced by the Word.

Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in
little things is the secret of not falling.

This world passes and ends, but what we do
and are in it never does.

Everyone who does not have Christ has either
a disappointed heart or a heart seeking what will
disappoint it.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: In Christendom what answers now to the camp?

ANSWERS: Wherever I find the world united to the church or to religion, that is the camp. Persons who have brought in false doctrine are the vessels to dishonor, and we have books such as The Christian World, but we cannot take it all in a lump.

In Jeremiah 15, we have separating the precious from the vile. There we see Jeremiah in constant exercise of heart before God and man. In verse 15 he calls for vengeance saying, "Revenge me of my persecutors.... For Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." But then he adds, "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." In verse 17 he does not rejoice, but is filled with indignation. He is representing Jerusalem before God, and God says to him, "If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before Me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (vs. 19).

The first returning is in the way of testimony; then, if Jerusalem comes back, there will be the blessing. We must not, however, fight the evil—"return not thou unto them"—but let them return unto you. "And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

There is the principle for us. God's Word, with all the blessed things that are in it, becomes the joy and rejoicing of the heart. We must take God's Word and use it to separate the precious from the vile, and then we become as God's mouth.

The reproach in Hebrews 13:13 is Christ's reproach: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." He is an outcast, a rejected Lord. Hanged as a malefactor, He

was in the fullest reproach, and in more than reproach.

We go there to Him. If we are to be as His mouth, we must in practice be there with Him, bearing His reproach.

Bible Challenger-06-June Answers V.11

1. I n secret Isa. 45:19
2. T ongue Isa. 41:17
3. H idden Isa. 45:3
4. E very moment Isa. 27:3
5. L ight Isa. 42:6
6. O ne Isa. 60:22
7. R obbery Isa. 61:8
8. D arkness Isa. 45:7

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who bath told it from that time? have not I THE LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Savior, there is none beside Me" (Isa. 45:21).

A Good Conscience

We gain a good conscience before God by the blood of the Lamb. By walking with God we maintain it before men and for communion with God, in order to have strength and spiritual understanding, and to have them increasingly. This is the practical strength of good conduct, of a conscience without rebuke.

"I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men," said the Apostle Paul. What integrity in such a walk; what truthfulness of heart when no eye sees us! If we are truthful with ourselves, with our own hearts and with regard to our conduct, we can be peaceful in our ways. God also-is there. So walk, says the Apostle Paul, and the God of peace shall be with you.

If the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, the path of peace is found in righteousness. If I have a bad, conscience, I am vexed with myself and I grow angry with others. When the heart is at peace with God and has nothing with which to reproach itself, and when the will is held in check, peace reigns in the soul.

We walk on the earth, but the heart is above it in communion with better things; we walk in a peaceful spirit with others, and nothing troubles our relations with God. He is the God of peace. Peace, the peace of Jesus, fills the heart. The feet are shod with the gospel of peace, and we walk in the spirit of peace.

Editorial: Joy—in 1996?

Joy, gladness and true happiness—where are they found in this world today? Everybody craves them and is set upon finding them. God is the author of every good and perfect gift, so what is necessary is to find God. He Himself is perfectly good and above all evil. But God still desires good for His creature, even though sin has come in and, through sin, man is alienated from God.

Wrongfully, man's idea of joy is to be as happy as he can make himself without God and away from Him. Nearly the whole world, at this time, is a witness of just how wrong is this idea. If you really want joy and peace, you can yet find it in God. You will learn that God also finds His joy in the repentance of the sinner that returns to seek Him.

When the light of God's love, revealed in the gift and death of His Son to put away our sins, enters the heart, it is filled at once "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is true joy found in God. After listing many things in Romans 5, it says in verse 11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Having found God and true joy, you would think that believers would never turn from God and look for mere pleasures that this world offers. But there are pleasures in this world, and the Scriptures call them "the pleasures of sin." Have you thought about how long they last? The answer is "for a season," and an exceedingly short season when compared to eternity.

In this world as we approach the end of another millennium, there are many riches. Do we think that having them would give us joy, or peace and lasting happiness? Listen to what Solomon said: "Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. 23:4-5).

Let us who have put our trust in God and found joy and lasting peace in Him continue in obedience to Him and walk with Him. Obedience and happiness go together.

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy with other beautiful things, and this is produced in the believer's heart by the Spirit for God's glory. Our joy and peace is in believing God.

In contrast, true joy is unknown in the world in its present state. Do you, then, want joy and peace as you pass through this present evil world? Of course you do! "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). Ed.

The secret of real progress is personal attachment
to Himself.

Why Did God Permit Sin?

F. G. Patterson

This question is often asked by the skeptic and frequently found without reply in the mind even of the believer in Christ. How immensely important to possess clearly an answer to this stupendous question—one that will leave the infidel without excuse and at the same time will settle firmly in divine truth the minds of those who believe. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

The first part of this important verse confines the entrance of sin to this world, and the second limits the passing of the consequent sentence of death on man, without noticing either the possible entrance of sin into other spheres or death's passing upon other than the human family.

Let us now turn to Genesis, chapters one and two, where we have the account of the creation of man. "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (vss. 26-27).

There are two distinct words used here by God, very different in their signification: they are "image" and "likeness." How accurately this usage is maintained throughout the Word of God is among the wonders of its perfection. The word "image" is sometimes used, in human language, to signify the likeness in one for another. One might say, "Such an one is the very image of his father"—meaning that he is an exact likeness. But this is not the way it is used in general in the Scripture. There it is used rather in speaking of that which represents another, without having any reference to its being like or unlike, in features or otherwise, to the person represented.

We read of Christ being the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), and man being "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:7). In these and other scriptures the word "image" is used as fully representing another, as the image of Jupiter or of Caesar.

Now "likeness" is different from this. Its meaning is simple and readily understood as describing a person being like another, that is, having the same traits of character and features.

The man was created, then, in both these ways. He was set as the great center of an immense system, fully to represent God as His image. The dominion of the vast system was his. All intelligences, his wife included, were to look up to him as God's representative in that sphere. God alone was over him, all else being subject to man. But he was also in the likeness of God. He was pure as his Creator made him; he was "very good"; he was sinless too, absolutely without evil. He was from God to be for God and thus like Him and fit, therefore to be His image. He was to represent Him and to be the center to which all should look up. He had also an intelligent will and his choice was free.

But why did God leave moral evil a possibility? Or why did He permit the entrance of sin? Could He not have created a being which could not fall, one who could only do what was good and right?

The answer is plain. If He would create a glorious creature—man, after His own image and in His likeness, free to choose either good or evil, and not a creature governed by a mere chain of instinct as the birds and beasts around him—He must leave to him a possibility of the entrance of evil, though not a necessity. If man, as God created him, could not choose evil, then he had no choice at all. He would be no more virtuous in doing good than the mere animal which follows the instincts of its nature. And because in such a case he must do good, he would be no more virtuous in doing so than they.

Either God must refrain—we write the words with reverence—from creating such a being of this high and glorious order of existence with a free choice and will, or He must leave the question of evil a possibility to him. Alas! for the result, of which a fallen race speaks with such terrible reality. He chose the evil and refused the good. The moment he exercised this choice he became a sinner. Man, created in the image of God, fell from that pinnacle of eminence, never to be restored to it again (except as God's plans and counsels will be fulfilled in Christ—the second man, the last Adam). Fallen Adam begets a son in his own likeness, after his image (Gen. 5:3), while unfallen Adam had been created "in the likeness of God" (Gen. 5:1).

Observe in all this that there was no thought of man being holy; nor could it have been said of him, as afterward of the "new man," that he of God was "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). God is holy—absolutely so. But holiness is relative, inasmuch as it supposes evil to exist and implies absolute separation from it. This could not be said of man as God created him. He was pure and perfectly good, but evil was not for him in existence until he chose evil when presented in the form of a temptation. Thus he threw aside the authority and will of God who had given it to him.

Everything in the sinner now depends on his will in having to do with God; his salvation and all depend upon the surrender of his will to Him. "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Now Christ is said to be the "image of the invisible God," and the "image of God" Himself (2 Cor. 4:4). This is because He fully represents God, but He is never said to be in His "likeness," simply because He is God Himself, therefore not merely like Him. But it is also said that He came in the "likeness of sinful flesh," and rightly so, because He was not sinful flesh at all. (See Romans 8:3.)

He too had His own perfect will, and, while tested to the uttermost in life and in death, it was always His will to do the Father's will. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

This obedience and subjection found its perfection fully in death. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Notice that He was not subject to death, as the first man was through his sin. With the first man it was the penalty of disobedience. But it was there that the perfection of Christ's surrender of a perfect will in obedience shone out most fully. May we not say that it showed the perfect blending of a perfect will in Him, as a man, with that of God, in obedience unto death itself.

Bible Challenger-07-July Answers V.11

1. C loth 2 Kings 8:15
2. A scended Judges 13:20
3. M ocked Neh. 4:1
4. E vil spirit 1 Sam. 16:23
5. T ribulation 1 Thess. 3:4
6. O ld 1 Kings 11:4
7. P resence Neh. 2:1
8. A sked 1 Sam, 1:20
9. S hip Acts 27:44
10. S pear 1 Sam. 13:22

"There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all CAME TO PASS" (Josh. 21:45)

Bible Challenger-08-August V.11

The first letters of the following responses will form the word which men might use when something is highly regarded, but in God's sight quite the opposite evaluation is manifested. [1]
The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.

1. " _____ , when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise." [3]
2. "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's _____ "? [1]
3. "Let nothing be done _____ or vainglory." [2]
4. "Let _____ be fully persuaded in his own mind." [2]
5. "All Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate _____ way." [2]
6. "The words of his _____ more than my necessary food." [1]
7. "Greater riches than the treasures in _____ ." [1]
8. "He is _____ and rejected of men; a man of sorrows." [1]

Answers to these questions will be Found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Vows

Vows were one character of communion under the law. There were required sacrifices, vowed sacrifices and voluntary sacrifices. In these three ways the worshippers approached the Lord. We have a long chapter of Scripture on the persons who, under the law, were competent to make vows (Num. 30). We have another scripture on the law touching the things that were vowed or devoted (Lev. 27).

The Son of God was the great maker of vows. "Lo, I come" was His language in such a character before the world was, and we know how He fulfilled it. In the day of His sorrow also He made vows. Psalm 22 shows this. He vows to declare God's name to His brethren, and in the midst of the church, or congregation, to sing praise. The first He began to pay immediately on His being delivered from death (John 20:17) and is still fulfilling in all the saints (Rom. 8:15).

The second He will pay in the kingdom when Israel and the nations are gathered and all the offerings shall only be to the Lord God of heaven and earth, according to which He says, "So will I sing praise unto Thy name forever, that I may daily perform My vows" (Psa. 61:8).

And again, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord" (Psa. 116:18-19). Thus Jesus perfectly fulfilled His vows, the great pattern of paying that which He owed.

But we have some few instances of vows undertaken by others, and paid differently by them, which are lessons of either warning or encouragement to our souls.

Jacob vowed a vow that if the Lord would take care of him in such and such a manner, he would, among other things, make the stone on which he was lying God's house (Gen. 28). When God had accomplished all the desired mercy, Jacob grew slack and is not in that readiness to fulfill his vow that became him (Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:4). He lingers about Succoth and Sychem, and the Lord has to stir him up to go to Bethel and there perform the vow of his distressful hour.

Jephthah vowed, as we know, what is commonly called a rash vow, and perhaps so. He was under excitement and his lips spoke too quickly before he had duly counted the cost (Prov. 20:25); when the time of fulfillment comes, he consequently suffers some loss. The honor of performing the vow rather rests on the head of his honored and devoted daughter who in due deliberation of soul will have it accomplished, though against herself, which her too-hasty father had undertaken (Judges 11). It is better to be slow and sure.

Hannah, by a vow, dedicated her child to the Lord. This evidently cost her much; when the child was given to her, prayers and vows, a mother's affections, as well as a suppliant's truth, assail her. She has to meet a conflict of contending emotions. But the right prevails according to her vow and she is rewarded. The Spirit fills her mouth with praise, and the Lord gives her many children in the place of her little Samuel (1 Sam. 1 and 2),

These cases warn and encourage us. Jacob tells us not to delay, but be in haste to do our duty, be it what it may, lest the Lord have to rebuke our lingering. Jephthah warns us to sit down and deliberate with our souls before we undertake great services or sacrifices. Hannah encourages us to be true and devoted to Jesus, because, though this may at first and for a time cause the heart a struggle and a sorrow, blessing will surely be in the end thereof.

We are not to make vows, in the strict sense, as binding our souls to do something or make a sacrifice with certain penalties, because service is now to flow from love, and the sense of liberty, and the sense, too, of our own insufficiency (Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12).

Two Characters of Testimony

There are only two characters of testimony—the lip and the life. The lip should be but the expression of what has first been produced in the life. What we should all desire is intense reality, to be possessed and controlled by the truth we profess to hold, and thus to shun the use of phrases and sentences which we have never eaten, digested and found true in our own souls.

Haman the Jew's Enemy

P. Wilson

On October 15, 1946, Julius Streicher and nine others were hanged at Nuremberg, after having been condemned by the International Military Tribunal. Particular attention is directed to this man who generally was mentioned as the "Jew Baiter." He was one man, more than any other, who persecuted the Jews of Europe in the past years and instigated the murder and starvation of thousands and thousands of them.

It is more than 2500 years since God, acting according to His righteous government, turned His earthly people, the Jews, over to the Gentiles for chastisement. The sentence of "Lo-Ammi" (meaning "not My people"), pronounced by Hosea the prophet, still hangs over that people. But Gentiles who were only too ready to wreak their own vengeance on the Jews have not been wanting from that day to this. It is true that God has allowed much suffering and many troubles to come to that erring nation and has allowed the Gentiles to be the instruments in His hand for this purpose; nevertheless, He still has His eye on them and is taking careful note of the actions of the Gentiles against His people.

In Isaiah 10 the Assyrian is spoken of as "the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation." That Gentile power was to be used "against a hypocritical nation... to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." But the Assyrian did not act as though he were merely the instrument in the hand of God to punish His guilty people, for we read: "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.... Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.... Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith?... as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up." (See Isaiah 10:5-19.)

As the Assyrian was punished for his malice toward the Jews, so will God yet punish those nations that persecute His people who are suffering under His hand for their sins. The time has not yet come for the Lord to come forth in power and glory and punish the Gentile nations and exalt Israel. The Jews still have many hard trials and much suffering ahead of them before they, as a nation, will be made the head of the nations and not the tail. God has, as it were, withdrawn from the earth and is not actively intervening on behalf of His earthly people. Nevertheless, He is still overruling in a providential way.

The book of Esther stands alone among all the books of the Bible in that it shows the very condition of God's disowned people while He overrules in a providential manner. His name is not once mentioned in the book. That fact has caused many to think that it is of small value or that it is not rightly a part of the Holy Scriptures, but the absence of His name is only in keeping with the character of the book. The Jews there were out of their own Land and under the power of the Gentiles. The great Persian Empire was at its zenith in the days of Esther, and the Jews were only

a small minority within its borders.

A great enemy of the Jews within the Persian Empire made plans for their extermination.

Haman was the prime minister with more than ordinary power.

He was a descendant of Agag of the royal family of the Amalekites—the avowed enemies of the Jews from the days when God was leading them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. At that time God said that He would "have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. 17:16).

But in the days of the book of Esther the Amalekite was next to the throne of the kingdom, empowered with the king's seal to issue irrevocable laws.

Haman took special dislike and hatred to a Jew named Mordecai who, acting according to God's edict toward Amalek, would not bow down to him.

"Wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai. In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar" (Esther 3:6-7).

After the twelfth month was decided upon, by a lottery system, as the month for the slaughter of the Jews, Haman asked the king for the needed authority which was immediately granted. Then letters commanding the destruction of "all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month" were dispatched by posts (it is said that the Persians started the postal system) to every province in the empire.

Where was God in all this? His name is not mentioned, but the history here shows His secret providential workings. Through a certain act of displeasure of the queen to the mighty king, she was displaced; God overruling saw to it that a Jewish maiden was elevated to be the queen. All seemed to be just ordinary circumstances, but God was ordering every movement from behind the scenes. He caused the king to lose a night's sleep and then to ask for records of the kingdom to be read before him that the king might learn of Mordecai's faithfulness and so desire to honor him.

Haman also was allowed to proceed farther, and even to build a great gallows in his own yard for the purpose of hanging Mordecai thereon. But all the while things were shaping up to bring down evil upon the head of the man who plotted the Jews' slaughter. God was not in all their thoughts. Read the book of Esther and see God's overruling hand.

Finally the time came when Queen Esther told the king of her nationality and begged for her life and the lives of her people. The king became furious at the thought of anyone seeking to destroy the queen, and before long he issued the order to hang Haman on the very gallows that was built for Mordecai. Thus we see divine retribution in the case of Haman and God's deliverance so that none of the Jews were murdered. It was true that "he that toucheth you [the Jewish people] toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zech. 2:8). For one to lay his hand to the Jews is to bring damage to himself.

Instead of the slaughter of the Jews came the right to stand for their lives and "to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them." Thus God, acting providentially, cared for the Jews and turned the hatred of their enemies on their own heads.

As a conclusion to their happy deliverance, the Jews celebrated a feast which they named "Purim" from the word "pur" or "lot." They also decided that the days of Purim should be remembered and kept throughout every generation. This feast is still kept each year by the Jews.

Now, to return to 1946 and the hanging of Julius Streicher, this man will go down in history as one of the worst enemies the Jews ever had. And while God has allowed intense suffering to come to that people who cried, "Away with Him," when their Messiah was presented to them, He nevertheless does take knowledge of those that vent their wrath and hatred against the people that "are beloved for the fathers' sakes." And it is striking that this man was ordered hanged by the Military Tribunal. A number of others were hanged at the same time who were more or less guilty of the same atrocities, but Julius Streicher stands out alone. He was the only one of those executed that gave trouble to the executioners; he had to be pushed across the floor to the gallows.

The most remarkable thing connected with hanging this enemy of the Jews, on a gallows as was Haman, was what, came from Streicher's own lips just before his execution he turned to the witnesses and shouted: "Purimfest, 1946. "He connected his own hanging with Haman's and the Jews' triumphal celebration of "Purimfest" or "Feast of Purim." Although the Jews are suffering for their sins under the government of God, woe to any who would persecute them or augment their sufferings.

May all Christians remember their own heavenly calling and consider that we poor Gentiles have been brought into rich blessing through the fall of the Jews. Let us not boast against the Jews, nor have anything to do with anti-Jewish propaganda. While they suffer, they are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes" and will someday come back into blessing from God—a richer blessing than they have ever yet known.

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 12:11-20PRO 12:11-20

11. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." He that takes pains in an honest employment, suppose in tilling his land, shall find it requite him with sufficient, if not plentiful, provision for himself and his family: but he that is idle, falling into the company of loose and wicked persons, will find at last (by the desperate courses into which they will lead him) that he wants not only bread, but understanding.

12. "The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit." The wicked desires two things, first to do as much mischief as he can by his wiles and arts of deceiving, and then to be secure in his wickedness: but the righteous make everybody the better for them, and thereby enjoy that safety which the other have only in their wishes and desires.

13. "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble." The wicked ensnares himself by that deceitful talk, wherewith he designed to have ensnared others: but the righteous escapes the danger; nay, by his prudent discourse avoids very great difficulties, wherein other-ways he might have been entangled.

14. "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him." There is no man gives good counsel and advice (especially in public affairs) but he shall reap the fruit of it abundantly himself: and there is not good work he doth for the benefit of others, but God will requite it, and make it turn to his own good account.

15. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." A fool is so conceited that he consults nobody but himself; for whatsoever he doeth, in his own opinion he is always in the right: but a wise man will not rely upon his own judgment alone; but suspecting himself, makes use of the sound advice of other men.

16. "A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame." A fool (like a beast) is no sooner provoked but he grows angry; and which is worse, it appears immediately in his countenance, words and actions: whereas a prudent man is not unseemly transported by his passion; but stifles his resentments, even of the most reproachful injuries that are done him.

17. "He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit." He that freely and boldly speaks the truth and all the truth, and nothing but the truth, demonstrates himself an honest man and doth justice unto others: but he that conceals the truth or forges falsehoods, and testifies unto lies, declares himself both a deceitful and mischievous person.

18. "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health." A cut-throat is not more pernicious than he; and they are not much better, whose business it is by secret calumnies to wound the reputation of their neighbors, or to make discords and divisions among them: which a good man uses all his skill to cure; persuading them to love, unity and peace.

19. "The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment." He that speaks the truth (being always conformable to himself) hath this advantage, that he can never be disproved, nor consequently discredited: but a liar, though he may at present be believed, is soon confuted; for he is apt to contradict himself and blast his own reputation forever.

19. "Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but the counselors of peace is joy." They do but deceive themselves, who look for any satisfaction from dissensions and disturbances; which they cannot contrive without much fear and anxiety of mind: but as they are always cheerful who consult nothing but peace, concord, and happy settlement, so they will have great joy, whatsoever the issue be of such good designs.

Communion

One great thing we have to seek is that communion with Christ be as strong as all the doctrines we hold or teach. Without that the doctrine itself will have no force; besides we ourselves shall not be with God in it, and after all, that is all.

The Transfiguration

J. G. Bellett

The transfiguration is given more particularly in Luke than in either Matthew or Mark. The full proof of Israel's unbelief was fully laid out in Matthew's gospel. Israel had refused to receive their Messiah. They had not discovered in Jesus of Nazareth the Light that was to lighten the world and be their glory. The earth, for the present, was therefore lost to Jesus, for Zion by ancient decree (Psa. 2) is the seat of divine dominion in the earth. As the Lord here forebodes, the cross and not a crown awaits Him.

If the earth be closed upon Him, the heavens must and will open to Him and to His saints now in the Jay of His refusal here, gathering around Him by faith. And the purpose of this vision on the holy mount is to give His saints a pledge of some of that glory in the heavens which is their inheritance.

There was no moment like this. This was the hour of passing from earth to heaven. The secret of God, in vision, was here disclosed. The heavenly Jerusalem stood for a moment with her opened gates before those favored disciples, Peter, James and John. Moses and Elias appear in glory with Jesus, but Peter, James and John behold it. There were in this manner both companions and witnesses of the glory, as in the coming millennial kingdom the bride of the Lamb will descend, as this glory now rests on the hill, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it (Rev. 21).

Such is the great purpose of this vision which we call "the transfiguration." There is an intimation in Luke 9:37 that it was witnessed at night—a circumstance of much meaning, I believe, for, as this was the place of the heavenly glory, and as that place will need neither sun nor moon, but the glory of God will lighten it, so this mount is now lighted up as by the body of the glorified Lord. The "holiest" in the temple also, another type of the heavenly place, had no light but from the glory.

Again observe that these heavenly and glorified strangers talk with Jesus about His decease, a fit theme for such a moment! That decease is to be had in everlasting remembrance. The glory will celebrate it (Rev. 5). The whole order of heaven, the redeemed, the angels and all creation will own it. For the glory owes itself to the cross, just as the trumpet which ushered in the jubilee was heard only on the Day of Atonement. The time of restitution and refreshing in this manner was owning its dependence on the smitten Lamb of God (Lev. 25), or on the decease of Jesus.

And further, I find that this journey up the hill (taken as it was, under promise that it should lead to the kingdom; Luke 9:27) was a little too much for the disciples. The Lord is in prayer till the glory

appears, but they are heavy with sleep. This, too, has meaning. Nature was betraying its weakness—the flesh was burdensome and could not travel such a road. It was an uphill journey to poor man. The wise virgins slumber. All this is so, but still when Peter and his comrades awake, "Master, it is good for us to be here" is his word. This tells us that his heart and desire were really in the right place, though flesh was weak. The wise virgins, though they slumber, have oil in their vessels for their lamps when the Bridegroom comes. That oil, like this word of poor, loving Peter, tells us that in the real longing of their hearts they waited for Jesus.

This is another point of interest and of comfort. At the end, in full harmony with the great leading purpose of this vision, "the excellent glory" appears (2 Peter 1:17). The cloud comes. Within this cloud, as we here see, the glory was seated again—as of old when it traversed the desert.

This part of the vision being somewhat beyond the present thoughts of the disciples, they fear, for the heavenly places, or the top of the mystic ladder, had not as yet been disclosed to Jewish faith. Jacob had been at the foot of it, and Jacob's people knew the God of Bethel and lived in the hope of the promise touching the inheritance of the land. But neither Jacob nor they knew of anything at the top of the ladder save the voice of Jehovah who addressed him.

The transfiguration now discloses the secrets of that glorious place and shows a family of shining, heavenly ones there with Jehovah-Jesus. This was a mystery that God was to have a family in the place out of which the blessing was to flow, and the glory was to shine as well as have a restored people and a subject creation at the foot to enjoy the blessing and to dwell in the light of the glory.

This vision was an advance, filling up the revelation of the purpose of His will, that God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10). Indeed, so glorious a vision as this had never been enjoyed. Abraham's passing lamp was glorious, and the ladder of Jacob was glorious. The sight of the burning bush was full of blessing. The sight of the God of Israel by Moses and the elders at Horeb was glorious and also that of the armed Captain under the walls of Jericho. Angels were welcome visitors from heaven to patriarchs and rulers of old, and the passage of the Lord Himself before the mediator (Ex. 34) and the prophet (1 Kings 19) at the mount of God were both perfect in their season. But this vision on the top of the hill is beyond them all.

That which perhaps the most nearly approaches it is the rapture of Elijah in the presence of Elisha, for that was the conducting of the glorified ones up to the place where they are now seen. But this, therefore, surpasses it and gives us to see the heavenly family, not merely on their way to glory, but peacefully at home in it—no terror making them afraid, no surprise as from light that was beyond them, as with Isaiah, Daniel and others, but all is the consciousness of being at home, though in the very midst of the brightness of it all.

Excellent, however, as this was, it was destined to yield to something more glorious still. Acts 7 gives us what is Stephen's mount of transfiguration after this. And then the martyr himself is stamped with the heavenly glory. He shines with the light of the children of the resurrection who are to be as the angels (Matt. 22:30). It is not that, like the disciples here, he sees that light reflected in others, but he bears it immediately himself. Nor is it that the glory is let down on the mount that he might see it here, but the heaven itself is opened, and he sees it there and One waiting to receive him into it. His eyes behold Him for himself and not for another. And his word

before the council is a comment on all this, showing a line of strangers and sufferers (among whom he there takes his place), led by "the God of glory" up to "the glory of God" (Acts 7:2, 55).

Whether there to Stephen, or here to Peter. James and John, heavenly secrets are disclosed, and the church is shown to be at the top of the ladder in the glory of the Son Himself. There is the celestial, as well as the terrestrial. The heavens declare the glory of God. Heaven and earth are both to have in them the witness of redemption. Redemption is too excellent a work to remain uncelebrated either here or there. It is a work that has called forth the full flow of divine love and power and must be known, therefore, in heaven and on earth.

The church is appointed to tell of it there and Israel with her attendant nations to speak of it here. This heavenly witness of it is here for a passing moment seen in her place on the top of the hill. But what a grace and calling that is! The very conception of it is divine. None but God could have conceived such a purpose; nothing less than infinite love could have formed the thought of a family drawn from among sinners to be loved with the love and glorified with the glory of the Son, to dwell in one house and to sit on one throne with Him. But, oh, how little do our hearts value either Him or His glory!

Tidbits

- If we cannot overcome where we are, we cannot overcome anywhere.
- Afflictions cannot injure when blended with submission.
- Jesus Christ is no security against storms, but He is perfect security in storms. He has not promised us an easy passage, only a safe landing.

The Authority of Christ Over All

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17:1-2).

Power, or authority, over all flesh! Such are the words which we overhear. It is the Lord who speaks. He is about to leave this world, and in His hands the Father has put authority over all humanity. Whether the tiniest baby or the greatest of kings, all men are subject to His power. Let us consider well these words: God the Father has given over to His Son Jesus the human race. Let infidelity assert itself as it will, or vain reasonings argue as they choose, here stands the immutable fact—every human being is under the absolute authority of the Son of God.

It is power, not salvation, of which the Lord speaks. And when we consider Him set at naught by sinners, despised and spit upon and at length nailed to the accursed tree, there is something in this certain knowledge that authority over all men is His which rejoices the heart. Let us ask, What does man generally say to this? What is the response of the heedless and the pleasure-loving to it? What is the voice of the proud and of the self-confident? We say to each one: You are absolutely, and for time and eternity, under the authority of the Master Christ Jesus. You are at His disposal; your present and your future lie with Him. You are shut up to Him and cannot break away from under His sway. Should you defy His authority for your lifetime, you must yield thereto forever when your last breath leaves your body.

Now this authority over all is not merely universal; it is for a special purpose, and the purpose is one of perfect grace. It is that the Lord may give eternal life to as many as God the Father has given to Him. He who has power over all is the giver of life to all who come to Him. All whom the Father gives Him come to Him, and he who comes to Him, Jesus in no wise casts out. The power is absolute, and the grace is perfect.

We must have to do with the Lord in His power, if not in this lifetime, then in eternity. But if we go to Him, owning our natural state of spiritual death, He is the Life-giver and will give us life. The life becomes ours by gift. "I give unto them eternal life." It comes to us from the Son of God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

As those who must very shortly meet the Lord, let us inquire in what way have we had to do with Him. Have we had to do with Him as the Life-giver? Have we believed on His name? He came to this earth to give sinners, dead in their sins and in their state of nature, everlasting life. He gives this life to all who believe on Him and His Father who sent Him. Are we connected with Him in life, or are we merely part of the human race, all of which must submit to His authority? The Young Christian

Editorial: Rich—in Which World?

The desire to be rich is probably a desire that most people experience, and which controls their thinking, their time and their energy. Let us examine a little of what men say about this and also what God says about it in His Word.

One religious leader openly preaches that there is a biblical imperative to making money. Another brazenly says, "God wants you to be rich." Still another one argues, "If we are all poor, who is going to help the poor?"

Those who preach money and material wealth certainly find that saying such things is very popular and gains much attention. It even adds to their own wealth. One man said it this way: "It used to be that I thought if I make a lot of money, I'll be happy. Now I say that if I'm happy, I'll make a lot of money."

Next we will examine a little of what God has to say in His Word of these things. Any careful reader of the Bible knows something of the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God was working with and testing a people to bring blessing to them as His earthly people. For that people, then, all was conditional. The results were either blessing or cursing.

All started with an "if" and depended on obedience to God and His Word.

We recommend that you read Deuteronomy 28. Verse 1 says, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." Many blessings on earth are added. But then it changes at verse 15; instead of blessings for obedience, there are curses for disobedience. We ask you, Did they obey and get the blessings? No, they did not, but rather they got the curses. The very last word in the Old Testament is curse.

In these days in which we now live, God is saving people for heaven, and soon Christ will come to take all His own there. Meanwhile, there are promises given to us and they are sure in Christ who has bought everything. He Himself waits to take possession of "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18).

There is the privilege now to live for Christ and to labor not to be rich, but rather labor to give to him that is in need (Eph. 4:28). The Lord said when He was here, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). We ought to realize that earthly riches are not forever (Prov. 27:24; 23:5). In 1 Corinthians 7:31 we read, "This world passeth away."

In fact, instead of promising riches now, the Lord gives us this promise: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Ed.

"Is It Nothing to You?"

R. Erisman

"Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12).

These are forceful words, to be sure, which reach into the inner recesses of the heart as they search for the answer to the question that has been raised. It was Jeremiah the prophet who first uttered them some 2500 years ago. They seem to have been focused on a tumultuous gathering of people outside the city of Jerusalem around A. D. 30.

There are many people seen here that are coming and going, passing by in the busy pursuit of life's daily routines. There are children playing and calling one to another. There are women going to the market or perhaps on their way to draw water. There are businessmen discussing the business of buying and selling of merchandise. There are religious leaders talking excitedly of the events of the past several days. There are many soldiers going about their appointed tasks. And there are little centers of curiosity-seekers lounging on the grassy slopes waiting to see what would happen next.

Indeed, something was about to happen, for this day was the appointed day of a public execution. Three crosses had been erected, and on these, three men were seen with huge nails holding them fast. Not much attention is given to the two men on the left hand and the right hand. They were notorious criminals, and no doubt most everyone thought they were getting what they deserved.

The man on the center cross, however, was receiving very much attention. There were those who thought He had deceived the people, that He wanted to abolish the religious customs of their nation. Others said, But don't forget He cured many that were sick and infirm. That was countered with the charge that His blood was on them and on their children. One spoke up and said, He restored the sight of a man born blind, and surely if He were not of God He could do nothing like that. And so there was a division among the people.

As the morning hours slipped away, it seemed the antagonists were gaining the upper hand. They jeered, they mocked, they spat, they smote, they mistreated Him with thorns and briars. Those who knew of a truth that this was the very Son of God could seemingly do nothing more than smite their breasts in utter helplessness. Perhaps they called to mind the prophet Isaiah's words: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isa. 53:3). And they may have remembered the words of one of their own who had said earlier, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?"

Mary, the Lord's mother, was at the scene too. How could she stay away? She had a true mother's heart for her firstborn Son. No doubt she recalled the words of Simeon in those days of euphoria when Jesus was born. Simeon, an old man had said, "This child is set... for a sign which shall be

spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Was this, what she was witnessing, what he had meant?

Standing with Mary, the Lord's mother, was another Mary, Mary Magdalene. Not too much is known of this Mary, except that the Lord in His early ministry had cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). Because of this act of kindness and compassion, Mary's heart was greatly attracted to Him. She often ministered to Him when He was in Galilee (Mark 15:41).

And now a curtain of darkness falls on the scene. Man is permitted to go no further in venting his anger against heaven's beloved One. Those that remained in the vicinity could not see with the eye, but they could hear with the ear. Piercing the darkness was a heart-rending cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And later, "It is finished." The work of salvation had been completed by the death of the sinless, spotless Son of God, the Lamb of God's own choosing.

From that moment until the present time, the words of Jeremiah's lamentation have particular meaning: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Many at the crucifixion scene would say it meant nothing to them. They went their way to their homes and resumed their usual activities. Not so Mary Magdalene. She waited nearby to behold where He was laid (Mark 15:47). Already a plan was forming in her mind as to how she might show one more act of kindness to the One who had showed kindness to her. She bided her time, and when the Sabbath was past, very early in the morning she came to the sepulcher with sweet spices to anoint the body of Jesus (Mark 16:1-2).

There on that resurrection morning she found the tomb empty. This was too much for Mary, and she ran to find Peter and John in the hope that they might provide some answers for her in her great perplexity. Peter and John verified the fact that the tomb was empty, and then went their way to their home, leaving the empty tomb and Mary standing by it, stricken with grief. Peter, can this be—"is it nothing to you?" With the events of the last several days, can you go home at such a time as this? This was far from Mary's thoughts. She stood at the tomb weeping, her actions clearly giving answer to Jeremiah's question. Her tears and aching heart speak louder than words, "It is everything to me." He was altogether lovely in her eyes.

With the departure of Peter and John, however, she must continue her search by herself. This led to the remarkable revelation of Jesus to her, a greater honor and privilege than that accorded to any of the disciples. She heard from the Savior's own lips her name spoken once again in tones of tenderness and love (John 20:16). At last her aching heart could rest, knowing that her true Friend and Benefactor was alive forevermore.

How is it with His saints in this our day? When we come together to remember Him in death each Lord's Day, do we hear Jeremiah's burden, "Is it nothing to you?" Do we enter into His presence as a matter of routine? Are we there in the conscious realization that we have been freed from Satan's bondage, just as completely as Mary Magdalene was? Would not our praise and worship reach a higher plateau if we had the sense of love and appreciation that Mary Magdalene had? May we proclaim with her, "It is everything to me." "He is altogether lovely."

No man ever lost anything in God's work

By humbling himself,

Or by dealing gently with a brother

Bible Challenger-09-September V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses will Form the word denoting that which the Lord Jesus gained upon His resurrection over that which had been swallowed up in victory. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "They hated him yet the more for his, _____ and For his words." [1]
2. "IF any man speak, let him speak as the _____ ." [3]
3. "The only wise God our Savior, be glory and. _____ ." [1]
4. "I shall be _____ From the great transgression." [1]
5. "Every name that is, _____ not only in this world." [1]
6. "Let us make man in our after our _____ after our likeness." [1]
7. " _____ my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." [1]
8. "And a kingdom, that all people _____, and languages, should serve Him." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Fundamental Principles

On Which the Church Is Built

C. H. Brown

Acts 2:37-47 ACT 2:37-47

In the Word of God we have God's mind with reference to the church of God. We read in Acts 20 that the church is very dear to the heart of God, because He paid for it with the blood of His only Son. He is jealous of that church that it might go on and abide in all its privileges that were guaranteed to it in the Word of God by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

The church of God was a new and distinct thing in that day. It had never been the subject of direct prophecy, though it was found hidden in types and shadows from the first major type of the Bible, right on down to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. But as to its actuality, the church of God never existed until that memorable day when the 120 were gathered in the upper room and the Spirit of God came down and baptized them into one body. The ascended Head from heaven assumed the responsibility of equipping His church with every needed gift. He still lives, He is still in the glory, He is still caring for His church, He is still giving out gifts, and He is still nurturing every individual in that body.

In the New Testament, primarily in the Acts and the epistles, every detail has been worked out for us, especially the fundamental principles on which the church was built, and by which and for which it was formed.

Look at verse 42 of chapter 2: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." It says, "They continued": Who were "they"? It is this new group, this company that have been baptized with the Spirit of God, and baptized with water to identify themselves with this new position here in this world.

So here is a baptized company; they had received the Word and they were baptized. On this particular day when Peter preached his sermon, there were three thousand souls added. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" Any Christian company which denies any of those four things is not going according to the plan that God has in mind. Remember, it is His church and He is the One who decides the path, and you and I are only in obedience if we follow what is the Word of God. One of the marks of a Christian is to "continue steadfastly."

Which of these four things comes first in verse 42? The apostles' doctrine. We are living in a day of shallow thinking. People say, "Doctrine doesn't make any difference," but it makes all the difference in the world. Doctrine is a solemn thing, it has preeminence, and you find it stressed in the Word of God.

Turn to 1 Timothy 1 and the end of verse 10: "And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." Does God care what you believe? In the same epistle, chapter 4:13, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Does it make any difference what you believe? Give attendance to doctrine. Then in verse 16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Do you want to be used in blessing to others? Then continue in sound doctrine yourself, for it is a day when we have to be on the alert about sound doctrine.

Now look at 1 Timothy 6:3-4: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing." There is no use boasting of gift, there is no use parading our clever abilities, if our doctrine does not square with the Word of God. We know nothing apart from the revealed will of God, as we find it in the Word of God.

In 2 Timothy 1:13 we read, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." You and I cannot afford to do any experimentation in the truth of God. In 2 John he warns us: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, bath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

Again in 2 Timothy 3:10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." Doctrine and manner of life are two things put together. Man will tell you that it doesn't make any difference what you believe—the main thing is how you live. That is false. Doctrine comes first. You cannot live right unless you believe right. Don't think you can divorce conduct from doctrine. The only right conduct that God can look upon with complacency is conduct that desires to obey the revealed Word of God. My doctrine and my conduct are my manner of life.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). We are there now; we have reached that place; they will not endure sound doctrine.

Go back to Acts 2:42, "The apostles'... fellowship." It is not only the apostles' doctrine, but it is also the apostles' fellowship. Now there are many fellowships in the world, but here is the apostles' fellowship. What is that? It is that fellowship that results from the association of those that keep the doctrine of the apostles. In other words, if you set out to observe the doctrine of the apostles, you do that and I do the same, we will find ourselves together. It is founded and it is based on the doctrine of the apostles. We see it functioning here in verse 44 of this chapter, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." There is no such pathway marked out in Scripture as going it alone in God's things. No, and do not think you are pleasing the Lord when you are walking apart from your brethren. I know they are a failing lot. I'm one of them, and I know I try my brethren, but oh, my brethren have been so good to me, that I seek grace to go on with them.

There is now another point: fellowship and breaking of bread. Some Christians seem to feel that there are two kinds of Christians in the world: those that break bread and those that do not. I have never found that in my Bible. Apart from being under discipline, we break bread. Of course, we do not expect those under discipline to be breaking bread. But I do not find in Scripture that one class is breaking bread and another is not. No, the normal thing is that if you are a child of God, you will go on to break bread. It was one of the privileges in the new position that they had as Christians: that sacred privilege, the breaking of bread. The Lord asked them to do it and they gladly responded. I know we are living in days of utmost confusion, and it is difficult to find your way today. I am quite ready to admit that, but that is no excuse for going on not remembering the Lord. Are you a Christian? Do you know your sins are forgiven? Why, then, are you not remembering the Lord in the breaking of bread? It is a solemn thing. He asked us to do it. He did not say, "If you would like to do it," or, "If it is agreeable to you." He said "this do." Not "go and preach the gospel," not "go as a missionary to some foreign country," but "this do in remembrance of Me."

They continued in the breaking of bread; they did not give it up. Some of us have known believers that broke bread for a while and then they quit coming to remember the Lord. When asked why they ceased, they replied that they were offended. But I have never met one that took offense at the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet He was the One that said, "This do in remembrance of Me." Why can't we have more patience with one another? Do you think that you personally never try your brethren? Cannot you find grace to go on with them? Are you justified, just because someone has hurt your feelings, to deny the Lord His request?

The last thing that is mentioned is "prayer." That occupies a great place in the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus set us an example; He was a man of prayer. When we come to the lives of the apostles, we find they were men of prayer too. When Peter was in prison and his head was to come off the next day, the saints of God were in the home of John Mark's mother, on their knees way into the wee hours of the night praying. They were not just saying prayers; they were praying earnestly. Those prayers penetrated; they went up to the throne of God, and God heard and answered in a mighty way. Peter was gloriously delivered. But the moment he was delivered and could decide what had happened, he made his way straight to the powerhouse of deliverance—that little prayer meeting in a home.

Suppose you had been living in that day and you knew Peter was being persecuted and going to be killed. Would you say, "I'm tired today; I think I'll stay home tonight. I don't think I will go to the prayer meeting"? Then the next day you heard of what happened. Surely, you would be disappointed; you would say, "I wish I had been there and prayed to God for Peter." Oh, yes, you would have wished that you had been at the prayer meeting. Don't despise the prayer meeting or discount it; an assembly without a prayer meeting is a sick assembly. Thank God today there is a prayer meeting!

We have had before us the simple path of the New Testament saints. Are we willing the tittle time that is left to walk in the simplicity of that path, jealously excluding anything that denies it, detracts from it, or adds to it? If we are willing, someday we may hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"; not "good and successful servant," but "good and faithful servant." May God grant that it will be so.

Self-denial is discipline for life—the work of awry hour.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the meaning of Hebrews 9:26, Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"?

ANSWER: I believe it extends to the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, as does John 1:29, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The work that accomplishes it is done, but the power is not yet put forth. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). That is, atonement has been made, and the blood is on the mercy-seat, so that all hindrance is removed.

En Hebrews 9:26, 28 we get two things, putting away sin and sins borne, just as we get the sin offering and the scapegoat on the day of atonement. The blood of the sin offering was first sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, then the sins of Israel were confessed over the head of the scapegoat (Lev. 16). The blood on the mercy-seat now is the ground of invitation to the sinner.

I say now to the sinner: Christ has died, and the blood is on the mercy-seat, and you will be received if you come. If you accept the invitation, I can tell you more. Not only has the Lord Jesus put away sin, but He has borne all your sins and confessed them as if they were His own, and they are all gone.

Choices

L. C. Perry

In a way, this is a misleading title, but it is one which expresses what most people consider is a description of their life. People tend to feel that life is one long succession of difficult choices. Certainly life is full of decision points, crossroads, partings of the way. However, what the Scripture teaches us as followers of Christ is that there really is no choice for us at any of the crossroads of life. The only course for the believer is to follow Christ where He leads, always in obedience to His Word.

True enough, we often let our own willfulness intervene and take the fork in the road which seems to please us most, or seems the most logical, or looks like the popular way, or is the path of least resistance. None of these rationales is supported by Scripture; they are all of Satan.

God's Way Is the Only Way

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

This wonderful verse, which describes our salvation experience way back in the Old Testament, clearly brings out that when God invites us to sit down and reason things out with Him, He does all the talking and has all the answers. We really have nothing to say for ourselves. If we approach God full of self-justification, we will never be saved. The work of salvation is based upon God's satisfaction with the work of Christ on the cross, and it is only by God's grace and love that the offer of salvation is extended to us. Neither human reasoning nor human accomplishment play any part in the transaction.

What Jesus Required of Nicodemus

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

The Lord Jesus made this seemingly irrational statement to a man who came to seek Him out. We don't read about Nicodemus' accepting the Lord's words; what He said seemed to be too hard a concept for him to swallow. He asks, "How can these things be?" The Lord was referring to being born of the Spirit, obtaining new life from God. This is something to which our reasoning power will never lead us. It requires that we just take Christ at His word, even though we don't completely understand. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Joshua Saw Only One Path

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve whether the gods which your fathers served that were on else other side the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Joshua saw only one right path for his feet. He knew that any other path would result in sorrow and judgment. He lays out the so-called "choice" for the people, but does so in such a way that there really is no choice—just one route leading to peace and contentment.

A Rich Man's Dilemma

"And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these! me I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet lackest thou: one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich" (Luke 18:18-24)

Here was a fork in the road; one way was to follow Jesus, abandoning all his riches, and the other way was to follow the path of greed and pride of possession. Only one led to eternal life. Is there really a choice here? Will the pleasures of sin for a season compensate for an eternity in hell? Never.

Treasure in Heaven

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:19-22).

The Lord Jesus said these words to people whose eye was not single. They were trying to keep to the rules while ensuring for themselves a path of ease and prominence. A single eye upon Christ and His Word will keep us from leading a double life. The truth about a double life is: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the Other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [riches]" (Matthew 6:24).

Serving One Master

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will free front him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:4-5).

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24).

There are thousands of conflicting voices around, all of them seeking followers. The radio and TV are full of them—so are the universities and libraries. Even large corporations have become modern-day religions where their standards and objectives are intended to consume the soul of the employee.

The Lord Jesus sets out a simple pattern. If we will just be like sheep; which seem to know that the path of security, sustenance and satisfaction is based on following the shepherd's lead, we will avoid the pitfalls that Satan has ready for us.

Not Necessarily an Easy Path

"And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

We could never help bear the Lord's cross. That work was entirely His own. But He does tell us that we all have our own crosses to bear. It is part of following the Lord. In Matthew 11:29 He tells us that we have a yoke to bear, but that the yoke is easy and the burden is light. How can this be? Crosses and yokes are inherently uncomfortable and heavy to bear, and a burden is by definition a load. The Lord promises that, in spite of the burdens of life, we need never lose our confidence in Him, our satisfaction with His work for us at the cross or the hope of His coming for us. Would I choose a life of ease? Not if it means following something or someone other than Christ.

Power to Follow in the Right Direction

"Bid we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

"Kirov, ye not Owl ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3:23).

"I am crucified with. Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liven: 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 self for me" (Galatians 2:20).

These promises of protection and provision of resources are unlimited and unconditional. Just as we could contribute nothing to our salvation, so we are, in ourselves, helpless to sustain an exemplary Christian life. Following the Lord depends upon obedience to Him and complete trust in Him for everything.

This One Thing I Do

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:10-14).

Apprehend is a strong word. We use it sometimes when someone is arrested, just as Saul was on the road to Damascus. His life was completely changed by his encounter with a risen and glorified Christ. Similarly, our lives as believers will be changed, little by little, as the truth hits us and we bow to it. These verses give Paul's clear statement of the purpose and direction of his life. There were no choices to be made. It was always following Christ.

The thought of choice puts man in command of his destiny. However, no one lives very long before finding out that the circumstances of life cannot be made to order. Everything is in the hand of God, and that which comes upon us is allowed by Him for a purpose of blessing.

We are left with only one path for our feet and that is to follow where our Savior leads.

The more we have of Christ in our hearts,

The less room there is for self.

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverb 1683

Chapter 12:21-28PRO 12:21-28

21. "There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief" The divine Providence takes a peculiar care of good men, to avert the harm that the iniquity of the wicked intends them: which shall fan upon themselves in such abundance as to overwhelm them.

22. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are His delight." It is thought no great matter if a man break his word, or any way deceive his neighbor; but know that this is a thing exceeding hateful to the Divine Majesty: and on the contrary they that faithfully perform their promises, and in all things deal truly with their neighbors, are acceptable to Him.

23. "A prudent man concealeth knowledge; but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness." A prudent man conceals his knowledge, and will not make a show of being so wise as really he is: but a fool publishes his ignorance, as if he was ambitious that everyone should know he is a fool.

24. "The hand of the diligent shall hear rule: but the sloth shall he under tribute." He that taketh pains in an honest employment shall take his ease at last; nay, raise himself to dominion and power: but he whose sloth make him live by shirking and deceit, shall bring that toil upon himself which he would avoid; when his poverty and villainy have reduced him to be a slave.

25. "Heaviness in the heart of man: maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad." Anxious cares and solicitude how to live depress the spirit of a man, otherwise magnanimous: but the kind and encouraging discourses of a friend (much more the gracious promises of God) erect it; nay, make it glad.

26. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: but the way of the wicked seduceth them." As in other things, so in this a righteous man is more excellent than his neighbor, that he doth not delude himself with vain hopes; nor miss his end, as the wicked doth in all his designs.

27. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious." There is nothing more vile than a lazy fellow that lives by cheating; who, if he catch, shall not be able to keep his prey: but he is a valuable man, who by honest diligence getteth wealth; which shall durably remain with him.

28. "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death." True goodness leads unto endless prosperity and happiness: nor is there any one action of virtue that tends to make a man miserable; as all manner of wickedness doth.

There is nothing more dangerous than for a soul to
speak of truth, when not living in that truth.

It is the road to a fall.

Bible Challenger-08-August Answers V.11

1. E ven a fool Prov. 17:28
2. S on-in-law 1 Sam. 18:23
3. T hrough strife Phil. 2:3
4. E very man Ram 14:5
5. E very false Psa. 119:128
6. M outh Job 23:12
7. E gypt Heb. 11:26
8. D espised Isa. 53:3

"And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly ESTEEMED among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Bits and Pieces

It is not by change of circumstances that we can be made happy, but by submission to the will of God.

Much self-judgment makes a man slow to judge others, and the vent gentleness of such a one gives a keen edge to his rebukes.

One special mark of "a sound mind" is readiness to take counsel of God.

One of the great smarts of understanding Scripture is taking out of it what God puts into it, and not to be thinking what it means.

Liberty

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Galatians 5:1).

Being a Christian is often seen as restrictive, confining and constraining. It is really just the opposite: the ultimate in freedom. However, our new life in Christ only wants to do what pleases Him, and we are at perfect liberty to do so. Here is a list of ten positive aspects of the liberty which we now have in Christ: Liberty 1:

To see my sins as put away from God's sight and to understand that I am justified by the Judge Himself.

"king justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

Liberty 2:

To know that God expects nothing of value from my old nature and that it was, in fact, condemned at the cross.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (Rom. 6:8)

Liberty 3:

To recognize that my new position (standing) before God is in Christ.

"God... hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4, 6).

Liberty 4:

To look away from myself and unto Christ, knowing that God finds all His delight in Him.

"As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

Liberty 5:

To regard myself as entirely connected with my new nature, the Holy Spirit providing the power to fill my heart with Christ.

"This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.... And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6).

Liberty 6:

To appreciate that God is my Father (no longer my Judge) and that He takes pleasure in blessing me.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

Liberty 7:

To know that, since it is the Son who has made me free, I am completely and permanently free.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Liberty 8:

To look at the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ and to be at home in that wonderful place of holiness and love.

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).

Liberty 9:

To reckon that every blessing is through Christ by unmerited grace and that this will continue for eternity "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin lath reigned unto death, each so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20-21).

Liberty 10:

To serve the One who has delivered me: the Lord Himself.

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24). L. Perry

Obedience

On the whole, the Scripture is plain, as the principle is uniform—that obedience is the way of blessing, and that we are not to wait for power to obey a command but to obey it that we may find power (Matthew 11:13). The Lord did not restore the hand that he might stretch it out and show it, but ordered the man to stretch it out that it might be restored. And this is true in all possible cases.

Editorial: Hear, and Understand

The professing church is a great thing in the world, and, as rated by the world, is either scorned or admired. Sometimes she is hated, and sometimes she is glorified, boasted about and cultivated. She is looked up to as responsible to use her power to make the world better, to govern and to pass an opinion on every political matter.

People can easily find fault with any denomination, so they start a new one or reform an existing one. In the older and larger denominations, as well as newer ones with scarcely any good biblical doctrine, there is much confusion. There is gift and human leadership in these systems that men have organized, but little stability. Many congregations just follow their paid leader without searching their Bibles to see what the Scripture says. It is like what our Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Truly the confusion is great in the great house of Christendom and it seems to become worse instead of better. Are we nearing the end? Is there at this time a trend that I culminate in what God's Word "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"?

Let us remember that Christ said, "I will build My church." There is only one true church and she belongs to Christ. She is heavenly and for heaven, and she is not for the earth—what is the resource and where will any believer find guidance in this time of such great confusion? If we go back again to Matthew 15, we find the answer in three words of our Lord's teaching in Hear, and understand." All guidance for the Christian is found in God's Word. In chapter 16, for the first time the church is mentioned, and the foundation is CHRIST the ROCK, not the little stone, Peter. When Peter confessed to Jesus, he said, art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then the Lord said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona [Simon, son of Jonah]: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

In comparison, and for our understanding in our course and association today, let us just simply hear cud our Father through His Word of revelation, and we shall have His answer and understand. Ecclesiastical confusion abounds, and we need to be sure of the way of approach to Him. The way into the holiest, which is heaven, is now made manifest. It is opened up and our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is passed into the heavens (Neb. 4:14). The believer is invited to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Neb. 10:22).

We need to follow Him to be where He is. "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him." He being there makes the place. Also, it is by Him that we can offer the sacrifice of praise to Gad continually. See Hebrews 13:12-16. Ed.

Bible Challenger-09-September Answers V.11

1. D reams Gen. 37:8
2. O racles of God 1 Peter 4:11
3. M ajesty Jude 25
4. I nnocent Psa. 19:13
5. N amed Eph. 1:21
6. I mage Gen. 1:26
7. O rder Psa. 119:133
8. N ations Don. 7:14

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death bath no more DOMINION over

Him" (Rom. 6:9).

The Father's Love

H. H. Snell

"For the Father Himself loveth yore, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27).

Our Lord Jesus Christ received these precious words from the Father, who commanded Him to speak them for our comfort (John 2:49). They sweetly assure us of the Father's love. We read of God's love—"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). We read also of Christ's love—"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). And we read of the Father's love, which is exercised toward those who, through grace, have been brought into relationship with Himself—"the Father Himself loveth you." The Father's love has wrought for us in accomplishing redemption through the death of His Son and in Him risen and ascended, according to His eternal purpose. Thus it gives us life in Christ and brings us into the relationship of children, as well as uniting us to Christ by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. The Father's love has wrought in us in revealing His Son unto us. When our Lord said to Peter, "Whom say ye that I am?" and he replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus immediately said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:15-17). Thus we see that everyone who has apprehended the Person of "the Christ, the Son of the living God" has only done so because of a distinct revelation of the Father to him. Without this, whatever else we may have known, we should have been in darkness as to the Person of the Son, concerning whom it is said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

To apprehend the Person of the Son of God is entirely beyond the scope of the natural man. He may have heard of His name and of His works; he may be acquainted with the external circumstances of His death on Calvary and of the fact of His resurrection and yet not know Him. Though to the natural eye Jesus was like any other man, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," yet Peter saw by the revelation of the Father that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Father has also wrought in us in having drawn us to Christ as sinners to a Savior. It is only by the working of the Father's grace in our hearts that we have thus had to do with Him whom the Father sent. Unless the Father had specially wrought in us in this way, it is certain we should never have recognized our true condition as hell-deserving sinners and come to the feet of a gracious Savior. It is well to have the sense of this fact constantly fresh in our souls, for Jesus said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." And again, "No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John 6:44, 65). Thus we see that the Father's love sent the Son to accomplish redemption for us, brought us into nearness to Himself, called us into the relationship of children, has given us the Spirit, revealed His Son to us and has drawn us to Him as our Savior. How sweet to think of the various yet distinct actions of the Father's love! Well might an inspired servant cry out, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath

bestowed upon us."

How astonishing, then, is the fact that there are those on earth who, though poor and feeble in their own eyes, sensible too of much failure, coldness and forgetfulness of Him, are the constant objects of the Father's love—those on whom He always looks with a Father's watchful eye and ministers to with fatherly care. He is the perfect Father. He knows the state of heart, as well as the need, peculiarities and circumstances of each child, and He withholds or gives, sends adversity or prosperity, as is most needed for our real good. He disciplines and chastens for our profit that we may be in subjection to Him and be partakers of His holiness. It is well that we should receive all from Him, for all is dealt out in infinite wisdom by the hand of perfect love.

He desires us to cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us— to make all our requests known to Him by prayer and supplication. And in this our Lord encouraged us by saying, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. 7:11).

But one of the children of God may inquire, How much does the Father love me? We are told that the Father loves us as He loved Jesus (John 17:23). Our blessed Lord said to His disciples, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). His love to us then is the same as the Father's love to Him. And elsewhere we find He prayed that by-and-by the world may know that the Father loves us as He loves Him.

Thus we find that the infinite, eternal, unchanging love of the Father to the Son is the measure of His love to us, His children. This, too, will be manifested ere long in answer to His prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.... And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:20-23).

In perfect keeping with the activity of this infinite, eternal, unchanging love, the Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Thus we are always before His eye in all the nearness, acceptance, righteousness and life of Christ and blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings. All this and more is to be known now for our present enjoyment and power for service and conflict. What a precious assurance for our poor hearts are these few words of our adorable Lord, "The Father Himself loveth you." It is, indeed, a great secret for our souls when such words are received in faith, and we grasp them as infallible and settled forever. We then shall be able to say in the hour of deepest sorrow and affliction: Why do we not enjoy the Father's love more than we do? Because the Holy Spirit, which is given to us and by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, is grieved. When we walk obediently, we abide in His love and enjoy the presence of the Father and the Son. To be loved by the Father is a precious fact for every child of God, but to enjoy the Father's love and presence is the privilege of those only who are walking obediently to His will. Jesus said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). But let no believer imagine, then, that he will have the comfort of the Father's love if he is not walking in the truth according to the Father's will. In the path of disobedience, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is grieved, and we are not in the place where the Father's presence can be known. Our blessed Lord said to His own loved ones for their encouragement, "I have kept My Father's commandments,

and abide in His love" (John 15:10).

We are told here who are the objects of the Father's love. They are those who have loved Jesus and have believed that He came out from God. It is not those who say this and that, but those who have the two grand cardinal points of vital Christianity—faith and love. They always go together when there is a divinely wrought work in the soul, for faith works by love. Every true believer loves. He loves the Lord Jesus and all that are His. He loves the brethren, the truth, the service of the Lord and all that is in association with Him. The believer loves, and he who loves believes. Without this love, whatever else he may boast of, he is as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Love is a vital necessity, for "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16:22). We love, because we believe the love of God to us. "We love Him, because He first loved us." We most certainly believe that Jesus came out from God; we have no doubt of it. We grasp the divine love that gave Him, and we cannot help loving Jesus. We believe and love. Oh, the preciousness of the Savior's words, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

The more we ponder this precious subject, the more our hearts become melted and our ways become molded according to this elevated and eternal relationship. To be "children of God" now while in mortal bodies and in a world where sin reigns unto death is indeed a glorious fact. Because we are sons, to have the Holy Spirit sent into our hearts crying, Abba, Father, is love so rich, free and abundant as never could have entered into the heart of man to conceive. And yet, how true it is that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Wondrous grace—all "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6)!

Bible Challenger-10-October V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the expression used by several persons in the Bible; it is related to one of the five senses. The referenced verse mentions two of the senses. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "Dreamed a dream, and there is none that can ____." [1]
2. "I have hallowed this ____ which thou hast built." [1]
3. "In a time, ____ and in the day of salvation." [1]
4. "The Lord heard the ____ of your words, when ye spake." [1]
5. "Light and understanding and ____ wisdom is found in thee." [1]
6. "I have seen thy tears: behold, I will ____ thee." [1]
7. "How much ____ he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem." [1]
8. "Miserable comforters are ye ____." [1]
9. "In the midst of the years make known; in wrath ____ mercy." [1]
10. "The servant knoweth not what his lord ____." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

The Christian's Path

C. Barton

2 Timothy 22TI 2

We know that in spite of all the failure that has come in, the Holy Spirit still dwells in the church, and the place where He dwells is a place of privilege with which the name of Christ is connected. The path for such a day as this is marked out for us in 2 Timothy. The danger for our hearts, in looking at all the corruption that the will of man and the flesh have brought in, is that we resort to our own ways and means to meet the difficulties.

Jeremiah 7 was a day of moral and ecclesiastical evil and the people said, "We are shut up to this." (See verses 9-10.) They throw the blame back on God, and nowadays some Christians will even admit that they are going on with what is contrary to God. They say, "What can we do? What a mess Thou have made of it."

Well, we may find much failure in those who are trying to walk in this path, but the truth remains. There is a ruin and we have all contributed to it, but there is the path today. God's order is to cease to do evil first, before you learn to do well. It is one thing to be adept at pointing out the evil around and quite another to lay hold of the Lord's strength to walk in His path. Is there a resource for faith, or would He have us go on with all this? "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Is there a path in which we can look up to God and count on His being with us?

Some people talk of all testimony being gone. It is one thing to be saying, "We are Philadelphia," but it is quite another to say, "Everything is gone." They would be more truthful if they said their hearts had let it go. They have gotten under the state of things around. I would to God that saints, especially young saints, would read Romans 14, and not the beginning only, but the end. I know how that word, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," brought me up short, and it is not speaking of unconverted people, nor is it for people inclined to walk carelessly, but it is written for scrupulous ones who had not the light and instruction we have today.

Have I the Word of God for my path? Turn to Jeremiah 18:12. The danger for the heart that is not in communion with God in this evil day is to say, "There is no hope," and instead of bringing in God's "nevertheless," they bring in their own "but we will walk after our own devices." They turn in on their own hearts. At the end of Judges, Micah was a man who had a houseful of gods, and a Levite came that way. (The Levites received their place of nearness to God for their faithfulness at the time of the golden calf.) Micah makes a bargain with this Levite to be the priest to his houseful of idols in return for certain things. What is so terrible is that he counts on God's favor and smile on the occasion. "Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest" (Judges 17:13).

How true it is that there is nothing new under the sun! Where is ill.: worst show of the will of the flesh? Is it not when it intrudes itself into the things of God, where He has expressed His mind and will? Jeremiah did not do very much, but he took to heart the state of God's people. He was faithful and he bore faithful messages to them. In Jeremiah 15:16-17 we find it was the Word of God that put him right, and it filled him with indignation. People think now that the study of the Word of God fits them to put up with what is around them, but that is not the result to a true heart. What people call a useful, large-hearted man today is sometimes a man with a rubber conscience. God's picture of a useful man is not one that goes on with everything, but one who purges himself from the vessels to dishonor that he may be meet for the Master's use.

People talk of being liberal; it is very well to be liberal with What is my own, but if it is God's truth, it is very presumptuous of me to be liberal with it. (See 1 Corinthians 4 on stewardship.) I am to be subject to it, to be girt about with it, and by manifestation of it to commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The man in 2 Timothy is awake, his conscience is exercised and he is to "endure hardness" to good, notwithstanding all the efforts to turn him aside. The Word of God teaches us how to strive and how not to strive. In one sense strife is wrong, but in the sense of contending earnestly for the faith, it is not. There is no loophole here for "agreeing to differ." We are not to be amiable by saying, "You maybe right and I may be wrong, but we are brethren, so let us ignore everything else and agree to differ." No, the servant of the Lord is to be patient and gentle, but he never for a moment gives the sense that he will agree to differ (vss. 24-25). His object is that he and his brother may acknowledge the truth.

Is it not a comfort today that "the Word of God is not bound" (vs. 9)? If any soul turns to Him, there is the Word of the Lord to meet him and the grace of the Lord too. But we are not to compromise one single point of the truth of God. We may talk of the good of souls, but "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). Saul had been destroying witches, but "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft," and he dared cover his disobedience by sacrificing. In Hebrews 12, Esau is called a "profane" person. What was his sin? He so lightly valued his birthright that he sold it for present advantage under the pressure of circumstances.

What people are saying today is: What is the use of contending for the truth? Some who do not say it in actual words have imbibed this profane spirit. In Zechariah 4:10 we get, "For who hath despised the day of small things?" When God talks of despising, it is always in connection with something very precious of His that is presented to me, and indifference to it makes me a despiser. It is in a day of small things that endurance is all the more called for. The path becomes narrower and is more opposed, but is there anything on this earth equal to what the Lord holds out to us in this day? "A vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use" (2 Tim. 2:21). Can this be true of us even though the church, so dear to Christ and so cared for by Him, is in a state of ruin? You say, Is that what the Lord has for me in such a day? I say, Yes, for the youngest and the simplest believer with the love of Christ before him can know that the Lord has marked out this path. What are the things of earth compared to it?

What do you suppose heaven esteems most on earth? Not that which is highly esteemed among men! In the darkest day, how precious it is to the Lord to mark the path of one who knows Him, by witnessing that He is sufficient. It is the witness to who He is and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, even in the scene where Satan's seat is. However, Christ is over it all and He is

sufficient to meet and help us in it. "Study to show thyself approved unto God." How easy it is to get under the eye of man and to give souls what will be popular. No, we are to study to be approved of God. The men in verse 18 had erred concerning the truth. It is the truth that sanctifies (John 17:19), and the Spirit of truth is here (John 14:16-17). Saying the resurrection was past led to indifference.

In Thessalonians we find Satan trying to terrify the saints by saying the day of the Lord was present. He will try to terrify and he will try to set us at ease—anything to prevent us pressing on with energy and vigor. Then we come to the blessed resource of verse 19 of 2 Timothy 2. People sometimes say, "The Lord knows I love Him." Do they remember that was the expression of Peter's shame? He had denied the Lord. Men could not see he loved Him. It needed One who saw the heart to know it. Is that all that is to be in our lives? Men should be able to see by our lives that we are His. Every one of us should be His witnesses, but instead of that the house of God has come to this: a company bearing His name, but having to fall back on His knowledge—"the Lord knoweth." Here is really the point that tests us all. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [or, the Lord] depart from iniquity." Individually, this is our responsibility. If we desire to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," as surely we do, and desire to see the saints together, that desire is so apt to lead us to compromise with evil in order to maintain outward unity. I am to own the claims of the Lord over heart, conscience and life and to depart from all that is unsuited to Him.

Do you say, How am I to know what is iniquity? By God's Word! I must depart from what dishonors Him; it matters not where or with whom I find it. We are not called to separate from Christians. If Christians go on with iniquity and cling to it, I must separate, but it is from iniquity, not from them. We should always have a tender heart for every Christian, but also be true to Christ and own His claims over everyone. In faithfulness to the Lord, we must not compromise truth in order to bring Christians together. We must be faithful to the Lord who is holy and true and will not have one point of truth compromised. If it is in the Lord's name and for Him, it must be worthy of Him who is soon coming to take the church out of this scene and present it to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

We may fail in a great many points, but this is the instruction for the saints: "Depart from iniquity." An earthly master may come down in his standard, but if it is for the Lord, let us be jealous of any compromise is not this true love to our brethren? That is what true love is. I distrust above all things the expressed love of any Christian who is untrue to Christ. Is it love to my brethren to encourage them even by a look in any bit of their path that is contrary to Christ? It is treachery. Can you call it love and fellowship if anything due to Christ is lost? It is the cruelest thing to those to whom it may be meant to be kind. In 1 Timothy 6:11, he is told to follow after righteousness. In our chapter, "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" is added to it.

What is a pure heart? We find the answer in 1 Peter 1:22. Compare also Titus 2:14 and 1 John 3:3. One who "purifieth himself, even as He is pure" is one who judges and refuses in thoughts, walk and ways all that is unsuited to Him. The Apostle compares the house of God to a great house with many vessels, but it is not a question of degrees of usefulness of the vessels; it is a condemnatory word; dishonor is disapproval. The truth disapproves them; therefore one must purge oneself from them, (I fit is not truth disapproving them, you get a sort of select company.)

Now he who has purged himself is ready to be taken up and used for the Lord's work, and verse 22 is his moral responsibility and his company. "But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." It is remarkable it should be "with them" here where the state of the church is such confusion—everything is mixed up, and we each have to tread our way through it, but not in isolation. Separation is one thing and one may have to sit alone, but he shall find out that there are others who have done the same, so he has others to walk with. We get the ordering of the path elsewhere, but here we have to learn what is to govern it—the principle on which we are to walk together. We are not to go on as we like in self-will. There is that which remains, what we get in 1 Corinthians 12. Being separated from all that denies that "there is one body" on earth, we are to come together on that ground.

We have 1 Corinthians 10 as well as 11 before us, and we know the Lord's word in Matthew 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The loaf on the table remains the outward expression of the unity of the body today. If there are only two or three gathered by the Holy Spirit, they are to think of the whole body in their hearts, and if only three are governed by this, it is not their oneness, but "there is one body" and they come together in acknowledgment of it. There is, so to speak, a chair at His table for every member of the body of Christ. Our responsibility is to acknowledge "there is one body." Our eyes of faith have been opened to it, and what we have to do is to acknowledge it practically.

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 13:1-12 PRO 13:1-12

1. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke." A good child will reverently receive and obey, both the instruction and the reprehension of his father: but there is no hope of him that laughs and scoffs when he is admonished or chidden [chided] for his faults.
2. "A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence." He that speaks well of others, or gives them faithful counsel, shall reap the benefit thereof himself: and so shall they that perfidiously calumniate or deceive them, suffer themselves that injury which they desired to do their neighbors.
3. "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." It is worth a man's pains to watch over his tongue; for he that carefully observes every word he speaks, preserves himself from much trouble and danger: but he that blurts out everything that comes into his head, not minding what he saith, is in the ready way to ruin.
4. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." There is nothing gotten by sloth, neither riches, nor learning; which he in vain desires that will not labor for them: but the diligent and industrious shall never want satisfaction, but enjoy perhaps a great deal more than he desired.
5. "A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame." A good man not only avoids but hates all manner of falsehood, both in word and deed: but the wicked delights to abuse others with such abominable lies and frauds, as make him no less loathsome than a stinking carcass; and so contemptible, that he dare not show his face for shame.

6. "Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner." The justice of all honest and upright designs will be a sufficient security to them: but all wicked contrivances are overthrown by their own iniquity.

7. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet bath great riches." You will be deceived if you judge of men by the outward appearance; for there are those who have the vanity to make a great show in the world, when they are not worth a farthing: and others, who are so cunning as to dissemble their vast estates under the garb of poverty.

8. "The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke." Rich men are not always so happy as they are imagined; for their wealth sometimes only serves to make them accused of high crimes, and then to bring them off with a huge sum of money which they pay to save their lives: but nobody is apt to find fault with the poor, or to bring any charge against them.

9. "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." The happiness of the just is great and illustrious, like the light of the sun; and increases still to their endless joy: but the happiness of the wicked is weak and dim, like the light of a candle; and will at last be utterly extinguished.

10. "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." They that have an high conceit of themselves and will yield to none, declare their folly; in that they can do nothing without strife and contention: but they that are so humble as to be advised by others, do all things prudently, in quietness and peace.

11. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase." Wealth ill gotten (by lying, gaming, cheating, etc.) soon wastes away: but what is gotten by honest labor swells to a greater heap, which molds not but still increases.

12. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life." The delay of that which a man eagerly expects is such an affliction, that it differs little from a lingering disease: but when he enjoys what he hath long looked for, it restores him presently to his former vigor and liveliness.

Christ's Love

Christ never makes a breach, except to come in and connect the soul and heart more with Himself, and it is worth all the sorrow that ever was, and more, to learn the least atom more of His love and of Himself, and there is nothing like that, nothing like Him, and it lasts.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Please explain James 5:7, "The early and latter rain."

ANSWER: It is God that gives the increase. The husbandman plows and plants and cultivates, then he waits with patience for the precious fruit of the earth. The rains give the increase.

Jehovah promised these rains if the Israelites were obedient (Deut. 1.1:13-14), but because of their wickedness the rains were withheld (Jer. 3:3; 5:24). On Israel's repentance they are encouraged to expect these rains again. Hosea 5:15; 6:1-3, and also Joel 2:23-32 and Zechariah 10:1, connect the fulfillment with "the day of the Lord" when Israel is restored. James 1:1 has Israel in view, and so looks on to the coming of the Lord for their blessing. The Christian waits to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-17). He looks for no signs.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:33). He formed the house of God of those one hundred and twenty and baptized them into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit came then and never went away again. He is here still, dwelling in every saved one and also in the house of God. Since then everyone that believed the gospel of his salvation has been added to that one body. The baptism of the Spirit took place then and can never be repeated. Christ is not said to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, nor is any individual baptized with the Holy Spirit. It reads, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Individuals are sealed and so added to the body formed at Pentecost. The Gentiles are also included in this action of the Spirit (Acts 11:15-16).

Joel's prophecy (ch. 2:28-32) was not fulfilled at Pentecost, but will be to usher in the day of the Lord, for Israel's deliverance. Peter quoted it to show that what was happening was not from men drunk with new wine, but like what Joel spoke of.

The church is not waiting for the kingdom with blessings on the earth, but for the coming of the Lord to meet us in the air—not on the earth (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

The woman in Revelation 12 is Israel of whom Christ, the man child, came. We are now in the last days (2 Tim. 3). Insubjection to God's Word increases. Paul said by the Spirit that women were to keep silence in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34), and he adds in verse 37, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Speaking with tongues is mentioned three times in Acts. The hundred and twenty spake with tongues, and were understood. The converts did not speak with tongues as far as we know. The Samaritans did not, nor the eunuch, nor Saul when he received the Spirit. The Gentiles in Acts

10:46 did to confirm Peter and those with him in admitting the Gentiles into the house of God. But notice, they magnified God; it was intelligent, not jabbering. Acts 19 is the other place, and there they prophesied; again, it was intelligent giving out the mind of God.

The gift of tongues is different in 1 Corinthians 14. Directions are given that such a gift is not to be used in the assembly, except someone can interpret (vs. 28). The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. But this so-called speaking in an unknown tongue comes on those who have given themselves up to it when they are alone or in a group without someone to interpret, when it can have no meaning. They say they cannot help it. What power is behind such ways?

In Acts 2:22, God bore witness to Jesus with power and signs and wonders, but we find in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 that one is coming after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. God's signs were at the beginning; Satan's signs are at the end. And the mystery of iniquity is working already; even now are there many antichrists (1 John 2:18). There is a demon or evil spirit behind every evil doctrine, giving it power in men's souls to hold them enthralled (1 John 4:1-3). Our only safety is to act on the Word of God. "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ [or, the Lord] depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

Drink for Yourself

No testimony, no preaching, no teaching, even if the matter of it be all right, is right teaching, when the soul is not filled for itself first from God. We must drink for ourselves that rivers may flow. Indeed, all else dries up the soul.

Lord's Nearness

Is the thought of the Lord's nearness welcome or unwelcome to your soul? Is the expectation of being with Him, without notice or delay, pleasant to your heart?

The true practical walk of the believer gives a right answer to these inquiries. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9). Moderation, or holy restraint in the use of present things, and gracious, liberal consideration of others, here approved as among the right ways of a saint, are such as would stand the light of the Lord if He were at this moment to appear.

Are our ways, then, such as suit the thought of His nearness and would abide the light of His presence? Have they or have they not this voice in them, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Could carnal levity, spiritual sloth, vanity, uncleanness, or the desire of gain, or could the lust of distinction, or even the haughty look, have a voice in it?

We know that these things cannot desire the day of the Lord, for it is to them a day of "darkness, and not light." Our behavior should be such as would introduce us to His presence without disturbance. For He comes, not to regulate, but to gladden us; not to put us in a right path, but to close a right path in glory. J. G. Bellett

Editorial: Still More to Learn

Surely every believer is chosen of God, that is, God wanted you and God wanted me. This is sovereign grace. And oh, how we should appreciate it and be thankful! Do any of us understand this and do we know why we, as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, are still left here in this world at this late time at the close of another millennium?

The God of all grace has a witness here to Himself and His grace. This puts every believer in a position of immense privilege and responsibility. We are left here to represent Christ. Do we today expect the world to desire and look with favor upon such a testimony? Did they want that perfect witness of Christ when He walked here in perfect love and grace and goodness nearly 2000 years ago? You know the answer.

There are at least two more reasons why we as believers are left here instead of being taken to be with Christ as soon as we are saved. One is to learn our own hearts. The other is to learn God's heart. Our time here in this world brings out in a wonderful way both of these, and we would not want to miss them.

What is so delightful is to learn Him and to learn of Him. The opportunity for that experience in learning is here and now. Of course, walking with Him is in the light. In 2 Corinthians 6, these words are used: righteousness, fellowship, concord, agreement, and then to these believers He says, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, He will dwell in them, and walk in them." To those who practically walk in this path of separation from the world and to the Lord He says, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Wonderful promise!

Paul, who had seen the glory and longed to be there, but as yet was not there, wrote this for us: "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him... that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.... Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:8-12).

So we see that Paul's time here was a wonderful time of learning, and especially the learning to know Christ. So it can be for us. Let us walk with Him, and let us talk with Him. The two on the way to Emmaus said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). Ed.

Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise,

As in a strange country"

Christ was a stranger in the whole world.

As & so

Two Words Coupled Together in John's Writings

The two words, as and so, convey to us some of those wonderful comparisons and measures of divine things which God has given us in the Scriptures. Let us look at a few of the places where they occur.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14).

Once sin came in, nothing short of the lifting up of the Son of Man—the cross—, could meet and satisfy God's holy and just requirements with respect to IL. The brazen serpent was the divinely appointed remedy for that day; so the Son of Man lifted up is the sole source of eternal life to all who believe. Nothing short of this work.. could meet, at the same time, God's holiness and our need. But it is also the righteous outlet for God's love—not now to one nation, but worldwide in its aspect. Here we have the measure of our distance as sinners—what we were as seen in the light of God's holiness. Nothing less than the lifting up of the Son of Man could meet the case and lay the groundwork, according to God, for the gift of eternal life.

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6:57).

The Lord Jesus was indeed the Sent One, the dependent Man on earth, who ever walked in perfect communion with, and dependence on, His Father. His words and His works were those which the Father had given Him to speak and to do. Now He is not only the giver of life, but food to sustain the life He gives. So our life is to be regulated on these principles—communion, obedience and dependence on Him, drawing from Him the resources to sustain the divine life and to carry us on from day to day.

"I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father" (John 10:14-15).

The sheep had heard His voice; He had called them by name, but what a measure of the intimacy of knowledge between Him and them, flowing from the divine life and nature possessed, is expressed in the words, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father."

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (John 15:9).

Can we take in fully the extent of the Father's love to the Son? Such is the measure of the Son's love to His people; we cannot grasp its extent, its breadth, its fullness, its abiding and unchangeable character. Love that would serve, cost what it might, love that led Him to give Himself up to death and the enduring of God's wrath against sin, love that rose superior to all that could try and test and prove it to the last extremity—it is divine love and absolute perfection.

"(Thou) hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:23).

Here is the Father's love to them whom He had given to the Son, seen in all its fullness when they shall be manifested before the universe in the same glory with Christ as truly one, loved as His own Son.. Is it not true now to faith?

"As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

As the accomplisher of redemption, the risen and glorified Man, the Son has taken His place on the Father's throne, waiting the day when He shall sit on His own throne. We are before God our Father, now in this world, in all the unclouded favor and acceptance in which Christ is.

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 20:21; 17:18).

The gospel of John speaks of the Son as the Sent One of the Father. He is thus mentioned more than forty times. We are not of the world as He was not, but sent into it as not belonging to it, just as the Father had sent Him. His path as the Man on earth—the Servant (He was God too, as we know)—was one of absolute, undeviating obedience, terminating only in death itself. The servants of God and saints of past ages had trodden the path of faith some-little way, but here was One who never swerved from the path of submission to His Father's will for a single moment. Passing through a world where every element was opposed, where everything bore the marks of sin and ruin, where the manifestation of perfect goodness drew out perfect hatred, He could draw His resources as the dependent One, the perfect Servant, from His Father. How truly He has marked out the path and principles of true service! And surely how great the distance at which we follow His steps.

Let us, then, sum up a little of what is expressed in these two words, as and so. We find in John 3:14 the measure of God's requirements with regard to sin, what His holiness demands, the lifting up of the Son of Man. In John 6:57, we find the measure of dependence in the one who; through receiving Him, has got this new life and nature. In John 10:14-15, we find the measure in which Christ knows His sheep, and they know Him in John 15:9, it is the measure of Christ's love to His people. In John 17:23, it is the measure of the Father's love to them to be displayed in glory. In 1 John 4:17, we find the measure of our present acceptance. And we find in John 20:21 the measure and principle of true service.

The believer's standing and place in Christ now is termed "perfection," as dispensationally distinguished from that of a Jewish believer under the law, which "made nothing perfect." To this Paul refers when he says that he labored that he "[might] present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). This I would term positional perfection.

The Vocation Wherewith Ye Are Called

Ephesians 2 and 4:1-16 EPH 2 EPH 4:1-16

There are two characters in which the church is looked at in the end of Ephesians 2: it grows up unto a holy temple in the Lord, and it is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Chapter 3 unfolds the mystery of the body of Christ, and in chapter 4, where it is spoken of as down here upon earth, it takes up our blessed privileges and exhorts that we may walk according to them.

The Apostle begins by speaking of the unity we are in, and here it is a question of the church's vocation and calling. This is a different thing from the Christian walking individually with Christ. Here it is what belongs to the church of God, and not what the individual ought to be. Here we get church vocation, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the church of God. The effect of God's presence is to judge self and make us feel our own nothingness, to fix the mind on God and His presence and give us a distinct sense of what we are. If I am thoroughly lowly in my own mind, self never comes out.

This wonderful vocation wherewith we are called, and of which we are exhorted to walk worthy, is that the church, the body of Christ, is the habitation of God through the Spirit. What an immense privilege it is that the church of God should be His dwelling-place down here. The effect of a complete redemption is made good on earth before the full, final result is. There was no dwelling-place on earth before redemption. He could and did walk with Adam in the garden, but He did not dwell with him. He could meet with Abraham and in gracious condescension sit at the table with him, but He did not dwell with him.

The moment He brings Israel out of Egypt, He will make them know that He has brought them out that He may dwell among them (Ex. 29:46). He will bless His children; He will guide them, sit at the table with them—anything that can testify of His grace and love. But until He has taken out a people for Himself, He never dwells there. He cannot dwell unless the place is fitted for Him who dwells. How complete and blessed is redemption; the people are so suited to His presence that He can come down and dwell among them.

God by reason of the value of the work of Christ can come and dwell here. It is this that brings His church into this responsible place. The question at once comes, Are we honoring the presence of God the Holy Spirit? If we get the ground on which it is, we get the completeness and absoluteness of what redemption is. Then He puts us on the responsibility of walking as such. The moment we get hold of this truth, that it is the dwelling-place of God by virtue of redemption, we see how it has failed. Where do we see any likeness at all of the very thing that gives it its character? What a solemn thing it is when that is spoiled and corrupted! Notwithstanding, God will make good all His promises and have the church as His dwelling-place in heaven.

None would now deny the fact of the day of Pentecost, but the distinct, definite reality that the Holy Spirit is here, how little it is recognized. We have almost gotten into the condition of John the Baptist's disciples, who said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

What John the Baptist had promised as distinctive of Christ, they did not know.

There is but "one body" and "one Spirit," and He is looking that they should maintain the perfect manifestation of it in the unity of the Spirit. Christ can have but one body. Then there is "one hope." "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

The uniform way of God is to set up blessing on man's responsibility, which has always failed, and then to set it up in the second Adam who never fails. Adam failed; Israel failed. We get the same thing with the priesthood: they offered strange fire; the sin offering was not offered and eaten within the holy place, and perhaps Aaron never went into the holiest of all in his robes of glory and beauty. Again Christ the High Priest never fails. So David, so Solomon, so Nebuchadnezzar. Christ will be the true Son of David. Nebuchadnezzar had power put into his hands, and he turns the power given him to evil; he sets up an image and puts the children into the fire. So the church: it has been set up to be the habitation of God, and it has failed. Paul tells us that the mystery of lawlessness was already working, that as soon as he was gone, grievous wolves would enter in, that evil would come in like a flood.

Put upon man's responsibility and called to keep this unity of the Spirit, to maintain it practically in the bond of peace, the church has totally failed. In it we find all kinds of oppositions and divisions, totally contrary to the unity of the Spirit. Where is the practical unity in the power of the Holy Spirit overcoming and binding the saints together, so that God's presence being there, there is nothing that is unsuitable to His presence?. Look at it in practice; it has failed. Individuals may crave after it; a remnant may seek in weakness to observe it, but this is the general state of things.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given Himself to redeem us. He died "that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52), and it ought to be on our hearts that it is scattered which Christ died together. He will gather them in heaven, but He gave Himself to gather the children of God in one when here, the children of God who were scattered. He must have it so in the unity of the Spirit, or nothing else.

There is (1) a unity connected with the Spirit, (2) a unity connected with the Lord, and (3) a unity connected with God.

1. The first is what the Holy Spirit by His presence constitutes absolutely in one. It is what is essential in its nature and unchangeable, "one body" called in "one hope." It has not two.
2. The second is the external profession of it—in the truth, of course—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism [one system of faith]."
3. Finally, there is a larger and wider range or sphere of unity. "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

In the saints, God has taken a central place, and when He takes up the universe as the display of His glory, the church is the center of it all and the habitation of God. What we get here is the central circle of all, God's thought in the church itself.

We have the same truth in Revelation 21. There is no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. A temple would be an obstruction to the light; "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." He fills with His glory that wherein He dwells, and

others get the light thereof. The church ought to have been so down here, for now it is the dwelling-place of God, that in it might shine out to all around His glory who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

It is wonderful to think that God has taken the church that He may set Himself in it to display His glory to the world. Yet we find every wickedness there. Wickedness not even named among the heathen was found in the church.

Then in Ephesians 4:7-8 we get back to the individual again. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." It is striking as regards the completeness of the triumph of Christ. Notice here the extent of what He does. Christ comes and takes us out of Satan's power altogether and so completely delivers us that He makes us the vessels of His power to destroy Satan's again. So completely are we delivered that we are associated with Christ as the Lord's host in putting down His enemies. He gives us our place of service in power, because He has Himself destroyed the power of Satan. He has ascended up, the witness in His own self that He has broken, through death, the power of Satan. His victory over everything is complete and He associates us with Himself as the instruments of His power.

"Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (vs. 9). Here we get Christ Himself as Redeemer. Faith knows that it has got the Christ who, as man, goes down where sin had brought the first man, truly and really breaks and annuls the power of Satan. Then as man He goes up to the right hand of God. If I look at Christ, I cannot see a place where Satan triumphed over man that is not a witness of His power. We must have faith to see it, and it will be displayed publicly hereafter. The whole power of Satan is null for faith; death is gain—it is "absent from the body... present with the Lord." All this is founded on His having led captivity captive. So then faith knows no place that Christ does not fill. I can say of Christ, He has gone down as man to the dust of death and right up to the throne of God, and this as man. What a place for man!

In verses 11-16 we get the whole unfolding of ministry, but here we do not get any gifts that are signs of power as in Corinthians. He is not occupied with this here. Christ is occupied with His own work to have the church for Himself. We have gifts here and ordinary ministries—persons as such. We get specific ministry—prophets are prophets, apostles are apostles. And then we get the whole body taken in by "that which every joint supplieth."

What a place we occupy in the purpose of God! And this would be impossible if redemption, which puts us spotless in the presence of God, were not complete! It is the place where He chooses to dwell, because He has redeemed it to Himself. What a place in which He sets us. In the world that rejected and crucified His Son, God has a place to dwell.

How far have we kept that, as God originally set it up? "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" as Jeremiah said (only the church is not a flock; it is the habitation of God through the Spirit—the body of Christ). He abides with us more really and truly than with Israel. The Lord said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." How truly it is, therefore, that He gives man a place in Himself, and sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the church. How far does what is called the church, in any shape or form, answer to it?

The responsible, outward church is not cut off yet, but it has failed. Infidelity and popery abound on all sides, though God is at the same time working graciously. If a person were to look for the manifestation of the church of God and the Spirit working in it, where would he find it? But the Head never fails, whatever the individual does. He never can find himself in trials and difficulties in which he is not bound to act according to the divine principles God has revealed, and where there is not the power of Christ for him. It is impossible that Christ can be anything but sufficient for us. The perfection and faithfulness of Christ are ours, and they, as the truth of God, have never changed.

He who is perfected forever as to his conscience—cleansed from all his guilt and saved from wrath to come by the blood of Jesus—should cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Surely, for him whose sins are put away by the sacrifice of Jesus, it is but reasonable service that he should present his body a living sacrifice, in order that in him might be seen the reflex to the glory of Christ on high, produced by the Spirit of God which dwells in him.

Bible Challenger-11-November V.11

The First letter of each of the following responses will form an expression denoting something mighty under which we do well to humble ourselves. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "Had spoken unto them, He was received up into ____." [1]
2. "I was ____ to require of the king a bond of soldiers." [1]
3. "There is ____ better for a man, than that he should eat and drink." [1]
4. "There was a ____ throughout all the city." [2]
5. "Behold, I see the heavens ____ and the Son of Man standing." [1]
6. "Thou speakest as one of the ____ speaketh." [2]
7. "That he may give me timber to make beams for the ____ of the palace." [1]
8. "This man, after He had ____ one sacrifice for sins." [1]
9. "It is Christ that ____, yea rather, that is risen again." [1]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

A Touching Contrast

The woman with the alabaster box stands forth in bright and beautiful contrast with all around. While the chief priests, elders and scribes were plotting against Christ in the palace of the high priest, she was anointing His body in the house of Simon the leper. While Judas was planning to go to the chief priest to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, she was pouring the precious contents of her alabaster box upon His Person. Touching contrast! She was wholly absorbed with her object, and her object was Christ. Those who knew not His worth and beauty might pronounce her sacrifice a waste. Those who could sell Him for thirty pieces of silver might talk of giving to the poor, but she heeded them not. Their surmisings and murmurings were nothing to her. She had found her all in Christ. They might murmur, but she could worship and adore. May we, like her, always find our place at the feet of Jesus, loving, adoring, admiring and worshipping His blessed Person. May we also be willing to spend and be spent in His service.

Young Christian

The World

The world is corrupt; it lies in sin; it has rejected the Savior—God come in grace. It is not only that man has been cast out of Eden because he was a sinner, which is true and suffices for his condemnation, but there is more. God has done much to reclaim him. He gave the promises to Abraham; He called Israel to be His people; He sent the prophets, and last of all, His only Son. God Himself came in grace, but man—as far as he could do it—cast out the God who was in the world in grace. Therefore the Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world." The last thing, God could do was to send His Son, and He has done it. "I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him." But "they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him."

The world is a world which has already rejected the Son of God, and where does it find its joy? In God or in Christ? No, in the pleasures of the flesh, in grandeur, in riches: it seeks to make itself happy without God, that it may not feel its want of Him. It would not need thus to seek happiness in pleasures if it were happy. Formed by God with a breath of life for Himself, man cannot be satisfied with anything less than God.

Read the history of Cain. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod. Then he built a city and called it after the name of his son, Enoch. Afterward Jabal was the father of such as have cattle (the riches of that day), and his brother's name was Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. Then Zillah bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.

We have here the world and its civilization complete; not having God, they must make the world pleasant and beautiful it will be said, But what is the harm of harps and organs? None, surely; the harm is in the heart of man who uses these things to make himself happy without God, forgetting Him, flying from Him. He seeks to content himself in a world of sin and to drown the misery of this-condition of alienation from God by hiding himself in the corruption that reigns there. The elegance which man affects makes him only too often slip insensibly into this corruption which he seeks to conceal with mirth.

But the new man, born of God, partaking of the divine nature, cannot find its delight in the world—it shuns that which would separate it from God. Where the flesh finds its happiness and its pleasures, the spiritual life finds none. James speaks of actual corruption, but he does not speak as though one part of the world were corrupt, and another pure; on the contrary, it is defiled and corrupt in its principles, and in every way. He who is conformed to it is corrupt in his walk. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Whoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. We must keep ourselves pure from the world itself. We have, indeed, to pass through it, and to be, in passing through it, the epistle of Christ, undefiled by the world which surrounds us, as Christ was undefiled in the midst of a world that would not receive Him. J. N. Darby

The Name of Jesus

It is truly edifying to trace through the New Testament the varied virtues of the name of Jesus. We shall just refer to a few passages.

1. There is salvation in the name of Jesus. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The soul that trusts in the name of Jesus gets all the saving virtue which belongs to that name.

2. There is eternal life in the name of Jesus. "These [things] are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). The soul that simply trusts in the name of Jesus becomes a partaker of His life, and that life can never be forfeited, because it is eternal.

3. There is remission of sins through the name of Jesus. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). The soul that simply trusts in the name of Jesus is forgiven, according to the value of that name, in God's judgment. It matters not what or who he may be that comes to God in the name of Jesus: he gets all the credit, all the value, all the virtue of that name, and could no more be rejected than the One in whose name he comes. If I go into a bank with a wealthy and trustworthy man's name on a check, I enter in all the confidence which his wealth and credit can give. It matters not what or who I am; I come in his name. Thus it is with a sinner who comes to God in the name of Jesus.

4. The name of Jesus is the power of prayer. "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" (John 14:13-14). The believer, coming to God in the name of Jesus, could no more be refused than Jesus Himself.

5. The name of Jesus gives power over Satan and over all manner of evil. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18). (See also Acts 3:6; 16:18; James 5:14.) It may be said that this power is no longer available. I reply that we are tracing, through the New Testament, the power and value of the name of Jesus. That name has power in heaven, power on earth, power in hell, power over angels, power over men, power over devils. Let faith use that precious, matchless, powerful, all-prevailing name.

6. God's assembly, wherever it is, is gathered in the name of Jesus. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Observe, it does not say, "Where two or three meet." Men may meet upon any ground, or for any object they please, but the Holy Spirit only can gather unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. The name of Jesus will be the object of universal and everlasting homage. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow, of things [these] in heaven, and things [those] in earth, and things [those] under the earth" (Phil. 2:9-10).

May God the Holy Spirit unfold to our souls more of the power and value of the name of Jesus, so that we may more fully know what we have in Him and be enabled to use His name in more holy confidence at all times, under all circumstances and for all purposes. Christian Truth

Bible Challenger-10-October Answersv.11

1. I nterpret Gen. 41:15
2. H ouse 1 Kings 9:3
3. A ccepted 2 Car. 6:2
4. V oice Deut. 5:28
5. E xcellent Don. 5:14
6. H eal 2 Kings 20:5
7. E vil Acts 9:13
8. A ll Job 16:2
9. R emember Hob. 3:2
10. D oeth John 15:15

"I HAVE HEARD of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Job 42:5).

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 13:13-25PRO 13:13-25

13. "Whoso despiseth the word shall he destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shone reworted." He that despises the good admonitions or counsels that are given him, is his own enemy, and destroys himself: but he that reverently submits to the divine commandment makes God his Friend, who will reward him for it.

14. "The law of the wise is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death." The instructions of a good man ought to be as a law to him that receives them; for like the water of a perpetual spring, they are most beneficial: especially to preserve him from those pernicious and destructive principles whereby too many are ensnared,

15. "Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard." A prudent, pious and regular behavior, is most amiable and acceptable to all men: but the conversation of such as live by no law but their own lusts, like rough way, is grievously uneasy.

16. "Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly." All prudent persons are so cautious not to discredit themselves, that they undertake nothing but with due deliberation, and what they understand: but a fool discovers his weakness to be greater than was thought, by rash meddling with matters out of his reach.

17. "A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health." A messenger, or a minister, that wickedly betrays his trust, is so injurious to (his prince or) him that employs him, that he shall not escape a just punishment: but he that faithfully dischargeth this office (healing suppose, or preventing differences and breaches) procures safety to himself, as well as to the person that used his service.

18. "Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored." He that proudly rejects instruction, and disdains to be checked in his lewd courses, is likely to be a beggar, and exposed to the public scorn: but he that is so humble as to give a due regard to reproof, and to correct his errors, not only gains a just esteem, but is likely to rise unto dignity and honor.

19. "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil." It is an high satisfaction to enjoy what we earnestly desire: but fools herein defeat themselves; being so wedded to their wickedness, that they will not quit it, if that must be the condition of their being so happy.

20. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." He that keeps company with wise and good men is likely to be so himself; that is, to be happy: but he who associates himself with the wicked, shall be as certainly ruined, as he will be unavoidably infected with their wickedness.

21. "Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid." The wickedness of sinners pursues them to their unavoidable destruction: and the good which righteous men do, will infallibly return into their own bosom, and reward them with many blessings.

22. "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." A man that doeth good with his estate, takes the surest course to settle it upon his posterity for many generations: but the wealth of him, who regards nothing but his own sinful lusts and pleasures, shall be transferred from his family unto one that is truly virtuous.

23. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment." A poor man, many times, makes a plentiful provision for himself and his family, out of a few acres of land; which he manages judiciously and honestly: but there is a sort of men, whose larger estates are wasted; either for want of skill to improve their ground, or because they do not pay the hireling his wages.

24. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Fond affection, which makes a parent forbear to chastise his child for the faults that cannot otherwise be amended, is no better than hatred; for it helps to undo him: therefore he that truly loves his child must not be so indulgent; but as soon as ill inclinations begin to appear, while he is tender and flexible, give him early correction as well as admonition, before he have accustomed himself to the doing evil.

25. "The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want." A righteous man never wants satisfaction, because his desires are moderate, and he lives in a temperate use of God's blessings: but wicked men, some of them bring themselves to extreme poverty, by their luxury and riot; and others of them are indigent even in the midst of the greatest

abundance; because their desires are insatiable, and they never think they have enough.

Two Domains

The domain of the Spirit of God is the truth.

The domain of the spirit of the world includes everything that is not the truth. His method of gaining his end is deception. He is the one who "deceiveth the whole world [habitable earths]" (Rev. 12:9).

The world itself is a gigantic and complicated

deception... whose promises are not fulfilled,

whose honors quickly fade, whose prizes are cheap,

whose pleasures do not satisfy,

whose riches corrupt,

whose praises are insincere...

in which, in a word, the real value of everything is disguised and misrepresented.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will you please explain the passage in John 16:23, "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." To what time does "that day" refer?

ANSWER: To the present time. The meaning is that which the Lord further explains in verse 26, that they would not have to come to Him with requests, as if the Father were inaccessible to them, and they needed Him to go to the Father for them, but they would be able to go directly to the Father in His name—in the consciousness of the new and blessed place of acceptance in Himself, which by the Spirit they would have. It must be remembered that this is a question of approach to God as such, not a denial of the fitness of addressing the Lord also in prayer in due time and place, still less of worshipping Him, which, as the Lamb, all heaven does.

There is no possible place of distance from sin

but in nearness to God.

There are indeed joys by the way, but the moment

we rest in them, they become, as the quails

of Israel (Num. 11), poison.

God of Love and Mercy

Nothing but redemption can bring to the heart of a poor sinner what God's character is as love. God is God. Let Him have His own way; yes, let Him have it! There is nothing like it for His glory—nothing like it for our needs. He knew right well what He did in giving Christ. He came not only to save a people, but to have a saved people with Himself in glory.

We never rightly see the full measure of the blessing wherewith God has blessed us unless we see that it all sprang up in His own mind, as the God rich in mercy. God always keeps His place of the God rich in mercy. There is no end to what He will give. He has given us His Son, and He will send Him a second time from off the throne to take us up in bodies of glory, to show out in us the riches of His mercy. God always acts as God. How utterly beyond all the thoughts of man, His having sent down His only-begotten Son to put away sin, because none but He could do it. G. V. Wigram

Editorial: Patient Waiting for Christ

This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Such were the words spoken to men of Galilee in Acts 1. Would you like to be one of those who will have that blessed promise fulfilled to them? Can you think of anything more grand and glorious? It shall certainly come to pass for many saints of God, and maybe even today for those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Probably many who are living here on the earth at this present time will see Him come. Are you expecting Him? Are the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming your present hope? Is there anything in your life that would make you want to postpone or delay His coming, or are you gladly waiting and watching for Him?

In this final Editorial we can point you and all of us to nothing better. As we near the end of six thousand years of the first man's history, there is a good indicator that time is about to run its course.

Another stirring message for us is this: "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5). If, in our thoughts, we are enjoying the love of God, patience will be easy for us. The love of God is so great that it swallows up and fills all our thoughts with thoughts of Him, for He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

Do you have a longing, a deep desire in your soul? He can fill it even to overflowing, so that like David you can say, "My cup runneth over." And also, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psa. 23:5; 34:1). Meanwhile, the instruction and privilege for us today is to "go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:13-16).

Another verse for us as we wait for Him and enjoy Him is this: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). "Meditate upon these things" (vs. 15), for "my meditation of Him shall be sweet" (Psalm 104:34).

'Tis not far off—the hour

When Christ will claim His own!

We soon shall hear that voice of power,

The Lord Himself shall come!

Ed.

It is by looking to Jesus that we can give up anything.

The Mystery of Godliness: Practical Considerations

"If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:15-16). The mystery of godliness, I believe, brings in the practical part for us. Here is the source, the origin, of the mystery of godliness. God manifest in the flesh is what starts it out.

When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son born of a woman—God manifest in the flesh. The mystery of godliness has come down to give us a demonstration of what it is, and it is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is that mystery of godliness in person here on earth. He came down to show us, so we have it in the life of the Lord Jesus. He perfectly demonstrated to us what the mystery of godliness is. That is the beauty of reading the gospels where we see Him demonstrating it for us. It is given to us here for an example for us to imitate in the church of the living God.

Christ is no longer here to demonstrate this, but His body, the church, is viewed as the house of God. It is in the house where this mystery of godliness is demonstrated and ought to be seen. That is what the church is to be on this earth. We are the only Bible that a lot of people read. We, God's people, are the house of God here, the place where the order and government of God Himself are demonstrated, so we ought to function in that way. It is not the counsels of God coming out as it is in Ephesians, showing us what He purposes and has done and will do, but it is a practical thing that is shown out—this mystery of godliness.

It started out with God manifest in the flesh, and so the Spirit of God could justify the Lord Jesus in all His actions. It is of God; there were no flaws, nothing was there to contradict. Everyone who came to the Lord to find fault or to accuse was turned away in total exposure of the reality of what their purposes really were, for the light of God exposes.

The Lord Jesus was seen of angels. The angels for the first time saw their Creator when He was born and placed in Bethlehem's manger. There you get them praising God in that humble scene—God come down here on the earth. I can't help thinking that if it were possible, the angels would be envious of humans, because God became a human being like us. He was seen of angels, not made in the likeness of angels. They behold in us, the church, the manifold wisdom of God, because God has expressed all this to us.

Compare this to a marriage. We are not the audience; we are the participants with God, while the angels are there observing. John 3:28-29 says, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that bath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." John the Baptist was not in the intelligence of the relationship with Christ that we are. He knew his relationship with Christ as the friend of the

Bridegroom, and that was as close as it had been revealed to him. Some in heaven will enjoy being friends of the Bridegroom, but He that has the bride is the Bridegroom. How beautiful!

In 1 Timothy 3 we read: "Preached unto the Gentiles." So the bride is purposely chosen out of the Gentiles, which was a new thing at that time, for only the Jews up to that time had been receiving blessing in such a favorable way.

"Believed on in the world." There is no limitation to the extension of the outpouring of God's grace today and no exclusion; it is to all.

"Received up into glory." The mystery of godliness doesn't end here on earth; the Lord Jesus was received up into glory. If those leaders of the Jews had known that that would be the result, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But they did crucify Him, and He is up there waiting to receive His bride.

That is the mystery of godliness, and that is what the Lord Jesus wants to see demonstrated in our lives. If it involves being different, let us be different and like Christ. D. B.

Joshua

Lessons for Believers About Possessing the Truth Given to Us

The Promise

Joshua heard directly from the Lord that the long-promised land was now theirs; all they had to do was cross the Jordan River and take it as theirs. In Joshua 1:2 God says: "Go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to thee, even to the children of Israel." This is the first lesson for believers; there is much more to Christianity than simply knowing what God has given us; we need to step forward and possess it, taking hold of it and living in it. God then tells Joshua what the people have to do to carry this out. Verse 3 says, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." The point for believers, as they learn a principle from the Word of God by the Spirit, is to put it into action in their lives.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated; 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" (Col. 3:1-3).

Dimensions

Verse 4 defines the boundaries of the land: "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." This has been interpreted as follows: from the Great Desert in the south (Egypt), to the Great Mountains of the north (Lebanon), from the Great River in the east (Euphrates), to the Great Sea in the West (the Mediterranean). From the standpoint of the children of Israel standing at Jordan's bank, this entire territory was occupied by enemies. For us as believers, we see the entire world as the domain of Satan and his followers.

The boundaries have typical meaning for us. The desert suggests the fact that the world cannot give us any sustenance; it is dry and devoid of necessary food. Only the Lord can provide what the believer needs day by day.

The mountains suggest the power of the world, over which the believer, in his own strength, cannot triumph. But we know that Christ has overcome the world.

The river suggests the prosperity of the world. In an otherwise arid land, a great river provides the water necessary to produce crops and sustain life. We believers are naturally attracted by the world's perceived prosperity, but we know it will not last. The only real prosperity for believers is spiritual, the result of obedience to the Word of God and reliance upon the Lord Jesus all the time.

The sea to the west suggests the restlessness of the world. Man, in his natural state, proves to himself over and over again that he is never satisfied with what he has. As a result of the work of Christ for us (typified by crossing the Red Sea) we have peace with God. As a result of the work of Christ in us (typified by crossing the Jordan and living in the promises), we have the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Strength and Courage

Four times in the first chapter (vss. 6-7, 9 and 18) Joshua is told to be strong and of a good courage, or to be strong and courageous. It is connected always with obedience. In verse 7 God adds: "That thou mayest Observe to do according all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest," The point for believers is that we cannot be either strong or courageous in spiritual things in our own strength. We need to learn that we are feeble failures and that all our strength and encouragement is in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. But to see such strength in action, we need to be obedient to the Word of God. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (fatties 1:22).

Bordering on Canaan

Two and a half tribes (Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh) chose not to live on the west side of Jordan with the rest. Instead, they thought first of their possessions, their cattle, and chose land on the east side of Jordan, which was described in Numbers 32:1 as "a place for cattle." But they were totally supportive of the other tribes in the process of subduing the enemies occupying the land to the west. They were people of faith—faith that God would carry out His promises to Israel—but they felt it was more important to provide well for their cattle than to exactly follow the instructions of God and actually occupy the Land of Promise. They were one with the nine and a half tribes but were weak in faith. They are not typical of worldly Christianity, but rather of earthly Christianity.

What they did was lower the position God had promised by relating it totally to the details of daily living. Such Christians claim power in their service for the Lord, but they know little of the extent of His resources. The full blessing that we can claim is to know the joy of entering now into where a glorified Christ is to be found.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not" (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:1).

Centered on Christ in glory, we will be drawn away from this world, and the motive for our walk will no longer be "much cattle." It will not be easy to take possession of all our present privileges in Christ. Satan and his forces are always there working against us. But faith enables us to take possession of the promises, and the enemy flees.

The Passover, the Red Sea and the Jordan River

All three are types of the cross of Christ, but in different aspects: The Passover shows us the cross of Christ as a shelter from the judgment of God, and it shows that only the blood of a lamb (a look ahead to the perfect Lamb of God) can ensure that shelter. God judged Egypt and kept Israel safe. Atonement was made.

The Red Sea emphasizes our redemption. Exodus 15:13 says, "Thou in Thy mercy has, led forth the people which Thou last redeemed." This is the Savior-God whose people have nothing to do but stand still and observe their deliverance. And in so doing they come out on the other side of the sea safe and sound, a type of Christ's death and resurrection for us. The safe pathway for the redeemed becomes the grave for the Egyptian army.

The Jordan River signifies death in another way; this time it is the end of man in the flesh, and, at the same time, the end of Satan's power. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). At the Red Sea the children of Israel saw the enemy behind them slain on the seashore. At the Jordan the enemy is in front of them. But the enemy does not swing into action until after they had crossed into the Land. So with us; it is only when we try to lay hold upon the fullness of the promises that Satan gets busy. But there is full power at our disposal to disperse the enemy and live in the territory of the promises of God.

"He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). L. Perry

"He Careth for You"

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young." How beautifully this shows us the tender care God has over all His creatures! He fails not to find a house for the most worthless of birds and a nest for the most restless. What confidence this should give us! How we should rest! What repose the soul gets that casts itself upon the watchful, tender care of Him who provides so fully for the need of all His creatures.

Bible Challenger-00-December V.11

The first letter of each of the following responses will form a word signifying a negative response in someone because of works or actions on the part of others. (Sad to say, it may be our actions before God.) [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. "The sword _____ one as well as another." [1]
2. "Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, _____." [3]
3. " _____ the little children to come unto Me." [1]
4. "They said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel _____." [4]
5. "He _____ till the going down of the sun to deliver him." [1]
6. "And turned away his face, and would _____ no bread." [1]
7. "They have _____ ten thousands, and to me..." [3]
8. "Crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the _____." [3]
9. "He held up his Father's hand, to remove it from _____." [2]
10. "And, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their Friend, _____." [2]

Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Metropolitanism

Joshua 11:10-13

"And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn" (Joshua 11:10-13).

In the beginning of the chapter we find that Israel's victories bring fresh war upon them, but the confederation of their enemies only serves to deliver them all together into their hands. If God will not have peace, it is because He will have victory.

In verses 10-13, a new principle is set before us. God Will in no way allow the world's seat of power to become that of His people, for His people must depend exclusively on Him. The natural consequence of taking Hazor would have been to make it the seat of government and a center of influence in the government of God. Then this city could be that for God which it had before been for the world: "For Hazor before!" me was the head of all those kingdoms."

But it was just the contrary. Hazor is totally destroyed. God will not leave a vestige of former power; He will make all things new. The center and the source of power must be His, entirely and exclusively His. 'This is a very important lesson for His children, if they would preserve their integrity.

The Nature and End of Suffering

It is, not so much from what trials or sorrows we suffer, but how we suffer—the extent or amount of our sufferings—which determines the purpose of God in them; with every suffering, be it imaginary or otherwise, it is as I feel it that God purposes that a corresponding virtue of His grace should grow up in me. The suffering is to bring out a peculiar virtue from His own grace which no other suffering could bring out. Certain preparations bring out certain desired colors. It is through the tears of the firmament that the colors of the rainbow are obtained, But I mean more than this; the suffering, or the depression, indicate the nature of the contrast or correlative which this pressure is appointed to elicit. If the pressure is great and peculiar, then some great and peculiar characteristic of the grace within is thereby to be evoked.

You thresh wheat for the grain, but you grind the grain to make flour—the produce is useful according to the severity and peculiarity of the process by which it is made available for use. We dry grapes for raisins; we bruise them for wine. Yet, the same grapes which make raisins might have been made wine if only they had been subjected to a more severe pressure.

Questions and Answers

QUESTIONS: 1. What is the Pentateuch? 2. Who wrote it? 3. What is the Decalogue?

ANSWER: 1. The first five books of the Old Testament are generally known as the Pentateuch, although the Jews call them the "Torah." The word is from the Greek and means "five books."

2. It was written by Moses. Critics and "would-be" wise men have sought to deny the authorship of Moses. We might add at this point that while Moses was the penman, he wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. It is divinely given, although Moses was the instrument used to write it. There is abundant evidence that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and we could refer to many scriptures in the New Testament where Moses' name is directly connected with it. The Lord Jesus Himself so speaks: "Have ye not read in the book of Moses?" (Mark 12:26). "If they hear not Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:31). "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets" (Luke 24:27). See also John 5:46-47 and 2 Cor. 3:15, which is a standing proof of the proof of Scripture. The Jews zealously guard the "Torah" and it is read regularly in their synagogues; yet, while it speaks of the Lord Jesus, the "veil is upon their heart" and they fail to see Him in it.

3. The word "Decaloguc" is of Greek origin and means "ten words," or the ten commandments. How blessed to know more than the Decalogue! "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

The Three Taverns: the Appian Way Station

Along the famous Appian Way, a paved road that ran from ancient Rome to the Bay of Naples, many processions had traveled. Over it mighty conquerors made their way victoriously to the great city, bringing along captives and other tokens of victory. About the year 63 A.D. two little companies of Christians could be seen making their way (very likely on foot) from the world metropolis toward the sea. One company went as far as "The Three Taverns," about thirty-three miles from Rome, while the other went on about ten miles farther to "Appii-Forum."

History gives a rather dark picture of the conditions along the road, and the bad reputation of the two named stations on it. Why were these early Christians traveling along this road? Was it to meet some great personage, some mighty conqueror? What motive prompted them to make what was in those days such a long, hard trip? It was love that took them forward on that journey. The news had reached them that the Apostle Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus, had arrived the week before at Puteoli, a city on the Bay of Naples. When they landed they found "brethren" there and, as they desired, Paul and his party remained one week with them.

It was springtime now, after a strenuous and hazardous winter. Paul the prisoner, his friends, the soldiers and other prisoners had started for Rome the fall before. After a terrible storm in the Mediterranean, the ship was wrecked and they were stranded on the Island of Malta. Now at last the great Apostle to the Gentiles was approaching the great and wicked city of Rome. This was his first trip to Rome; he had often longed to go there, as he says in the letter he wrote to the Roman Christians. We do not know how the gospel was carried to them, but the Apostle Paul had not done it, and as far as we know, no other apostle had either. God had ordered it that others should carry His glad tidings to Rome.

That precious bond that unites all the children of God was surely felt and manifested in this touching scene. Paul loved the dear saints whom he had not seen, and they loved him. Many of them had not long before been pagan worshippers of false gods, without God and without love for His people. Now they were drawn together by the same Spirit. Paul had written to them, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (Rom. 1:11-12).

He had written this perhaps about three years before, just previous to his arrest in Jerusalem. At that time he did not know that when he did go to see them, he would go as a prisoner.

Now the time that Paul looked forward to had arrived—he was approaching Rome where there were many who were dear to him. How would they treat him, a prisoner? Would they welcome him? He did not have to wait until he reached the city to find out and see evidence of love and affection. Prisoner or no, when they heard he was coming, many of the saints took up their journey to meet him en route and escort him to the city. To the teeming multitudes of the great city Paul was nothing, but he was the greatest servant the Lord ever had—the great Apostle of the Gentiles, although a prisoner under military guard.

Paul had desired to be a help to them and to be comforted and encouraged by the faith in them; thus they would encourage each other. How sweet and precious the fact that each is a member in that one body and each has his own particular place to fill and his own function to perform.

No one doubts that Paul would be a great help to those dear saints at Rome, but notice how he was first helped and encouraged by them. In Acts 28:15 we read that when Paul saw those fellow-members of the one body, "he thanked God, and took courage." No doubt Paul had natural fears and dread as he approached that great city for his trial before Caesar. The ordeals of his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea had not been effaced from his memory. He had suffered much for Christ in both cities, and in Jerusalem the Lord stood by him one night and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

When he and all on board ship had been in that terrible storm for many days, "an angel of God" stood by him at night and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:24). But this time as Paul neared Rome the Lord did not appear, but He used His people to strengthen and encourage him. How touching is that scene along the Appian Way, as Paul with Luke and Aristarchus came along the road to receive a loving embrace and words of comfort and cheer. Perhaps never before or since was such a scene enacted on that paved Roman road. Surely God looked down on them that day, and it was He who was using fellow-Christians to comfort and strengthen His faithful and wearied servant.

And, fellow-Christian, have we not each one of us opportunities to encourage one another? Which of us have not at some time felt the need of a word in season to lift up hands that hang down? And if we have such times, so have all the rest of the saints. If we have received such cheer, may we not desire to be able to render it to others? Yes, even Christ's greatest servant needed and received words and acts of encouragement, for which he thanked God. P. Wilson

When we are really weak God never leaves us,
but when unconscious of our infirmities we have to
learn them by experience.

Pride

The life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are a standing rebuke to every form of pride to which we are liable. Take for instance:

1. Pride of birth and rank—"Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55).
2. Pride of wealth—"The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20).
3. Pride of place—"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23),
4. Pride of appearance—"He hath no form nor comeliness" (Isa. 53:2).
5. Pride of reputation—He "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7).
6. Pride of independence—"Many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke 8:3).
7. Pride of learning—"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15).
8. Pride of position—"I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22:27).
9. Pride of popularity—"He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3).
10. Pride of ability—"I can of Mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30).
11. Pride of retort—"The chief priests accused Him of many things: but [Jesus] answered nothing" (Mark 15:3).
12. Pride of sanctity—"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2).

Proverbs

Simon Patrick on the Proverbs 1683

Chapter 14:1-17PRO 14:1-17

1. "Every wise Woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." He hath a great treasure, whosoever he be, that hath a wise and virtuous wife; for she alone by her diligence and prudent administration, is able to raise her family, and increase its riches and reputation: but she that is foolish, and void of goodness, by her negligence, ill management, and luxury, without any other assistance, will lay it low, and waste all that hath been gotten by her predecessor's care.
2. "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth Him." He that sincerely discharges his duty in all the actions of his life, hath a due regard and reverence to the Lord; from which all virtue flows: but he that cares not what he doth, so he cloth but satisfy his own lusts, which is the very fountain of all wickedness; lives in a profane contempt

of His Majesty.

3. "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. A fool is so insolent that he boldly calumniates [hitters maliciously false charges] and wounds the reputation of others, though it come home at last, with a terrible back-blow up In himself: but wise men are careful] of their words, not to offend, much less abuse the meanest person; and thereby they remain in safety.

4. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox." If the fields lie fallow and be neglected, a famine must needs follow: but good husbandry bestowed upon them makes great plenty.

5. "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies." A person of integrity will not be prevailed with all, either for fear or favor, to justify the least untruth: but a man of no conscience, who hath accustomed himself to lying, cares not how many falsehoods he testifies; which he utters without any difficulty.

6. "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth." He that scoffs and jeers at everything he reads or hears, would be thought wise; but loses all his pains, which perhaps he takes, to be so: when a serious person, who doth not think himself too wise to learn, easily and quickly attains the knowledge of things necessary, and useful for him.

7. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." Observe a fool (and a wicked man is no better) as diligently as thou pleases, and thou shalt never learn any good from him: and therefore it is best to flee the company of such persons, whose discourse thou perceivest tends to nothing but vice and mischief.

8. "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit." The greatest cunning and subtlety that a truly wise and good man studies, is to understand what he ought to do, and what to avoid, upon all occasions: but all the skill of wicked men, such is their folly, lies in cheating tricks, and in devising arts of circumvention and deceit.

9. "Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favor." Lewd men, as if it were but a sport, care not what injury they do their neighbors, and when they have done, laugh at those that talk to them of making satisfaction: but among men exactly virtuous there is nothing but good will, which makes them live without offense, or presently reconcile themselves to those they have offended.

10. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Nobody can know what another suffers, so well as he himself: and he alone is privy to the greatness of that joy, which springs from the happy conclusion of his sufferings.

11. "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." Men of sincere integrity are happier in a mean cottage, than the wicked are in their palaces: for, when the great and potent families of those wicked men are overturned, the despicable family of the sincerely pious shall flourish and grow illustrious.

12. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end there of are the ways of death." Examine everything strictly and impartially, and be not led merely by thy appetite: for that makes many actions seem innocent, which in the issue prove deadly destructive.

13. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful: and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Do not think that every one that laughs is merry, or that profuse and immoderate joy is true pleasure; for it leaves the heart

more heavy and sad afterward, especially when the mind reflects upon it: nay, such is the vanity of this present life, there is no joy without a mixture of sorrow; which oft-times treads so close upon its heels, that it immediately follows.

14. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied front himself." He that, to avoid a danger, revolts from those virtuous courses, unto which he knows he ought to have adhered, shall bring upon himself misery enough, by his own devices: but a truly good man is, even in this, far-superior to him, that though he should suffer, his on integrity and the clearness and quietness of his conscience, gives him abundant satisfaction.

15. "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." It is a mark of great silliness to be credulous; that is, to take all those for friends who make profession of it, and easily to follow every one's advice: for a prudent man proceeds cautiously; examining, before he trusts; and considering well, before he does as he is advised.

16. "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident." A wise man being admonished of his error, and of his danger, is afraid of incurring the Divine displeasure; and instantly starts back from that evil way, into which he was entering, or wherein he was engaged: but a fool storms at those that would stop him in his course, and proceeds boldly and securely to his own ruin.

17. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated." He whose anger is presently kindled, and breaks out when he is offended, may do such things, when the fit is upon him, as

none but a fool would be guilty of; but he is nothing so bad as him, who suppressing his wrath, lets it boil in his breast, and deliberately contrives how to take a cruel revenge: for most men are inclined to pity the weakness of him that is hasty, but this man's wickedness is odious, and execrable [detestable] unto all.

Bible Challenger-11-November Answers V.11

1. H eaven Mark 16:19
2. A shamed Ezra 8:22
3. N othing Ecc. 2:24
4. D eadly destruction 1 Sam. 5:11
5. O pened Acts 7:56
6. F oolish women Job 2:10
7. G ores Neh. 2:8
8. O ffered Heb. 10:12
9. D ied Rom. 8:34

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty HAND OF GOD, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:4)

Communion With God

There should be a going of the soul to God in a far more intimate way than to anyone else. Communion with saints is precious, but I must have intimacy of communion with God above all, and communion of saints will flow from communion with God.

Purpose and Action

The difference between the counsel, or purpose, of the Lord and His working it out into action is obvious enough. The seed of the woman was announced in Genesis 3 as to bruise the serpent's head, as well as the serpent to bruise His heel. But though such was declared in Genesis 3:15, seven thousand years were to roll their course before the seed of the woman finally did so (Rev. 20:10), and four thousand before the woman's seed was born.

God's purpose and intention about Moses and His willing attempt to work it out Himself are given to us in Exodus 1-2. See also Acts 7:23-29. After forty years the Lord's time was come (vss. 30-42), and He wrought with an unwilling Moses. God has a counsel and a plan, and He has revealed many such in the written Word, but who can work them out? Who keeps us in the position of dependence? Who proves Himself the God of resurrection to us in the carrying out of His work but Himself? The New Testament is studded with instances of the same kind. Peter would go through death for his Master's sake before Christ died and rose. The same Peter had to go through death for his Master's sake after his Master was risen.

If you consider this you will see and get helped as to many puzzling things. A young man converted gets hold of "Enoch walked with God" as his purpose in life. Surely it is God's purpose for all His children, for it was what the Son of His love did perfectly. But many a one has set out to walk and given himself to the work, as John Mark did, who, before they could be spoken of by God as having that true of them, had to learn some lesson or other about themselves, or their circumstances, or God. Lookers-on say, "A mistake from first to last," without taking what is precious from what is vile. The soul that humbly waits on God learns of God all about the various parts of the conflict, and comforts itself in God, and waits to see what end the Lord will bring forth. "Be still, and know that I am God" is the word for you perhaps, but look up and do not be puzzled. God often says, "It was well it was in thine heart," even where His time for working out is not fully come, and even when we have been showing out self, and what is of the world and gives power to Satan too. G. V. Wigram

Cross-Bearing

Jesus is the good Shepherd; He leads forth His own sheep, He walks before them and the sheep follow Him. The disciples were afraid as they followed Jesus; Jesus led them to the cross. The cross is on the road which leads to glory. It is the cross which takes from us all that which hinders our realizing Christ in glory.

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