

CHRISTIAN TREASURY VOLUME 5

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Christian Treasury Volume 5, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

288 Chapters

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Christian Treasury Volume 5

Christian Treasury: Vol. 5

"Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"

(Jude 20-21).

Nineteen-Ninety

One more millennium nears its end
As these nineteen-nineties now begin
Time in its course is progressing fast;
Now we wonder how long it will last.
Since Jesus came the first time to earth,
Hundreds of years have passed since
His birth; Of this we are sure: again He'll come
And take His redeemed ones safely home.
He is coming soon, perhaps today,
Are you ready? Will you hear Him say,
"Arise, My loved one and come away
To My Father's house with Me to stay"?

Supplement

At the time of going to press with this month's Christian Treasury, news has come from Jerusalem of an attempt to lay the corner stone for the third "TEMPLE." A small group who are called the "Temple Mount Faithful" were prevented from laying this three-ton stone in the Western Wall Plaza.

Mayor Kolleck was incensed. Others accused them of engineering Armegeddon.

In the March issue of Christian Treasury, we plan to have much information about the temple and its history and prophecy.

Ed.

Editorial

For the year 1990 we begin with THE BOOK. These are the first two words in the New Testament. They especially apply to Matthew's gospel, but they remind us that God has written a book which we call the Bible. Surely it will be good for all Christians, as we begin the nineties, to take a fresh interest in the coming of God into this world in the Person of Jesus the Savior—Emmanuel, which means God with us.

It has been close to 6000 years since God placed our first parents upon this earth. The year 1990 means that it is now nearly 2000 years since Jesus was born of the virgin who was espoused to Joseph. The date would be more correct if we would add four or five years to 1990, because the best chronologists put the date of Jesus' birth at 4 or 5 B.C. We are living in very interesting times and should want to know what God has made known about coming events.

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" traces His lineage down from Abraham and David to establish His royalty as the Messiah, presented to God's earthly people who were then in the land. Although Christ was rejected at His first coming, it has only postponed the sure purpose of God to set His Son upon His holy hill in Jerusalem. That time is drawing near.

One of the things that points to this is the plan for Europe. Nearly everyone is interested and concerned about what the twelve nations in the European Community are doing, and their schedule that they intend to complete by the end of 1992. As these things may relate to Christ and the Christian and the Jew, we too are interested in what is taking place now.

One of man's views about these things is expressed in this headline: "The Unification of Europe Is Making News. It Can Also Make You Money." Man has two great driving forces. They are greed and fear. These two forces are working now to put in place what the Bible tells us will be the revived Roman Empire. There will be ten kings who will receive power with the beast, the imperial head of this great power in the west.

In Europe the fear of not getting together has already driven the unification forward and will continue to do so most certainly. The great wealth of Japan and the immense prosperity of North America put great pressure on Europe. Of the ten largest banks in the world, the first eight are in Japan followed by one in the U.S. and then one in France. But the Europeans are increasing rapidly. Europe anticipates an immense increase in commerce as the border barriers are removed.

The Jews are in the land. The great powers to the south and north are in place as well as in the west. The hordes of the east are there. (Rev. 16:12.) What is lacking? Nothing that we know of that is necessary before the Lord comes to take His redeemed ones out of the world before the judgments that precede and prepare for His reign in power and glory.

Matthew tells of that coming with these words, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matt. 25:31. Let us who belong to Christ now rejoice in anticipation of His exaltation. He is worthy! (See Rev. 5:9, 12.)

Ed.

The First Chapter of Matthew

Those who were used of God to group the books of the New Testament have done wisely in placing Matthew first of the four gospels. Matthew is more intimately connected with the Old Testament than any other. To him it was given to draw the portrait of Christ in the manner best suited to meet the difficulties of the Jewish Christians, and to show them that every prophecy of the Old Testament had its perfect fulfillment in Him. This is why the quotations from the other scriptures are far more numerous in this gospel than in any of the others.

In Matthew we get a far more detailed account of Christ's rejection by the Jews than in the remaining records. He is presented to them as their Messiah, rejected by them, and only then reveals God's counsels as to what should be the result of this rejection. This gospel presents Christ in three ways:

Chapters 1 to 3: The Bethlehemite of Micah 5

Chapters 4 to 20: The Light from Zebulon and Naphtali as in Isa. 9

Chapters 21 to 24: The King of Zech. 9

Unlike Matthew, there is no genealogy in Mark or John. Mark omits it because he presents a divine servant doing God's will, so the introduction of a genealogy is unnecessary. John gives us Jesus as the Son of God. It is impossible to trace the descent of the

One who "was in the beginning with God" and who "was God."

In Matthew and Luke the case is different. All the Old Testament scriptures had converged to prove that the Messiah should be "born of a woman," and that He should belong to the house of David as well as of the seed of Abraham. The promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. In David's seed was the royal line. We find, therefore, the genealogy most suitably traced up through David to Abraham. To go further was unnecessary where the thought in the mind of the Spirit was to present the Messiah.

In Luke, where He branches out into the wider glory of the Son of man, the genealogy naturally goes back till it comes to "Adam, which is the son of God."

The Generation of Jesus Christ

Matthew, then, is "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." To Abraham it had been promised, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This seed is Christ as Gal. 3:16 tells us. Again to David the promise had been made, "I will raise up thy seed after thee... and I will establish his kingdom.... I will be his Father, and he shall be My son." 1 Chron. 17:11, 13. This prophecy is applied to Christ (Heb. 1:5). The Spirit of God takes care to prove the Messiah's descent from those two heads of the Jewish race.

The introduction of the names of four of the mothers into this genealogy is remarkable. When we consider what Scripture reveals to us about them, surely we may say that we get an indication that it was only on the ground of grace that the Jews got any blessing. And more than this, the blessing was not about to be confined to them, but would flow out towards the Gentiles. Tamar and Bathsheba teach us the former lesson the latter we learn from Ruth and Rahab who were Gentiles.

The genealogy is divided into three sections:

1. From Abraham to royalty in David
2. From royalty to the captivity in Babylon
3. From the captivity to Christ

Here we may notice that between verses 8 and 9, three kings are omitted, not an uncommon thing in Jewish genealogies, to make the numbers even. This account differs from that of Luke. Luke consistent with his line of things, gives the mother's line, or human pedigree. Matthew gives the father's line, or legal pedigree. Mary was descended from Nathan, Joseph from Solomon.

In like manner Joseph is the prominent figure in Matthew and the one to whom all the directions are given. Mary is selected in Luke. Surely God's ways are wisdom itself, and all harmonize so completely one with another.

Titles of Jesus

The manner of the conception is recorded in Luke, the fact in Matthew. The angel of the Lord anticipates the action, the tender conscience of Joseph considered, addressing him as the "son of David." He thus reveals that Christ is David's Son, and not merely that, but as His name, Jesus, indicates, "Jehovah the Savior," whose office should be to save the Jewish people from their sins. But more than this, as if to complete the circle of Jewish glory, He should be, as duly written of Him, "Emmanuel, God with us." Thus this mysterious babe was everything that Jewish faith could desire: the Son of David, Jehovah the Savior, and God with His people.

The reception Jesus met with at the hands of the Jewish people, we learn from the next chapter. Let us admire the beautiful but simple faith of Joseph who, under trying circumstances, acted in simple obedience to the commandment given by the angel of the Lord.

Words of Truth

God's Arm

The first two chapters of the book of Jonah teach us two all-important truths. In the first we learn that there is no place, however likely for escape, where God's arm cannot reach us. The second chapter shows us that there is no prison, however unlikely for escape, from which God's hand cannot deliver us. What place more suitable for escape than the wide endless sea? If the criminal wants to escape from the hands of justice, he embarks for some distant country. God knows how to overtake the fugitive, who, Jonah-like, desires to go his own way, and to "flee from the presence of the Lord."

And where in this world could a prison be found from whence escape appears to be more impossible than the fish's belly at the bottom of the sea? Do not despair. To God it is but a small thing to deliver from the strongest prison, as soon as it seems good to Him, and He has accomplished His purpose in placing you there.

The Second Chapter of Matthew

Matthew chapter one shows us that Jesus is everything that the Jewish Scriptures could lead a Jew to expect. He is the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, Jehovah the Savior, and Emmanuel Himself.

In chapter two we get the effect of His presentation to man. Three classes are before us: the Roman king, the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, and the wise men from the East. The effect of His coming on each class is remarkable. With the Jew, there was calm, stolid indifference; with the king, outrageous cruelty; with the wise men, unfeigned adoration. In the spontaneous outburst of joy that came from the wise men, one can discern that God was about to glorify His Son by means of the Gentiles, when the Jews would not have this man to reign over them. (See Isa. 49:1-6.)

Bethlehem

Bethlehem was the place of His birth. There Rachel had died; there the son of the mother's sorrow (Benoni) became the son of the father's right hand, Benjamin. (Gen. 35:16-20.) He was a beautiful figure of Him whose death caused a sword to pierce through His mother's soul (Luke 2:35), but who in resurrection took His place at His Father's right hand (Mark 16:19).

Bethlehem was the abode of Boaz which means "in him is strength." Boaz is a type of the One who, through redemption, becomes the Husband of the friendless one who comes up from among the Gentiles Israel returning from her banishment (Isa. 54:5). All was quiet at Jerusalem when the wise men came from the East to inquire, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East?" Here we have an allusion to Num. 24:17, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Balaam was from the East; God had preserved his prophecy. "Wisdom's children" had long waited for the star, and now it had come to gladden the hearts of those who, taught of God, were ready to receive it.

What brought joy to them, however, is a source of much trouble to Herod who trembles for his throne. The first thought in his mind is how he could destroy that Child who would dispossess him. He refers at once to the religious rulers whose Scriptures could give the necessary information. They refer to Mic. 5:2, the passage which tells, not merely of His birthplace, but His kingdom. Herod then calls the wise men again and with the utmost subtlety tells them to go and find the Child, under pretense that he might come and worship Him also.

They Worship Him

Now they have a fresh instance of God's attention to them for the very same star that they had seen in the East suddenly reappears and directs them to the actual place where the young Child is. With unfeigned thanksgiving, the Babe being the one object of their adoration, they fall down and worship Him. They accompany their praises with gifts of the most costly kind. What a beautiful figure to us of how "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him." Psa. 72:10,11. (Compare also 1 Kings 10; Isa. 9:1-9.) This is an example of how in true worship we lose sight of everything but Christ.

In His protecting care, God warns the wise men to depart to their own country by another way to escape the fury of Herod. Their mission is ended and they return home satisfied, for they have been in company with Him who alone can give perfect satisfaction. And surely we may well wonder at the number of instruments God uses to accomplish His purpose. The star (compare Josh. 10:12-14; 2 Kings 20:8-11), shows how God commands creation in a moment; He also uses the angel, the dreams, Joseph, and the wise men. It is no wonder that so many instruments are used, for the object of His interest is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

Departure into Egypt

Joseph then is warned in a dream of the danger that awaits the child, and in simple obedience to the word of God, departs into Egypt. He remains there until the death of Herod, and his faith is worthy of the highest praise (Matt. 1:24). All this, however, is but the accomplishment of the counsels of God. It has always been so. He who said to the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11), only uses the rage of Satan to fulfill His own purposes.

John was sent to Patmos that God might teach him the Revelation; the thief's legs were broken that he might be that day with Jesus in Paradise; Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the children of Israel, were gathered together against Jesus to do whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel had determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27, 28)

God had determined, since Israel had failed so noticeably to retain her place as God's witness in the world, to recommence her history in the Person of His Son, and therefore permits Herod's rage to be the cause of His banishment. A famine had in old time been the cause of Israel's descent to Egypt. Persecution now sends the true Son and Firstborn of the Father to the same place. So the prophecy of Hos. 11:1 has its full accomplishment in Him.

Corruption and Violence

We see the twofold character of evil developed in Herod-corruption and violence. Such were found in Satan at the time of his fall (Ezek. 28:16, 17) and such have been found in those who have listened to his enticements. We read of corruption and violence in Eve's descendants: "The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence." Gen. 6:11. All through the Word of God we find the same, the last found in Revelation where the beast expresses violence while the woman expresses corruption. Herod had tried in vain to destroy the Child by subtlety; he now equally fails by violence.

Twice in Scripture this scene is brought before us in figure. Once when Pharaoh commands all the male children to be destroyed (Ex. 1), and again when Satan, as the great red dragon in figure, urges on the Roman power and stands before the woman (the Jewish nation) ready to devour her child as soon as it is born (Rev. 12). And thus Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled (Jer. 31:15). It is worthy of remark that this slaughter takes place, according to Jeremiah, immediately previous to the establishing of the new covenant in the hearts of the people. We know, however, that owing to the rejection of their Messiah this has not yet been accomplished.

Dwelling in Nazareth

Christ now enters the land of Israel again (Matt. 2:19-21). He does not, however, go back to Bethlehem, but being rejected of man He goes aside to the poor of the flock that dwelt in despised Galilee. "Thou art a Galilean," and "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." This is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (chap. 9:1,2) that the people who walked in darkness should see a great light. By dwelling at the city of Nazareth which means separated or sanctified, He might fulfill the general teaching of the Scriptures which had foretold, by means of figures if not in actual words, that He should be the "separated One." And now we pause for twenty-eight years, until the ministry of John the Baptist commences.

Words of Truth

Exodus 16:14

There was no strength necessary in gathering the manna. A strong right arm was of no use-the thing was too delicate for man's strength to come in and destroy. To gather it delicately, with the weakness of man, was needed, so that the soul can say, That which I have gathered up of Christ today, I found it to be strength made perfect in my weakness. It was, "when I am weak, then I am strong."

The Third Chapter of Matthew

The prominent features of Matthew three are the mission of John the Baptist, and the entrance upon the scene of the Lord Himself.

Except for one incident when Jesus was twelve years old, about twenty-eight years are passed over in silence by the Spirit of God. Luke also gives us the birth and early history of John the Baptist; Matthew speaks only of his ministry. Being about six months older than the Lord, he was to go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias (Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 17:12), and make ready a people prepared for the Lord. He was a prophet, and even more than a prophet, seeing he not only spoke of the kingdom to come like other prophets, but introduced the King in person. Although he was greatest of those born of women, he was not in the kingdom itself.

John now enters upon his ministry. We will notice in order the subject of his ministry, then where it takes place, his manner of dress and manner of life, and finally the result.

Paul, in Acts 19:4, tells us that John's mission was to bring the people to repentance and to believe on a coming Messiah. But in Matthew we get a fuller revelation. He announces that Jehovah Himself is coming and that they were to prepare His way. He tells them that the kingdom of the heavens is at hand and in view of these two facts, their true position was that of self-judgment or repentance.

In contrast with Luke 3:4-6, the application of Isa. 40 is remarkable here. In both cases the Evangelist takes as much of the prophecy as is suitable to his subject. In Luke, inasmuch as the wider glory of the Son of Man is brought in, "all flesh" is mentioned. Here in Matthew, the Messiah is in view and that part is omitted.

The Subject of His Ministry

The kingdom of the heavens is what John announces. No longer is allegiance to the law set before the people, but a new state of things well known to those conversant with the prophets, for nearly all mention it. (Dan. 8:13, 14; Deut. 11:21, Psa. 89:29, Dan. 4:26, Matt. 6:10) God's government will then be openly manifested upon the earth and His will done on earth as it is in heaven. We know the period of its establishment has been indefinitely postponed. The kingdom of heaven in mystery is the consequence of the Jews' rejection of their Messiah, the mystery being that the King is absent. God yet tests His people by the offer of "the days of heaven upon earth."

The Place of Ministry

The place where John ministers is the wilderness-not Jerusalem. This is emphatic. It was beautifully situated and the joy of the whole earth, but the city of the great king was no longer owned of God. Therefore He sends His servant apart from the court and form of godliness, to draw out the people to take new ground through the baptism of repentance. God touches the hearts of these people. They no longer rank themselves under the headship of Moses, but under John the Baptist. With John they wait for the Messiah.

John's Dress and Manner of Life

John's dress and manner of life are in character with his ministry. In connection with the camel's hair and leather girdle, notice Elijah's dress (2 Kings 1:8). We read of the goats' hair covering of the tabernacle, and the sheepskins and goatskins of those "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:37, 38). The camel's hair points us to the separate character of Christ as He walked here on the earth, for the tabernacle is a figure of the person of Christ (Heb. 9:11). The leather girdle tells us that those who followed in His footsteps maintained the same characteristic features; they were inferior, but similar. Also his food was not of the city, but of the wilderness.

The Result of His Ministry

Next we notice the result of his ministry. Many of the Jews, no doubt discontented with the existing state of things, were baptized by him in Jordan. They were not pleading righteousness, wisdom or law, but confessing sinfulness, the only "way of righteousness" for the time (Matt. 21:32).

The Pharisees and Sadducees accompany the crowd, but John, detecting their insincerity, exposes their true characters. He warns them not only that true repentance would bring forth fruit, but that hereditary privileges would not avail without it. Moreover, God who raised up Abraham to be His servant, could also raise up children to him from the very stones. It was not a question now of mere fruit-bearing, but God was about to test the root itself. Unless there was true repentance, root and branch would alike be cast into the eternal burning.

He then unfolds the purpose of the Lord's mission in contrast with his own. His was to lead the upright in heart to confess their sins. The Lord's mission was to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) those who took their true place, and to burn up utterly those whose hearts remained untouched by His warnings. The land of Israel, the "floor" of Isa. 21:10, should be the scene of both blessing and judgment. There the wheat has already been gathered into the garner (Acts 2:47); there the apostates will yet be burned with fire unquenchable in the time of the great tribulation.

Jesus Appears on the Scene

Jesus Himself now appears on the scene from the solitudes of Galilee. Graciously owning the working of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the people so dear to Him, He desires to identify Himself with them. Though sinless Himself, He takes a place, in grace, side by side with them in order to accompany them in their trials and encourage them by His presence (Dan. 3:25; Isa. 43:2, 3). John beautifully owns his unfitness for the office, but this does not hinder the devotedness of the Lord. He saw His people's need and would not be prevented from meeting them in that need. He thoroughly identifies Himself with them when He says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

It is so precious to us to find that at the moment He is taking the lowest place, the Father pays Him the highest honor. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Never before do we read of the heavens being opened except in vision (Ezek. 1:1), but now there was an object worthy of their opening on the earth. They were opened to Him, and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him in the form of a dove.

He who was gentleness itself was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power-without a sacrifice like the High Priest of old-in token of the perfection of His person. We are anointed-like the priest's sons after the sacrifice (Lev. 8:30) in token of the perfection of His work. At the same time the Father's voice is heard proclaiming His absolute delight in the Son who had always displayed His glory. Thus Father, Son, and Holy Spirit participate openly in the entrance of Jesus on His ministry.

In conclusion, consider the fourfold opening of the heaven as Scripture records it:

1. In Matthew we find the heavens opened to gaze down on Him on the earth.
2. In Acts they are again opened to Stephen, and to us with him (Heb. 2:9) and we look up at Jesus, rejected of man, but exalted of God.
3. In Rev. 19 we find them again opened to allow Him to come forth to execute vengeance on His enemies.
4. In John 1:51 we see them again opened to gaze on Him. Peace having been proclaimed, the angels wait on Him to do His bidding. As Son of man, He has then set up His kingdom and His will is done on earth as in heaven.

Words of Truth

The Fourth Chapter of Matthew

From Matthew four we may learn this simple principle-God will not lead His own into circumstances of trial without first preparing them for those circumstances. He had anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He now leads Him by the Spirit into the wilderness that His manhood should be thoroughly put to the test. The prince of this world is the instrument chosen of God to do this.

Also in Job's case Satan had been selected to break the links that bound the carnal man to the earth. God will be glorified, and if man in the flesh fails to glorify Him, He still will be glorified in His Son. The first Adam had failed to resist the test applied to him by Satan. Jesus resists the temptation and defeats Satan, even though everything that could entice the natural man was laid before Him in the most attractive forms.

The wilderness, the pinnacle of the temple, and the exceeding high mountain are the three scenes of the temptation. The character of the trial is suited to the locality. The wilderness was necessarily destitute of food. The pinnacle would afford the most suitable, because the most lofty spot to display so notable a miracle (Psa. 91:11, 12). And the mountain top was the place from which naturally all the kingdoms of the world would appear before the eye in their most attractive forms.

Threefold Temptation

The temptations to which man is subject are divided by the Apostle John into three classes: "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 John 2:16. These comprise all that is in the world. Eve was tempted in the same three ways as the Lord Jesus, less clearly perhaps, but not the less certainly. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she gave way. Thus the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life had their threefold development in her. In Christ we find one who would not satisfy His natural need of food at the expense of obedience. He would not allow His eye to rest on the world so as to covet it. He would not take Messiah's place lest the pride of life should be manifested in Him.

Not only had Adam failed to glorify God in resisting Satan, but Israel also had given way through disobedience to the law. Therefore, we find Christ here taking the place, not only of a perfect Man, but of a perfect Israelite and resisting Satan by means of perfect subjection to the Law of Moses. Had he conquered Him as God, there would be neither victory nor contest, for one word from the Creator was sufficient to send the creature to perdition. But Christ, "who is over all, God blessed forever," was the perfect Man, made of a woman and made under the law. This is the character in which we find Him displayed here.

Surely this should awaken a deeper feeling of interest in us as we consider Him who is now able to sympathize perfectly with us in our trials. He endured precisely the same, leaving us an example as to how we should behave under similar circumstances.

Various Temptations

How different was His place from that of Adam. A garden of delights, surrounded by animals that were under his dominion, marked the scene of Adam's testing. Christ was in the wilderness surrounded by the wild beasts (Mark 1:13). Forty long days and nights the trial lasted, perhaps inasmuch as He took the place of Israel in memory of the forty years that Israel had tempted God in the desert (Deut. 8:2).

Elijah had gone in the strength of the meat that God provided forty days and forty nights to Horeb-the mount of God (1 Kings 19:8). Moses, too, had gone into the same mount for the same time (Ex. 34:28). But in Elijah's case there was no opposing enemy; in Moses' case, he went to be with God. Moses was separated from his natural condition to be with God. Christ was separated from His to be with the enemy. Everything was against Him, and yet by the word of Jehovah's lips He kept Himself from the paths of the destroyer (Psa. 17:4). He had indeed put on the whole armor of God, and defended Himself with the sword of the Spirit which is His Word.

Satan first tests Him as Man: "If Thou be the Son of God command," etc. One word would have been sufficient, but the perfect Man, and obedient Jew would not transgress the law of His God who said that man should not live by bread alone.

The Final Test

As Messiah, the protecting care of God had been promised to Him. When the enemy can quote Scripture, he is, indeed, "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). But the Word of God proves an infallible resource against Satan, and Jesus answers him that such a course as this would be tempting the Lord. And now the final test is applied as to whether He would take the place of the Son of man in glory without passing through the sufferings that would entitle Him to it. Again the Word of God supplies a ready answer, and God, not Satan, is alone to be worshiped.

In Rev. 13:2 we read how Satan afterward finds one who only too willingly accepts from him the domain that Christ had so successfully refused. This one is the future head of the Roman empire.

The temptation was now over for a season. Satan receives his sentence of dismissal from the stronger Man, who having now bound the strong man is about to spoil his goods.

Jesus now takes His place as "the light from Nephtalim," identifying Himself with the poor of the flock. His forerunner having been cast into prison, He then preaches repentance as the necessary precursor of the kingdom of heaven.

He calls Simon, Andrew, James, and John (their conversion had taken place previously, John 1:40-42) for work and promises them a service of a higher character. He Himself becomes the all-absorbing object of their hearts. They leave ships and fathers alike, for the superior claims of Jesus.

He now proceeds with His ministry, making use of the synagogues, or wherever there was an open door. He displays the powers of the world to come, which is the millennial age. As Man, He successfully opposes Satan; as God, He heals diseases. From verses 23 to 25 we get the powers of the kingdom, and from chapters 5 to 7, its character.

Words of Truth

Matthew 13

The parable of the "tares and the wheat" introduces the two seeds, the good and the bad, the diverse contents of the present age or world-Christendom.

The parables of the "mustard seed" and the "leaven," take up the "tares," presenting them, the bad thing of Christendom, in its two forms of outward, secular greatness and of internal, spiritual corruption.

The parables of the "treasure" and the "pearl," in like manner, take up the wheat, presenting it, the good thing of Christendom, in its two characters, as being set for Christ's glory and for Christ's joy or delight.

The parable of the "drag net" shows the separating, judicial action that is to close the age.

No doubt "the kingdom of heaven" when set up hereafter (in millennial day), will comprise Jews, Gentiles and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32), this last in heavenly glory.

The tares and the wheat are generating, so to speak, the rest. For it includes the bad thing, and the good thing and the judgment that finally separates these two things. And thus the last five parables are only an enlarged view of the contents of this parent-parable, giving us what was presented there, in deeply affecting, solemn and precious characteristics.

Balaam and Jonah

Balaam the son of Beor, and Jonah the son of Amittai, were somewhat alike in one deplorable way each was willing that a vast number of souls should be sacrificed for some personal advantage. With Balaam it was money, with Jonah it was his reputation! Balaam was a downright emissary of Satan, masquerading as a prophet of Jehovah for the sake of gain. Jonah, on the contrary, was a true man at heart, but somewhat of an untrained colt, sorely needing to learn important lessons in the school of God. From both Balaam and Jonah we may learn much: from the one, the danger of trafficking in unfelt truth, and from the other, the importance of entering into the divine sympathies while engaged in work for God. If we do not feel towards men as God feels, how can we be efficient as witnesses for Him?

Matthew 16

The Lord speaks of His final journey to Jerusalem in the full recognition that it is there He has to meet the enmity of man. He does not look towards that city with the thought of His being made the offering for sin under the hand of God there, but rather of His being the victim of man's hatred.

His death, of course, had each of these characters in it. It was the death of the Lamb of God for the putting away of sin. It was the death of the righteous Witness against the world whom they, in full enmity, slew and crucified. It was at one and the same moment, the death of the atoning Lamb and the death of the Martyr, but it is in the second of these characters that the Lord anticipates here.

His road to Jerusalem was such that all His saints can be in that same road with Him, and He calls on them to follow Him along in this road. His words clearly display His mind on this occasion, for we could never follow Him as the Lamb, or the atoning Victim. But we may and should follow Him as the Martyr or righteous, suffering Witness against the world. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." v. 24.

Comfort Along the Road

This makes the character of this path of Christ very simple and distinct. But there is comfort along this road if we have faith to receive it. It is a weary and rough path such as nature does not like. We do not like to be the companions of an insulted, despised, rejected, suffering Master. A journey on such a road as that is rough, and strength and heart naturally fail. There is comfort provided for it, however, if we have faith to receive it and drink it in.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." v. 28. This is the comfort. The saints are not set on this road to Jerusalem, this path across a world that is at enmity with them and preparing death for them as men at Jerusalem were then preparing it for Jesus, until they are given to know what the end of that journey is to be. They do not until they are introduced to the glory that lies on the other side of the sorrow and the martyrdom, and until they see the mount of transfiguration that is higher as well as more distant than Calvary.

The Glory and Joy that Follows

This comfort the Lord gives His saints when He calls them to follow Him on the road to Jerusalem (v. 28.) And in this character of it, let us notice that verse 28 is an epitome of that magnificent chapter of Acts 7. One of the purposes of the Spirit in Acts 7 is to tell us that from the beginning, and all along the line of Scripture, the Lord has never called His elect into a place of sorrow without telling them, or giving them some notice of the glory and joy that will end the sorrow.

Abraham was called from all that nature could value, but it was the God of glory that had appeared to him and spoke to him with words of promise.

Joseph was separated and in principle was a martyr, but he had dreams which already told him of ultimate exaltation.

Moses was reviled, refused, and exiled both by brethren and strangers, the seed of Abraham and uncircumcised Egyptians mistaking him and persecuting him. But he already had that beauty upon him which faith discerned to be of God, the token of divine favor.

Stephen was hated like his Master, interfered with and killed, but his face had already shone like that of an angel. He was marked as a child of resurrection before he was hurried to death as a martyr.

So in Matt. 16:28 some were to taste of death. Peter himself was to be bound and led whither he would not (John 21:18, 19) and suffer as a martyr. But they were to be taken beforehand to the place of the glory and shown the heavenly blessedness in which all their sorrow was to end. The value of this is such that the Lord says that though the whole world were gained, it would be nothing in comparison with the loss of the soul at the end.

Words of Truth

Bible Challenger-01-January V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word associated with man's capabilities, which is in marked contrast to God's capabilities.

1. The unnatural behavior of a borrowed piece of metal after a stick was properly directed.
2. An unlikely ingredient that rendered a deadly potion harmless.
3. A meager possession that, through multiplication, sustained a family of three.
4. Something the earth did to initiate the Lord's judgment upon those who rose up against their leader.
5. An unnatural phenomenon in the midst of heaven lasting about a whole day.
6. The prescribed number of washings to cure an incurable disease.
7. Something dried up because of a faithful contact.
8. The illogical direction of motion of a shadow that encouraged a dying king.
9. The beasts whose hungry mouths were stopped because of innocence.
10. The dead prophet who gave life to a dead man.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-00-December Answers to V.04

1. Peculiar people Titus 2:14
2. U spotted from the world James 1:27
3. Refiner Mal. 3:3
4. In a pure conscience 1 Tim. 3:9
5. Faith Acts 15:9
6. Iniquity Hab. 1:13
7. Example(s) 1 Tim. 4:12
8. Twelve Esther 2:12
9. Hearts James 4:8

"We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him PURIFIETH himself, even as He is pure.' 1 John 3:2, 3.

Dispensational Truth

Dispensational Truth is that which has to do with the different dispensations. The cycle of time is supposed to be for 7000 years: 4000 years before Christ and 3000 years after Christ. Before that it was eternity; after that it is the eternal state again.

God always existed. We may not understand this, but we believe it because God says so. Jehovah means the Eternal One. He is infinite. He does not need to explain everything to us. If we understood everything we would be His equal. We are finite; God is infinite. The wonderful thing is that God deigns to have a redeemed company with Him throughout eternity. But they must be redeemed (John 3:16). He will have a heavenly people and He will have an earthly people; hence the need of having a knowledge of the dispensations.

J.T. Armet

Editorial

One of the most interesting and helpful things for any Christian is to see or to get an outline of prophecy. God is a God of order. This is amazingly demonstrated in His universe. All is set and sustained and moves according to God.

God's plan for man in time and forever is no different. There is perfect order determined in His purpose to have His Son-the Son of man-exalted in heaven and earth with creatures around Him to His glory and praise.

Dispensations come in by the way. The last dispensation is called the dispensation of the fullness of times. It will be the kingdom of 1000 years made known in Rev. 20. This gives a clue to the length of time in the foregoing article by J.T. Armet. One day is as a thousand years with the Lord (2 Peter 3:8).

The times or the dispensations are the various tests under which God has placed the first man. Each succeeding test is more favorable to man, but in each test he breaks down in failure. Conscience was intended to help, and does help us somewhat in our behavior. Conscience remains and to this was added government which also still is with us and is needed.

One select nation-Israel-was tested for a definite period (dispensation) under law. It began and concluded as a test (Rom. 10:4). Since Christ finished redemption's work, God is gathering a people for heaven through the preaching of the gospel.

Many prophets foretold events in the Old Testament. While the heavenly people are now being gathered, time is not reckoned prophetically. When Christ comes and takes His heavenly saints out of the world, prophecy will resume.

The Prophetic Summary sets before us in order much of what God has revealed concerning the future. Let us consider well what God has opened up in His Word about dispensations and prophecy. It surely and solidly does confirm faith as well as establish us upon Christ who is the

foundation of all the purposes and counsels of God.

Ed.

Prophetic Summary

1. The return of Judah and Benjamin to their native land has placed us in prophetic times (Isa. 17:18). Their return is without belief in God's Word and will end in desperate sorrow (Isa. 17:9-11).
2. At any time we expect the Lord Jesus Christ to come to rapture the believers to heaven to be with Himself. (1 Thess. 4:15-18.) This event will be the first part of the first resurrection of the saints, including both those who are living and those who have died in faith since the day of Eden (1 Cor. 15).
3. The Spirit of God would first have our hearts fixed on the chief Subject, the Man-child, Christ, who will rule all nations in His time, and the raptured saints will be with Him. He will be the public Center of all glory (Rev. 12:5).
4. The Lord Jesus, the Son of man, will be seated in heaven on His throne of judgment according to His title as Creator and Redeemer (Rev. 4:11; Rev. 5:7-10).
5. The beginning of Jacob's (Judah's) troubles or trials and sorrows, at the rapture of the Church, will include many events such as conquests, earthquakes, civil wars, famine, pestilence, and death. Money will be worthless and thrown to the bats; primitive farming will replace modern (Isa. 7:21-25).
6. The prince of the Roman people (or leader of the western peoples) will make a seven-year covenant to protect Judah but will break it in the midst of the seven years, leaving her open to enemy attack (Dan. 9:27).
7. War in heaven among the angels will cause Satan to be cast down out of heaven to earth, precipitating great tribulation. The "hour of temptation" in Western Europe and the great tribulation for Judah will take place generally at the same time. (Rev. 3:10.) Knowing that his time is short, Satan will bring in false prophets with their signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect (Rev. 12:7-9; Matt. 24:24).
8. During this period there will be untold suffering under forced idolatry, apostasy which will wither civilization and make public and private life unbearable, parents and children betraying each other, shattering the home (Mark 13:12). Commerce will be greatly affected and will result in unstable business (Rev. 8:9).
9. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all nations of the earth (Matt. 24:14).
10. Among the Jews, love toward God will wax cold, but the true remnant who believe the gospel of the kingdom will endure (Matt. 24:13). All twelve tribes will have been sealed before the time of tribulation begins (Isa. 7:1-12).
11. The rich men who will have heaped treasure to themselves will experience the consequences in the great tribulation, but the down-trodden saints will be comforted by the hope of the Lord's coming in His kingdom. (James 5:1-6; Rev. 9:4.)

12. The woman, or Catholicism, will take an imperial place, controlling the Roman empire, a unity of western nations, forcing idolatry upon the masses of Roman subjects. (Rev. 8:8, 9.) In this way she will be "riding the beast." (Rev. 17:3,7.)

13. A Lamb will be seen on Mt. Zion gathering the remnant of Judah together for the coming kingdom. The one hundred and forty-four thousand, a symbolic number, will be preserved through judgment and meanwhile learn the songs of heaven from the heavenly saints. (Rev. 14:1-5.)

14. The everlasting gospel will be preached, calling to men to remember their Creator, to fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment will have come. (Rev. 14:6, 7.)

15. The Roman Empire will be headed by the beast, the emperor. Ten powers, called the ten horns, will receive power one hour with the beast and, having become kings, they will give their power and strength to the beast. Together they shall hate the whore, will make her desolate and naked, shall eat her flesh, and later burn her with fire. These events show that this woman who had been riding the beast, controlling him, will have become nauseous to the ten horns who will proceed to throw her off. (Rev. 17:16,3-6.)

16. Although Satan's purposes of deception will be allowed to mature, the woman finally will be judged by God through the means of the ten kings. (Rev. 19:2.)

17. (The story of Ahab and Jezebel in figure illustrates the connection of the beast and the woman. 1 Kings 21.)

18. After the rise of the first beast, described above, in his diabolic character (the personal beast), there will arise in Jerusalem, where Gentile and Jewish apostasy will be centered, a second beast called the man of sin or Antichrist. The worship of Antichrist, forced upon all, will bring untold anguish upon the consciences of the Jews, not on circumstances, but on the minds and hearts. This will be the first woe. (Rev. 9:1-11.)

19. The second woe will fall on the beast, as an innumerable company of warriors on horses will cross the Euphrates from the east to kill and to spread false doctrine atheistic, Moslem, etc. in Eastern Europe. (Rev. 9:12-21.)

20. Babylon, the great city, earlier connected with the woman and degenerate Christendom, will fall into the lowest degradation and become the dwelling-place of demons, the active agents of Antichrist, to completely deceive and apostatize the nations. (Rev. 18:2.)

21. (Heaven will be filled with joy, never known before, at the marriage of the Lamb. Rev. 19:7,8.) Men will be forced by Antichrist to worship the beast. As a result they will receive his "mark" which will bring servitude on all the earth. (Rev. 13:16-18.)

22. The Roman Empire (See Dan. 7), with unequaled fury and cruelty, will subject the whole earth to tyranny. (Dan. 7:7, 8.) This dreadful and terrible beast, strong exceedingly, will devour and break in pieces the prophetic earth, and he will stamp the rest (those outside the prophetic earth) with his feet. (Dan. 7:7.)

23. It will be said at that time, "Who is able to make war with him [the beast]?" (Rev. 13:4.)

24. Contemporaneously, God will employ the Assyrian as His rod of judgment to pass through the land of Judah and conquer Egypt, an old enemy. The Assyrian allies will sack Jerusalem. (Dan. 11:40-45.)
25. In Jerusalem and vicinity one half will be taken in judgment and one half left for the kingdom. (Zech. 14:1-3.) In all of the land two thirds will be slain and one third spared. (Zech. 13:8,9.)
26. The last martyrs, true to the Lord and refusing the mark of the beast, will be slain, which will call for the seven last plagues. Then the second or last part of the first resurrection will close the door to heaven forever. (Rev. 20:4; Rev. 15:1, 2.)
27. When heaven is complete with all of the guests present, the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place. (Rev. 19:9.)
28. Peace in heaven will be secured (Heb. 12:22, 23), before Christ comes to set things right and bring peace upon earth. (Luke 19:38.)
29. The ships of Chittim (western navy) shall afflict Assyria and Persia. (Num. 24:24.)
30. The kingdom of the beast will fall into disarray, as Satan will be bound, bringing in the day of the Lord. (Rev. 20:1, 2.)
31. The beast and Antichrist will be destroyed at Armageddon and will be cast alive into the lake of fire. (Rev. 19:20.)
32. At Armageddon the four monarchies of Dan. 7 will all fall together. Those monarchies which have held Israel captive for many years will be ended at the destruction of the Roman Empire, and the believing remnant of Judah will be delivered. (Dan. 2:35, 45; Joel 2:18,19.)
33. Destruction will reach out to Europe and her colonies, and they will perish with the sword, leaving none alive so much as to bury the dead in all of the Roman Empire. (Jer. 25:29-33.)
34. The Lord's feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. (Zech. 14:4.) The two tribes' repentance for their departure from Jehovah, and His setting up of the kingdom in Judah will herald a new day for Israel. (Zech. 12:7.)
35. The ten lost tribes shall return, weeping, to their own native land of Israel. (Jer. 50:4.)
36. A siege by heathen tribes against Israel will continue for forty-five days, during which time Israel will learn to trust the Lord completely as the One who will preserve them from harm. (Zech. 12:2; Isa. 27:2, 3.)
37. Gog (Russia, the great Assyrian) and all of his hosts will march toward Jehoshaphat (the valley of judgment) where the winepress of the day of God Almighty will crush them. It is there on the mountains of Israel that Gog's hosts will be slain and buried. Gog will be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 16:14; Ezek. 38; Isa. 30:31-33.)
38. This will be the humbling of all the nations, and every eye shall see Jehovah when He comes out of heaven with all of His saints to settle the controversy of Zion. (Isa. 34:8; Ezek. 38.)

39. The winepress signifies judgment reaching two hundred miles from Megiddo to Edom, the last battlefield of the great day of God Almighty. (Rev. 14:19, 20.)

40. The Lord will separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep are those from all of the nations who cared for the Lord's servants. (Matt. 25:33.)

41. After complete deliverance, Israel, every family apart, will mourn over their sins and disobedience as a nation. This will be national repentance. (Ezek. 20:43; Zech. 12:12-14.)

42. The Son of man will take His throne of glory upon the earth to reign in righteousness in Zion which He loved (Jer. 23:5.) "But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Psa. 94:15. (See also Psa. 99.)

43. The millennial day will bring a new order in the division of the tribes of Israel as they settle in their own land. (Ezek. 40-48.)

44. Sacrifices will be restored, not in view of salvation, but looking back to gaze upon the mighty redemption which saved Israel from eternal woe. (Ezek. 40-48.)

45. At the end Satan will be loosed and will lead men to attack the beloved city Jerusalem. Fire from heaven will destroy the rebels who will have partaken of millennial blessing. (Rev. 20:7-10.)

46. Satan will meet his doom in the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:10.)

47. The great white throne, the final tribunal, will close God's ways upon earth. All who will be left in their graves, rejecters of God's testimony of sacrifice, down through the ages, will be resurrected for judgment, to be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15.)

48. Those who will have been spared, still living upon the earth at the time of the judgment by fire on the rebels, will be placed upon a new earth. The first heaven and earth will burn with a rushing noise. (2 Peter 3:10 JND; Rev. 21:1.)

C. E. Lunden

Alas, proud earth!

What sorrow lies before thee!

None like it in the shadowy past!

The deepest throes that ever tore thee,

E'en though the briefest and the last.

H. Bonar

Prayer Meeting

As we consider the subject of the prayer meeting, let us notice Acts 2:42: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." I believe that is collective prayer, assembly prayer. Another example is found in the 12th chapter and verse 5, "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." There we have assembly prayer. In verse 12, there is a practical carrying out of that. "When he [Peter] had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." Notice that it says many were gathered together praying.

The Presence of the Lord in the Prayer Meeting

The Lord's presence is promised to the two and three gathered together unto His name. What a blessed provision that is for a day of ruin! Just a small handful gathered together unto His name are promised the presence of the Lord in connection, not only with the discipline of the assembly, but also with the prayer of the assembly. Let us read in connection with that from Matt. 18, those well-known verses 19 and 20: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in [unto] My name, there am I in the midst of them." What a blessed promise and what an encouragement for us as we come together in the assembly prayer meeting! May we not neglect that meeting. May we, as our brethren in the early days of the Church's history, continue steadfastly in assembly prayer.

Freely Addressing God

Prayer, I believe, is freely addressing God as we get in 1 Tim. 4:5, "It [what we eat] is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." What a blessed privilege we have to come into the presence of God and to address Him freely. In what? Confession! Oh, how it becomes us in view of our condition. We ought not to forget how things have deteriorated since the early days. We ought to be on our faces in the spirit of Daniel, Ezra and others and own before God the confusion of face that belongs to us; recognizing the sin and the failure that has come in, we ought to confess and own it to God. Then we can thank and praise Him for what He is and for what He has done, and, of course, present our needs to Him. We are a dependent people; we are a needy people and we ought to express that in our prayers, especially in our assembly prayers together.

Attitude and Form of Speech

In searching through the Word of God, I do not find that any special tone of voice, any intonation is required for acceptable prayer. I don't find any special vocabulary required for prayer except what is required by reverence. I believe that we have a mistaken thought that there is a special tone of voice that we need when we pray, and we have moved away from the thought of freely addressing God.

When we come together, we usually commence our meetings with a hymn. I believe this is orderly. I used to wonder where that custom came from, and then I read in Psa. 100, "Come before His presence with singing....enter into... His courts with praise." I believe that it is a godly way of doing things. But I want to say here that we are together to pray, not for a song service or a hymn sing, nor to preach. We are not together to read, but to pray. So when we come together and a hymn is given out, it should be a hymn that would be suitable to the thoughts we have been considering here.

Specific Needs

We ought to promptly present specific and special matters for the exercise of the assembly, requesting the prayers of the assembly. This ought to be done briefly and clearly with a specific request to be presented to the Lord.

We should not take so much time in presenting matters to the assembly for prayer that there is insufficient time to pray. We ought to be before the Lord as to what we mention for prayer and be specific about the need. As an example of this, the Apostle says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," and he doesn't stop there but goes on to say, "and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly." So it is well to be specific in the things we ask for.

The reading of Scripture in the prayer meeting has the particular purpose of encouraging us in our prayers, helping us to have the Lord's mind about the requests, helping us to see the Lord's care and love for us.

Physical Attitude During Prayer

When it is evident that there are no further requests on the hearts of the brethren, let us get down on our knees promptly. First of all, consider our physical posture: standing, kneeling, falling on our faces in the dust go along with prayer and are suitable attitudes. There are occasions when it is suitable and pleasing to the Lord to fall actually, physically on our faces before Him and put our faces literally in the dust. I believe real tears are becoming, real tears from a heart that feels with God the needs of His beloved people.

Most of us find it helpful to close our eyes when we pray. But I would point out, lest we be critical of others, that we read, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven." I recall several brethren in my experience who followed that practice, and I enjoyed their prayers and never thought they were mindful of anything but the blessedness of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God as they lifted their eyes to Him.

Amen is Our Assent

Assembly prayer is not personal prayer, but collective prayer. This is something that is very important. When we pray in the prayer meeting, we are there to pray in behalf of the assembly. In connection with that, let us not forget that our "Amen" is our assent to a brother's prayer. I believe this is the primary thought in the expression, "If two of you shall agree." I don't think it means that two brothers have to mention the same thing in prayer. I see nothing wrong with two brothers mentioning the same thing in prayer, but I believe that "if two of you shall agree" is accomplished when we say "Amen" at the end of a prayer. The amen should be audible and unanimous. We read twelve times in Deut. 27 that all the people shall say, Amen. Brothers and sisters together, unitedly give the assembly's assent to a public prayer.

Last summer I made a trip to South America and it was my great joy to notice that our beloved brethren heartily and unanimously and together say Amen at the end of a prayer. What an encouragement that is! In connection with that, the one who prays on behalf of the assembly should pray in a voice loud enough to be heard throughout the room. How can I say Amen to a prayer that I cannot hear? Unheard prayers cause drowsiness and inattentiveness.

Now I want to say a word about long pauses between prayers. They are neither necessary nor do they indicate the urgency of fervent prayer to the Lord. We ought to use our time when we are there to pray together, to call out to God in behalf of the assembly. It is true that sometimes a pause is of the Lord, but more often it is weakness on our part. Do I need to add here that preaching at our brethren, or reciting doctrine to God, in prayer is not becoming to one leading the assembly in prayer. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." God does delight to hear us speak well of His Son. Fervent supplication is what we need, not eloquence.

To Whom do we Address Prayer?

Normally we address prayer to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are also times when addressing the Lord Jesus is appropriate. He is the Head of the assembly which is His Body and, as such, we look to Him for direction in assembly matters. Also He is Lord of the harvest and, as such, we supplicate the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers into the harvest and provide for them and help them and encourage them. Then again, He is the One who lived here to the glory of God. He is able to understand us when we cry to Him in the circumstances of the pathway. Stephen is an example, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Also, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Let us not, however, confound the Persons of the Godhead. To thank God the Father for dying for us on the cross is unintelligent. God the Father sent the Son; the Lord Jesus came here and died for us. We can understand that, can't we? I believe that praying in the Holy Spirit will do that. While we are on that subject, Scripture does not allow the idea of prayer to the Holy Spirit. Of course, He is fully and equally God with the Father and the Son. But I don't find any example or precept of prayer to the Holy Spirit. We pray in and by the Holy Spirit.

Men and Women's Part in Prayer

Now what about the sisters? They don't pray audibly. We will refer to 1 Tim. 2:8, "I will therefore that men [literally, the men] pray every where." The word "men" is in contrast to "women" in verse 9 if you read it carefully, so the men pray audibly. However, the sisters' presence is important; they are a part of the assembly. Look at Acts 1:14 "with the women," and you will get the principle. The Holy Spirit is present and He gathers up the exercises of the assembly and presents them to God through the mouth of the one who prays out loud. More than once I've been encouraged to have a sister tell me that I had expressed in audible prayer exactly what had been on her heart.

Oh, beloved brethren, together let us seek to make our prayer meetings the vital part of the assembly life that they are intended to be. "Continue in prayer, and watch thereunto."

R. K. Gorgas

Non-Assembly Meetings

A difficulty sometimes arises from confounding two things which differ essentially, namely, meetings of the assembly, as such, and meetings convened and conducted on the principle of individual responsibility. If this distinction be thoroughly understood, all difficulty vanishes. The public preaching of the gospel, and specific lectures and expositions are carried out upon the latter principle, and are quite independent of the assembly. The members of the assembly may be present or not, as they feel disposed. Moreover the assembly may kindly lend their room or hall for such individual services, or the evangelist or teacher may hire a public hall for himself, or have it hired for him. It is his own individual work for which he alone is responsible. He may associate others with him in his work, but we must never confound such work with the meetings of the assembly for communion and worship. If I am expected to meet a public congregation, either with the gospel or an exposition, I am bound to be there myself or to provide a substitute. We understand a man's being responsible to preach if Christ has given him the gift to do it, but we do not understand "the responsibility of the preaching" resting on the shoulders of an ungifted person. We only speak of the general principle, but, in times like the present, we must seek to do the best we can to reach precious souls, whether it be the unconverted, or the dear lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ.

C.H. Mackintosh

The Ministry and the Minister

The manner of presentation of the ministry of Christ in Second Corinthians differs greatly from that in Ephesians. In the latter epistle we have the mystery of Christ and the Church unfolded, and our heavenly blessings in association with a risen Christ. In connection with this, ministry is found as the gracious provision of the Head for the need of His members below. It comes out, as it were, as part of a circle of teaching concerning the Church, its blessings and endowments.

We observe a different aspect in Corinthians. The Apostle is seeking the full spiritual restoration of his children in the faith. They had erred; Satan had gotten in. Their hearts had been estranged from the Lord and from the man who had been so greatly used in their blessing. Their ways and words had forced the Apostle to speak of himself and his ministry-this to a larger extent than he would have wished to have done. Consequently, ministry in this epistle has largely an experimental character. The deep feelings and emotions of the wounded servant are to be observed throughout. To simplify the matter, I would just mention that the subject is presented thus: in chapter 3, we have the ministry; in chapter 4, the minister; in chapter 5, his motives; in chapter 6, his moral traits.

The Ministry in Chapter Three

The ministry is of an exceedingly blessed character. The gospel, called here the gospel of the glory of Christ, is put in contrast with the law. Paul had been made an able minister of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. The law was a ministration of death and of condemnation. It set forth, not what God is, as some have said, but what man ought to be. This was fatal to the creature. So helpless is the ruin of nature that none can render the righteous requirement. Law knows little of mercy. It proposes blessing life and righteousness to those who keep it, but thunders out a curse upon all who fail, whatever their plea.

Law came in with glory and the circumstances in the giving of it were full of majesty. The mediator who brought it into the camp shone with the brightness of the glory he had been beholding, and had to put a veil on his face. It is the second giving of the law that the Apostle refers to here. This is important.

Law and Mercy

The first tables were broken before they reached the camp, for Moses would not bring them in where the golden calf was. The second giving of the law was accompanied by a proclamation of longsuffering and sovereign grace (Ex. 34). It is this the Apostle describes as a ministration of both death and condemnation. The law, even when thus accompanied, has this solemn character for all who have to do with it. What a grave consideration for thousands in Christendom! It is undeniable that those who in this day take up the law speak of mercy at the same time. Even a mingled system is ruin for the creature. Law in any shape or form only works wrath for man who is fallen and a sinner.

The old ministry is spoken of here as "that which is done away" (2 Cor. 3:11). It came in incidentally until the promised Seed came. God would make manifest to all the real condition of the creature before the mighty remedy was introduced. So grievously have men misunderstood the declared object of God in giving the law that instead of learning their true state by it, they have gone about to establish a righteousness of their own by means of the law. What utter blindness as to the real condition of flesh before God.

The gospel, on the other hand, is spoken of as "that which remaineth." It will never fade before a brighter glory.

The Glory that Excels

It is not the statement of what man ought to be, but of what God is. He has revealed Himself in His Son, and in a manner blessedly suitable to our need and condition. It is not merely introduced with glory, but it subsists in glory. This is the glory that excels! It is divine testimony to One who having accomplished redemption has gone up into the glory of God. We gaze upon Him with unveiled face, in perfect peace in the presence of infinite holiness.

It is a ministry of righteousness and of the Spirit. It is of righteousness, not in requiring it as under the law, but in revealing it unto all. "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:21, 22. God can now maintain His own consistency with Himself, yet holding as righteous every one that believes in Jesus on the ground of redemption. It is not mercy, though He is rich in it and has lavished it upon us, but righteousness. He is perfectly righteous in all His dealings of grace with us through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Here is solid ground for our feet, and resting here peace is sure and settled.

Also it is a ministry of the Spirit. God never even proposed to confer this as the result of law-keeping. The holy anointing oil could not be poured on flesh (Ex. 30:31, 32). The Spirit could not be granted as the reward of man's work.

The Ministry of the Spirit

But God has put this honor on the work of Jesus. The Spirit has come out from the glory into which He has entered, and is God's gift to all who believe the gospel of God's salvation. (How could we wish to go back to law? Yet the Galatians did so. And many to their own loss in this day say that "the old wine is better.") But this is the gospel, the wonderful ministry that Paul had received. It is not a dry abstract statement of doctrine, but a precious testimony to Christ's glory. It confers righteousness and the Spirit on all who bow to it.

The Minister in Chapter Four

The ministry imparted its own character to the vessel; it formed the Apostle Paul, so to speak. He did not faint, though there was much cause for him to do so. He was energized and sustained by the glory of Christ. "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." He was guileless, walking transparently without a veil. How could he preach such a gospel and be otherwise? He eschewed the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in darkness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully. He gave forth the truth in all its purity. It received no adulteration in passing through such a vessel.

The God who once commanded the light to shine out of darkness, had Himself shined in Paul's heart, for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Apostle was a vessel of heavenly light set here to shed a holy radiance around. Are we this practically? It is not merely that Paul set forth in his teachings the doctrines of these things, though he did so, but he was all this in himself as well as in his teaching.

He was a vessel of heavenly light. The treasure was in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power might be clearly of God and not of man.

A Vessel of Heavenly Light

Who but God could have accomplished all that Paul carried out in the face of habitual and serious opposition, with the added difficulty of a thorn in the flesh? But the vessel must be broken in order to have the effectual shining forth of the heavenly testimony. The allusion is doubtless to Gideon's lamps and pitchers. The lamps were placed within the pitchers, and the pitchers had to be smashed (Judg. 7). Consequently, God brought power out of weakness. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." 1 Cor. 1:25.

The breaking process described is very touching. "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:8-10. What a precious servant of Christ! He walked with scarcely a falter a path of unparalleled trial and suffering for the sake of Christ, filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for His body's sake, the Church. He met nothing but reproach and loss on every hand.

This is not, however, Christ the perfect Servant. But comparing ourselves with Paul, how far short we come! Is there not a tendency with us to seek our own and not the things of Jesus Christ? Are we not prone to seek a comfortable pathway in our service, and to shun reproach and suffering? Is there not a danger of flesh and the world proving a snare to our hearts? Let us search ourselves closely in the light of the Divine Presence.

The Motives of the Minister in Chapter Five

There are three motives of the minister: the coming glory, the judgment seat, and the love of Christ.

(1.) As to the bright future, the Apostle was full of holy confidence. We know that if the earthly tabernacle (the body) is destroyed, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. If life has to be laid down, we are confident that we shall be clothed at the appointed moment, and shall be like the Son. We do not look for dissolution, but for Christ's coming, that the power of life in Christ may swallow up mortality. We anticipate a glorious change at the fulfillment of the blessed hope. Let it be distinctly understood that the Apostle himself looked for this. By no means did he relegate the Lord's coming to a distant day. It is a mark of the evil servant to do so and such was not Paul. It is true that when he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, he spoke differently, but the Lord had then made known to him that he must go into death for His sake, and be among the sleepers at His coming. Peter was similarly informed by the Lord.

God has made us for the glory. His purpose when He first began to work in our souls was to have us ultimately like His Son. He has predestinated us to be "conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom. 8:29.

The Coming Glory

Meanwhile, He has given us the Spirit as the earnest and thus we are filled with confidence. If we die, it is but absence from the body, to be at home with the Lord. With the Apostle all this became a motive for service. "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." 2 Cor. 5:9. How could he help laboring for such a Lord? To have been marked out for glory, to be assured of the presence of the Spirit, so filled the Apostle with adoring gratitude that he was very gladly willing to spend and be spent for Him.

(2.) Then comes the judgment seat. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." This includes saints as well as sinners, not that all will stand before the Lord together, nor with the same issues. Those who believe in Jesus and are at peace with God through His work, these are in the possession of eternal life in His Son and beyond judgment. Christ cannot judge His own handiwork. But it all must be told out that we may know the real truth as to His grace and as to ourselves, that any rewards that are due for faithful service may be dealt out by the Lord. How solemn it will be for some to stand before Christ; what confusion of face there will be, what eternal ruin! They will stand in all the nakedness of nature, without a rag in which to appear, without a single plea, only to be righteously expelled from Him into eternal woe! The thought of it quickened the Apostle and became a second motive for service and ministry. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Does it act thus with us? Satan seems determined in our day to remove this motive for service altogether. Never were the terrors of the judgment to come so softened, not to say openly denied. Men doing this act falsely and become tools of the enemy. Paul had the future with its tremendous and appalling issues fully before his eyes, and it had the effect of making him even more zealous in his labor for Christ among men.

(3.) The third motive is by no means the least, but rather the spring of all. "The love of Christ constraineth us." He thought of Him coming down to where men were and walking here in an attitude of reconciliation toward men.

Love of Christ

Then He went into death that He might close the history of the first man and lay a righteous ground of reconciliation for the new creation. This wondrous love filled the heart of the Apostle and was a constraining power. It caused him to go forth throughout the Gentile world as an ambassador of the absent Christ, with this blessed ministry of reconciliation, beseeching men on God's part to be reconciled to Him. Service is of but little worth if love is not the spring. "Servile work" can never satisfy Christ. But what will not love endure? What will it not accomplish for its object?

Moral Traits of the Minister in Chapter Six

The Apostle and his fellow-workers besought the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. He speaks of beseeching sinners in chapter 5 and verse 20; now he beseeches saints. If they turned out badly, the ministry was blamed and the Lord dishonored. John presents the matter similarly in his epistles (1 John 2:28; 2 John 8). As for Paul, how did he behave? "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." He was most anxious to be without reproach, and to preserve a true character as God's minister in whom the divine glory was in measure bound up. Faithful man! He not only set forth the truth by word of mouth, but exemplified it in all his ways. Our teaching has only the weight which our lives give to it.

The first moral trait is "much patience." This is found in the front rank in chapter 12 also. In Paul it was proved to be "in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses." None endured what he did in the service of Christ. But is there no place for it now because persecution has ceased? Assuredly, there is. In these latter days of service in the assembly of God, it is not infrequently of a distressing and discouraging character. With declining love on every hand, the world coming into the hallowed circle, and growing indifference to the claims of Christ, the spiritual laborer needs "much patience." Let the whole chapter be examined with all its features and may the Spirit of God produce these things in us all for Christ's glory.

W. Fereday

Bits and Pieces

Correction despised, brings sharper correction.

Bible Challenger-02-February V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words that define a specific possession of Him who created all things.

1. A creature that catches and scatters at the same time.
2. A descriptive word concerning creatures that creep in a wide place.
3. A creature that turns not away for any.
4. A creature whose manner of drinking became the means of establishing an army.
5. A creature, in a vision, in whose mouth was a threefold evidence of its cruelty.
6. A flying creature whose care for her young finds herself sometimes over and sometimes under them.
7. The creature to whom sluggards are directed.
8. The creature that finds her house in the fir trees.
9. A creature whose voice when first heard, announces the passing of winter.
10. A creature that was formed with crookedness in mind.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-01-January Answers V.05

1. Iron did swim 2 Kings 6:6
2. Meal 2 Kings 4:41
3. Pot of oil 2 Kings 4:2-4
4. Opened her mouth Num. 16:32
5. Son stood still Josh. 10:13
6. Seven times 2 Kings 5:10
7. Issue of blood Mark 5:25,29
8. Backward 2 Kings 20:11
9. Lions Dan. 6:22
10. Elisha 2 Kings 13:21

"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is IMPOSSIBLE; but with God all things are possible." Matt. 19:26

Bitter Feelings

There is no burden of the spirit but is lightened by kneeling under it. Little by little the bitterest feelings are sweetened by the mention of them in prayer.

Bitterness

There is no bitterness, even in the deepest sorrow, unless the will is at work. It is the working of the will that brings the bitterness.

God's Care

It was God's purpose to bring His people into the land. The wilderness was not in His purpose, but when they were in the way, He cared for them.

The Silent Building of Solomon's Temple

When Bishop Heber read his beautiful poem, "Palestine," in manuscript to Sir Walter Scott, his friend remarked that in speaking of the Temple of Solomon he had forgotten to refer to the silence which prevailed during its erection. The poet immediately retired for a few minutes and introduced the following beautiful lines: No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung; Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric sprung.

This very remarkable circumstance has been frequently noticed. It is regarded as an indication of the deep sense which Solomon had of the sacredness of the work and it has given rise to many pious and useful meditations.

Matthew Henry in his commentary says, "It was to be the temple of the God of peace, therefore no iron tool must be heard in it. Quietness and silence both become religious exercises; God's work should be done with as much care and as little noise as may be. The temple was thrown down with axes and hammers; they that did it roared in the midst of the congregation (Psa. 74:4, 6), but it was built up in silence. Clamor and violence often hinder, but never further the work of God." These thoughts are well worthy of consideration, especially of those who can never assert their own opinions without violently assailing those of others, nor do anything for God without inviting the multitude to come and see their zeal for the Lord of Hosts.

Things New and Old

The Temples

The following are the temples mentioned in the Word of God: Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8), was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 588 B.C. Zerubbabel's Temple (Ezra 3:6) was pillaged and dedicated to the heathen god, Jupiter, by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the years 168 and 170 B.C. Herod's Temple (John 2:20), reconstructed and almost rebuilt in a style of surpassing magnificence, commenced in the year 17 B.C. Antichrist's Temple (2 Thess. 2:4) will be built by the Jews in unbelief when returned to their land (Isa. 18). The "Antichrist" and the "Beast," that is, head of the revived Roman Empire, will establish idolatrous worship in it. Christ's Millennial Temple (Ezek. 40) will be entirely new, and not on the site of the old one. It will be grand and spacious, according to Divine plan and measurement, and the glory of Jehovah will fully occupy it.

Editorial

"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple," writes Malachi, the last prophet in the Old Testament. One of our readers called our attention to the headlines in one of the leading news magazines which read: "Time for a New Temple." A frequently recited Jewish prayer is: "May it be Thy will that the temple be speedily rebuilt in our day."

If world news brings these things before us, what should we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ be thinking about and be looking for? Certainly the Lord from heaven. Also it should stir us up as to what will soon take place concerning the temple.

This month's issue of the Christian Treasury contains much information about the three temples that are past and two more that are future.

About one hundred years ago Walter Scott wrote: "The Jews as a nation are restored in unbelief both on their part and on the part of a friendly nation which espouses their cause (Isa. 18). They then proceed to build their temple, and restore, as far as they can, the Mosaic ritual. God is not in this Gentile movement for Jewish restoration, which is undertaken for political ends and purposes." We now see how accurately the first part of this prophecy from Isa. 18 is fulfilled, therefore we can soon expect the rest of the prophecy to be completed.

An observation from W. Bothwell is this: "Prior to Ezekiel's temple, a holy place shall be set up in which the abomination which makes desolate shall be placed. (Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15-a holy place; 2 Thess. 2:4-the shrine, not necessarily a temple which would require years to build.)"

The Jerusalem Talmud indicates that the Jews may build an intermediate edifice before the era of their Messiah. Some esteemed biblical scholars have called this antichrist's temple. Surely it will be used early in the seven years of the tribulation period that follows the rapture of all believers when Christ comes for His Church.

The temple under consideration now is not Ezekiel's temple. We quote from J.N. Darby: "Ezekiel's temple is not the temple built by the Jews in unbelief. It is all by divine measurement, directions given how the prince is to come in when all is in order, connected with the permanent division of

the land in its proper place in connection with the city. From that day the city is called, 'the Lord is there.' It is possible that they will try to imitate it in unbelief, but their temple will be destroyed and their service is rejected (Isa. 66). Still, even so, there will be a temple (v. 6)."

The five temples in historic order are:

1. Solomon's temple.
2. Ezra's or Zerubbabel's temple.
3. Herod's temple. These three are past and gone.
4. The Jews' or antichrist's temple.
5. Ezekiel's or Christ's millennial temple.

For our joy as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this age of grace, we state that during this present time God's dwelling is in the Church composed of living stones, and not as before or after in a temple made by hands, however grand. We quote from 2 Cor. 6:16: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

A comparison that helps us to enjoy and to understand a little about the millennial kingdom followed by the day of God is this: the 1000-year kingdom is like a grand porch to a most magnificent palace. The porch is the entrance-the 1000 years. The day of God that follows is the magnificent palace and has no measurement or end. The future, how glorious!

Ed.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear thou not, for I am with thee;

Be not thou dismayed;

I thy God am ever with thee,

Wherefore be afraid?

I will strengthen, I will help thee.

Held with My right hand;

Not a foe can ever harm thee,

Therefore, fearless stand.

The Temple

Although the books of the Kings give us the public history of God's government of Israel, in the Chronicles we rather find the history of His ways in grace. All is told out in Kings, while in Chronicles only those sins are mentioned which exalt the God of all grace. Yet, when we come to look at the two books in their typical aspect, we find the books of Kings surpass the Chronicles in that the former point us to heavenly things, the latter to earthly things.

The two descriptions of the various buildings erected by King Solomon are a striking illustration of this principle. Each has its own peculiar place and its special signification. Let us briefly glance at the description of each and at its typical bearing.

There can be no question to whom King Solomon points when we read in Zech. 6:12 and 13, "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne." It is Christ, the son of David. Joined with Him we find King Hiram, and he likewise (how common are these double figures in Scripture) points us to the One that "shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Rom. 15:12. As head of Jew and Gentile, Jesus builds the temple of the Lord.

The House of the Lord

Cedar trees, fir trees, great stones, costly stones and hewed stones were the materials needed for the work. Jehovah is the first thought of these united kings, and "the house of the Lord," therefore, is their first design. Compact and in unison as to its proportions, it is adorned with a porch and windows of narrow lights. Surrounded by chambers, the structure does not encroach upon the proportions of the house, seeing that their beams are dependent on narrowed rests round about.

This carefulness in regard to the Lord's dwelling place is further brought before us when we read that the house was built of stone, made ready beforehand, so there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building (1 Kings 6:7). How suited this is to the calm and dignified repose of the One who, when a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, and after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, was neither in wind, earthquake nor fire, but in the still small voice (1 Kings 19:11,12).

"The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir." Sol. 1:17. Well-chosen were those trees which represent creation's fairest produce (1 Kings 4:33); this earth's fertility was to adorn the home of Him to whom earth and creation alike owe their existence. "Carved with knops and open flowers," creation does its best to do Him honor while the unseen stones tell us of outward beauty and strength within.

As in the tabernacle, so in the temple there was the holy of holies, the oracle where the Ark of the Covenant should have its place, but unlike the wilderness habitation, no veil is here to shroud the glory of Jehovah. It was merely a partition formed of doors of olive tree and chains of gold, a most precious and lasting material with which the whole house was covered. When we learn that gold signifies divine righteousness (Rev. 3:18), in contrast to human wretchedness, the wondrous suitability of this is evident as well as becoming to the house of the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness (Psa. 11:7). The unvarying accompaniments of the throne, the cherubim, come now into prominence. Their very material, like that of the doors, seems to tell us that the One in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, is now enthroned in glory; they are made of olive trees (Rom. 11:17).

The accomplishment of promises and triumph over the king's enemies always go together, so we find the palm trees, too, brought in to tell of victory. What a beautiful combination it must have been when all the walls of the throne round about were carved with figures of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers within and without. The floor was overlaid with gold and the doors of olive tree were adorned with carvings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers overlaid with gold. The two folding doors of fir tree were covered with gold on the carved work. How sweetly it reminds us that righteousness, promise, victory and creation's blessings can now be blended together in perfect harmony.

The house was seven years in building. Perfection in spiritual things gives a period to the formation of the house. How could it be otherwise with the work of such a Workman?

Three More Houses

But though the house of the Lord first, and rightly so, was built, there is yet another structure that occupies King Solomon. Though there may not have been the same energy in exercise as when the house of the Lord was in course of construction, yet in due time his own house was completed.

Next in order comes the house of the forest of Lebanon with its porch of judgment, its pillars and its windows denoting, doubtless, government characterized by firmness and clarity-always the features of the throne of God. (See Rev. 4:6, 7.)

Lastly, private affections have their place as well as public government. Pharaoh's daughter whom he had taken to wife, a bride culled from the world (for Egypt is always a type of this world's glory), is not forgotten. A house is erected especially for her, the object of his love.

Durability, and that of the choicest kind, is evidenced in all these structures by costly stones according to the measures of hewed stones sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, stones of ten and eight cubits.

Inside the Houses

Now we pass from the various structures themselves, beautiful in their variety, to their internal fittings and arrangements. First in order come the two pillars of brass, each eighteen cubits high with their two capitals of molten brass, nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work. All these were adorned with pomegranates and lily work. These were erected in the porch of the temple, or house of the Lord, and when erected duly entitled "He will establish" and "In Him is strength."

How eloquently these, standing as they do at the entrance to the dwelling of the "Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," tell of the power and stability of the throne of Him who governs man righteously, yet graciously. This also is consistent with the purity of His nature. The brass, the pomegranates, and lily work are blended together in perfect unison.

If the pillars bear witness to the power and stability of the throne, the sea, which comes next in order, testifies to the holiness of Him who sits upon it. Though the oxen with their faces every way may tell us of the patience that bears with evil throughout the universe (Matt. 5:45), yet the brim of it wrought like the brim of a cup with flowers of lilies and bases of brass with borders of lions, oxen, cherubim, and wheels, and ledges engraved with cherubim, lions, and palm trees, most assuredly remind us of the purity found to perfection in Him.

His righteousness demands righteousness from those who approach Him; His power deals with those who disregard it. His government is in favor of the righteous and against the wicked, and this is shown by the rapidity with which He carries out His purposes, and the victory that must follow when He has taken the case in hand. The lavers, shovels and basins conclude the work of this widow's son of Naphtali whose father was a man of Tire, a simple figure of Jew and Gentile.

Solomon Must Build the House

Hiram's work was inferior to that of Solomon, for it is not without a purpose that the Spirit of God has recorded that Solomon built the house of the Lord, His own house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and even that of Pharaoh's daughter, but to Hiram was entrusted the lesser work of pillars, sea, lavers, basins and shovels.

Cast of bright brass, they might be, and without weight, but no one but Solomon must build the house or construct the vessels of gold that remain yet to be spoken of. They were for the house of the Lord, and of material suited to His glory. The altar, table for showbread, the candlesticks with their flowers, lamps and tongs, bowls, snuffers, basins, spoons, censers, even the hinges for the doors were all to be of gold, and all to be the work of Solomon. How careful of His glory is the God who has thus recorded with minute accuracy the material and structure of everything that He has ordained to surround Himself from the house to the hinges of the doors.

The Temple as Seen in Chronicles

Let us turn to 2 Chron. 2. At once the differences are noticeable. "Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the Lord, and a house for his kingdom." It is not so much the person of the dweller that is here before us as the dominions of the king the earthly kingdom rather than the heavenly home. This difference is manifest throughout. In Kings, no site is named; in Chronicles, the Mount Moriah at Jerusalem is specially designated as the place of the Lord's selection.

And yet King Solomon takes an interest in it and builds it, seeing it is for Jehovah. This sweetly reminds us of Christ's attention to His Father's interests, whether heavenly or earthly. It has its glory too, garnished with precious stones for beauty and the gold was gold of Parvaim. Still, the veil is there, telling of distance and imperfect access to the throne. The altar, too, of brass, the lavers wherein to wash the offerings and the sea for the priests to wash in remind us that we are not by any means on the same exalted ground we have already gone over from the book of Kings. Whatever the privileges of the earthly subjects of the millennial throne of the Son of man, they can in no way be compared to the higher order of privilege accorded to the heavenly saints.

As we have observed, in Kings we have the public government of Israel; in Chronicles we have God's ways in grace. In the former it is types of heavenly things, but in the latter, types of earthly ones. This, by attentive study, can be easily ascertained. In the one, the heavenly glory of the Father and the Son is set before us, but in the latter, it is the display of the earthly glory of the Son of man.

The Chambers of the House

The house of the Lord, with its chambers surely tells us of the Father's house with many mansions (John 14:2). There He dwells in the atmosphere of love peculiarly His own. The love of His Son has formed this place for Him, and not only for Him, but for those whom the same love has been pleased to gather around Himself-the companions of His glory, the sharers of His home. He has His own peculiar home, but immediately grouped around Him are the "chambers," the "place" that the Son has gone to prepare for us.

But the Son as well as the Father has His own peculiar glory, "as a son over His own house" (Heb. 3:6), the circle of His interests, the sphere of His attentions. He thinks of us; He cares for us, and He meets our every need. In connection with this peculiar place, this place of special preciousness to us, He builds His own house.

But more than this, there is the house of the forest of Lebanon with its porch of judgment, reminding us that public sway will be the portion of Him to whom every knee shall yet bow and every tongue confess. From the heavens He must reign till He hath put all things under Him. It therefore tells us of the glory of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The House of Pharaoh's Daughter

Last of all this fourfold picture is completed by the house of Pharaoh's daughter. This tells us that whatever may be the joys of the Father's home, the sense of the care of Him who rules over His own house, the grandeur of the time when saints will follow in the train of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Bridegroom still will not permit the bride to forget His precious love. That love proved its fullest measure when He gave Himself that He might sanctify, having cleansed her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. Truly this is love, "strong as death," that "many waters cannot quench."

Finally we notice the scene of His earthly rule, the house of His kingdom. Jerusalem will yet be the throne of the Lord. He will be represented there, no doubt, by the Prince of the house of David. The earthly Jerusalem will be the scene of His government as the heavenly one will be that of His grace and glory. How happy to have one's portion there!

D.T. Grimston

A Good Conscience

If one has in any way given up a good conscience, he has lost his public testimony.

God Entering His Temples

God entering His temples is a solemn, holy subject which our hearts would reverence while we trace it for a little through Scripture.

Scripture abounds with evidences of the intimacy which God has sought with the works of His hands. He has always been making a habitation for Himself, in some form or another, among His creatures.

At the beginning, as Creator, He formed His works so that He Himself might rest in them. He saw everything which He had made, that it was very good, and all furnished Him with a desired habitation. The Sabbath at the end of creation-work tells us this. Whatever measure of happiness was provided for man in the arrangements of creation (and that measure was indeed complete), still the Lord God was to have a place in the garden. He walked there in the cool of the day, seeking the presence of Adam.

Thus it was at the first when the earth was in virgin purity. It is quickly changed, but this purpose of God does not change.

The creation denies the Lord God a rest or a habitation by reason of sin that defiled. He must arise and depart. It could not be His rest, for it was polluted. We therefore at once see Him as a stranger in the world His hands had made. This was not His place of rest. He visits His elect that are in it, but He does not make it a home in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He communicates with them in marked, personal intimacy, but He seeks no place on the earth. Still, God has a dwelling place here in counsel and in prospect.

The Second Habitation

The seed of Abraham is redeemed from Egypt and brought into the wilderness. Egypt was as the world, the polluted creation; the wilderness was as a spot outside of it and there in the midst of His people again He finds for Himself a "holy habitation" (Ex. 15:13). The tabernacle is reared to be His dwelling and He enters it.

But how did He enter it? He had of old, with evident delight, taken His creation. But now, the earth being defiled with a wilderness around Him and before Him and under Him, how does He take His place and enter His dwelling in the midst of His people? With equal delight as at the beginning, He enters the tabernacle reared in the wilderness of Sinai with His whole heart and His whole soul. The cloud abides on the outside or top of it, and the glory goes within but goes there with an expression of earnest, delighted satisfaction. Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:35). God, as it were, would have the whole of it for Himself-at least for a season-as at creation. He enjoyed the work of His hands, and hallowed the seventh day and rested, before He shared His rest and His enjoyment with Adam.

This is full of blessing. It is an expression of the early desire of God to find a place among His creatures. If pollution separates Him from the earth in its common, general condition, it cannot separate Him from this purpose of His heart. He will purify a people that He may still dwell among His creatures. He will give them His Sabbaths, sanctify them as He did the seventh day and dwell in the midst of them as in the Garden of Eden.

The Third Habitation

There can be no happier thought than this that the Lord God purposes to be near to His creatures. It is a thought, as we shall find from this meditation, which the heart should always enjoy. As we travel through the Scriptures, we take it up at the beginning, we carry it along with us on our journey and find it full and fresh at the end. It accompanies us all the way, and is to be realized forever.

The children of Israel have to change their condition. They cease to be a traveling people and become a settled people. They leave the tents of the desert for the cities and villages of the land. The glory, accordingly, has to go from the tabernacle to the temple. There may be all these changes in circumstances, but there is no change in affection, no abatement in the fervency and desire of the Lord of Israel towards His people.

A great interval also took place and fresh provocations were given. As soon as the ark, the witness of the divine presence, had entered the land, the sword of Joshua began the work of conquest to prepare "a mountain" or a kingdom for the Lord. But Israel was untrue to Jehovah, and all through the times of the Judges and of Saul there is confusion and defilement and the restlessness of iniquity. The sword of David has, therefore, after so long a time, to finish what the sword of Joshua had begun until at length there is rest—no evil or enemy occurring—and the peaceful throne of Solomon, the throne of the Lord is set in the land and over the people. Then the temple is built and the ark leaves the tabernacle of the wilderness (or tent that David had prepared for it which in principle is the same thing) for the house of the kingdom.

This long delay of many centuries during which the Lord of Israel was kept out of His rest, and that through the faithlessness of His people, does not change things. The glory enters the temple exactly as it had before entered the tabernacle. The priests cannot stand in the temple just as Moses had been unable to stand in the tabernacle because the glory had again so filled the house of God. (See 2 Chron. 5.) This was the Lord again seating Himself in the midst of His people, or entering His habitation there as with His whole heart and His whole soul.

In Eden He found His rest because all there was "very good"; now He finds His rest in the temple because "He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." We see this difference (Gen. 1:31; 2 Chron. 5:13), but still He takes His place and enters His dwelling with the same earnest affection and delight.

The Fourth Dwelling-Place

After this He still goes on and we still trace the same mind in Him. The fullness of time arrives and God is to be manifest in the flesh. This great mystery speaks for itself in Luke 1 and 2. But what fervor is there seen in those who wait for it! What joy there is in heaven among the angels and what joy on earth in the vessels filled by the Spirit! The fields of Bethlehem witness this; Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna also are witnesses. God assuming manhood, manifesting Himself in flesh, entering the temple of the human body, are in its generation like the glory entering the tabernacle or the temple. The Holy Spirit Himself, the angels that are in God's presence on high, and the elect that are visited and quickened by Him here below, are all made to tell of the divine joy of that moment.

It is no exile from the higher regions that we see in the glorious, eternal Son of the Father, made of a woman, and taking flesh and blood. Unspeakable riches of grace indeed it is, but Luke 1 and 2 forbid us to say that it is an exile that is then entering a foreign land, or the place of banishment. There is no finer glow of joy expressed in the whole of Scripture than in these chapters which usher in and reveal and celebrate the Incarnation. If ever the Lord God entered His temple with desire and joy, it is then. But this, as we have seen, He has always done.

This is certainly wondrous and precious beyond all thought. But is there still more? Is this same story, full of blessedness as it is, able to go further?

The Fifth Habitation

The house is then finished, as the heavens and earth of old were on the sixth day. The vacant, forfeited apostleship is filled and the day of Pentecost has fully come. The glory again enters. The Holy Spirit comes into His temple now, as the Son in the day of Luke 2 had come into His. The temples are different, but the joy in which God enters them is the same.

The living house of God is raised and completed in Jerusalem, is filled with the Spirit, and like cloven tongues of fire He sits upon each of the assembled saints. This is a new form, but it is as when the cloud covered the house and the glory entered it in the times of Ex. 40 and 2 Chron. 5.

But how is this entrance made? Like "a rushing mighty wind" the Holy Spirit comes, and this style of covering, this expression of it speaks of the delight and fullness with which it is done. The full glory is there. The Spirit Himself, in His proper personality, enters in fullness and power. The fruit of this is shown all around as we saw in the day of the Incarnation. The wonderful works of God are rehearsed at once by the baptized body. They are glad and praise God. They are delivered from themselves, both dwelling together and sharing with one another all they have. Moreover, they give witness with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace is upon them all.

Surely if the Son entered His tabernacle of flesh, the temple of His body in divine fullness and glory, so did the Spirit now enter and fill His house in like affection. Intense personality is here again witnessed and God is again near. He finds His habitation here in the midst of us with His whole heart and His whole soul as we see in Jer. 32:41. The dispensation may change; the tabernacle may have to give place to the temple, or one temple to yield to another-the temple of a human body may be prepared for the Son, the temple of living stones for the Spirit, but the fervor and intimacy with which God or the glory enters each of those in its day, is alike throughout.

The Sixth Habitation

There is one other form which this same mystery is to take, but it takes it in the same manner as from the beginning.

In Rev. 21, the millennial (or eternal) city, descends in full form and solemnity. It is a finished thing, perfect in all its beauty before it appears in sight. It has been built in heaven. The marriage of the Lamb was celebrated there, and there the bride had made herself ready. She is now seen in all her costliness and perfection, the habitation of the glory as once the tabernacle of the wilderness, and then the temple of the kingdom had been. It is the habitation of God through the glory, as once the Church on earth had been the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

This city is now seen as "a bride adorned for her husband" a figure which needs no comment to tell its deep meaning. A great voice accompanies it in its descent and the voice cries, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

As the cloud of old filled the courts when the glory entered the tabernacle and the temple, as the angels rehearsed the joy of heaven when the Son entered the flesh and blood of humanity making it His temple, as the Holy Spirit entered His living temple with like witness of His presence in its fullness, so now the millennial, eternal dwelling place of God in the midst of men is shown as with kindred witness of the divine delight and of the rapture of heaven.

At the beginning, the Lord God had rested in His creation and walked with man. Now, at the end, He rests in His own accomplished redemption, and pitches His tabernacle in the midst of men again.

Surely all this tells us of the delight which He takes in the works of His hands, in His presence with His creatures and in His nearness to them.

J.G. Bellett

Five Temples

One thing that distinguishes the temple from the tabernacle is that God said of it, "Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." The temple referred to the kingdom and a settled order of things, whereas the tabernacle was typical of God's ways and gave the idea of movement. Though the actual building was destroyed and rebuilt, and is now swept away and will again be rebuilt, yet it is treated always as one house. Hag. 2:9 states that: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." When the Lord was on earth, though rejected by the rulers of Israel, He called the temple "My house," and "My Father's house," but later on He said to the Jews "your house." The latter glory refers to the future when God will be owned by His ancient people, and His glory be displayed.

Another thing that distinguished the temple was its being surrounded with chambers, so that the priests that were serving God could dwell around Him. Christ refers possibly to this in saying "In My Father's house are many mansions." The tabernacle had no flooring; the priests trod the earth, but in the temple they were separated from the earth by a flooring.

In the interior of the temple built by Solomon nothing but gold appeared. This is typical of divine righteousness, characterizing the throne and presence of God, as will be manifested in the millennium. The ark was placed in the temple, and had found there its abiding resting place; it was the token of God's presence. The candlesticks, tables of showbread, golden altar, brazen altar, and laver were similar to those in the tabernacle. God owned the house by filling it with His glory.

In the court of the temple were two pillars which received the names of Jachin, "He will establish" and Boaz, "in Him is strength," and these perfectly agree with the fact that it was God's house that was being built (1 Kings 7:21; Rev. 3:12).

Another remarkable thing in the rearing of the temple was that it was built of stones made ready before being brought, so that there should be no noise of hammer or ax or iron tool while it was in progress (1 Kings 6:7). Thus the Church is being formed of living stones who have come to the Living Stone (the chief corner stone, Christ Himself), and the whole building fitly framed together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord. (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:5.)

Of the actual buildings there were: 1. The Temple by Solomon. It was formed after the pattern of the tabernacle, being a rectangle of sixty cubits by twenty and its height thirty cubits. The holy of holies was a cube of twenty cubits, the holy (place) was forty cubits by twenty with a porch in front measuring ten cubits by twenty. The chambers and upper chambers and pillars and porches were additional as described (1 Kings 6). 2. The Temple by Zerubbabel. Few particulars of this are given. Cyrus ordered the foundations to be strongly laid, and its height was to be sixty cubits, and its breadth sixty cubits (Ezra 6:3). Probably it was the same size as the temple by Solomon: the breadth here of sixty cubits being its length and its width not mentioned. Or, if the sixty cubits be the width, it may have included the chambers. It is not probable that it was larger than the first

temple. The aged men who had seen the first house, wept when they saw the foundations of this house laid. This temple continued until the days of Herod. 3. The Temple by Herod. The Jews said it was forty-six years being built (John 2:20). Josephus gives almost the only account we have of it. It was apparently built over the old one, so as not to hinder the temple service; the priests themselves built the holy places. It was all on a magnificent scale. In the gospels we read that the disciples exclaimed, "What stones! and what buildings!" They pointed out how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts. Herod was not God's man to build Him a house, nor were the leaders of the Jews fit men to carry on His worship. To the disciples the Lord declared that one stone should not be left upon another (Mark 13:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6). Though Josephus gives many details as to this temple, they are not distinct enough to enable a plan to be made of it. In the New Testament one word refers to the house itself, and another word to the buildings and courts in general. Apparently the Lord never entered the house itself. Doubtless this temple stood upon some part of mount Moriah, at the south-east corner of Jerusalem, but on what part of the enclosure is not known. 4. A Future Temple. Scripture speaks in many places of the return of the Jews to their own land, but in unbelief as to the Lord Jesus being their Messiah. They will apparently build a temple, but this must not be confounded with the one described by Ezekiel, though the Jews may attempt to build it as there described. God cannot bless them until His anointed One is owned, and therefore this temple will be destroyed (Psa. 74; Isa. 66:1-6). 5. Ezekiel's Temple. This is fully described in Ezek. 40-44. It will be built when the land is once again divided among the twelve tribes and all brought into blessing. In the center of the land there will be a "holy oblation" of 25,000 cubits square which will contain both the city and the temple. That cubits and not reeds are intended, see chapter 45:2, 3. Other passages speak of the temple, Zion, and Jerusalem as associated together, as Psa. 68:29; 122; Isa. 2:2, 3; Mic. 3:12; 4:2. All these, though not exactly on the same spot, will fall within the "holy oblation" though the part on which the city will stand is also called "profane" or "common." Probably the city will be built on its old site, and the temple may be somewhat farther north. Then the latter glory of God's house will exceed all that has yet been, for the Lord Jesus will be the glory of the house.

Christ refers to His body as a temple in John 2:19, and Christians are now God's temple in which the Spirit of God dwells. The body of each Christian is also spoken of as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

In Rev. 11:19 the temple of God is opened in heaven, in connection with which are the judgments that come forth to smite the earth (Rev. 14:15, 17; 15:5-8; 16:1-17).

Bible Dictionary

Questions and Answers

QUES. What does "fearful in praises" mean in Ex. 15:11?

ANS. The word, fearful is sometimes translated revered. So we might read it, "revered in praises." This was drawn out from Moses' and the children of Israel's hearts as they witnessed the mighty power of Jehovah in their deliverance from Egypt and in the swallowing up of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Psa. 89:7 uses the same word. In all our prayers and praises the words we use should express reverence (Psa. 111:9)

A Cloud

Our path through the desert is strewn with countless mercies, and yet if a cloud the size of a man's hand appears on the horizon, we sometimes forget the rich mercies of the past in view of this single cloud, which after all may "break in blessing on our head."

Bible Challenger-03-March V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that describes the mental contemplation of someone very much in love with the law of the Lord.

1. A personal prayer of someone desiring a full perception of the Lord's precepts.
2. A dimensional expression applied to the Lord's commandments.
3. That which was not done concerning the law of the Lord by one who resisted the taunts of the proud.
4. That which was done inwardly by one who performed the statutes of the Lord.
5. The twin afflictions endured by one, even while maintaining his delight in the commandments of the Lord.
6. A value comparison by someone who esteems the Lord's commandments more highly than the world's standard of worth.
7. A personal prayer by someone who recognizes that the statutes of the Lord are to be desired.
8. Something not done by those who walk in the ways of the Lord.
9. A figurative comparison of someone who finds his joy in the word of the Lord:
10. Something that can be said of those having great peace concerning the law of the Lord.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-02-February Answers V.05

1. Wolf John 10:12
2. Innumerable Psa. 104:25
3. Lion Prov. 30:30
4. Dog Judg. 7:5
5. Bear Dan. 7:5
6. Eagle Deut. 32:11
7. Ant Prov. 6:6
8. Stork Psa. 104:17
9. Turtle [dove] Sol. 2:11, 12
10. Serpent Job 26:13

"I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the WILD BEASTS of the field are Mine." Psa. 50:11.

Something Wrong

Where you see something wrong in your fellow men go with it to the Lord, and tell Him of it as if you had done it yourself. That would be so much better than proclaiming it to others; while you are doing the latter you might have been praying to the Lord.

Associating

The temptation now is not to give up the name of Jesus, but to connect something else with that name. The golden calf was not to put aside Jehovah. "And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord." Ex. 32:5.

The Deserted Lamb

Walking through my field on a winter's morning, I met with a lamb, as I thought dead, but taking it up I found it just alive; the cruel mother had almost starved it to death. I put it into my bosom, and brought it into my house. There I rubbed its starved limbs, warmed it by the fireside, and fed it with warm milk from the cow. Soon the lamb revived. First it feared me, but afterward it thoroughly loved me. As I mostly fed it with my own hand, so it followed me wherever I went, bleating after me whenever it saw me, and was always happy when it could frisk around me, but never so pleased as when I would carry it in my arms.

Jesus is a shepherd, the Shepherd of souls, and of Him it is said that He carries the lambs in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. (Isa. 40:11.) If you desire to love Jesus, read that blessed book, the Bible. There you hear such things of the love of Christ to poor ruined sinners as I hope will melt your eyes to tears, and your heart into love.

Humbleness-Gentleness

No man ever lost anything in God's work by humbling himself, or by dealing gently with a brother.

Editorial

A remark heard recently was this: "It seems that wickedness now is so great that the only way to clean up this world is to burn it up like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed." The Lord God said of Sodom, "This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness.... They were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezek. 16:49, 50. Also the Lord spoke these words to Abraham in Gen. 18 about Sodom: "Their sin is very grievous."

As the Lord God looks down upon this world today, does He not see the same condition even in the professing Christian lands? How long will He wait before He judges? We cite two very interesting verses in Deut. 29

The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath. Deut. 29:22, 23.

Especially we notice that the Lord says, "the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it." Or "the sicknesses wherewith the Lord hath made it sick." Surely these scriptures make clear that present-day plagues and such sicknesses as AIDS and venereal diseases are judgments from the Lord God.

In the New Testament the Lord has forewarned about the condition in this world just before the judgment falls. "As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:28, 29. All these activities are going on at present and surely we believe that the iniquity and corruption now is like Sodom in the days of Lot.

The last chapter that Peter wrote tells us graphically of coming judgment and of the Lord God's way of cleaning up by fire the marks of iniquity that are so prevalent in this world even now. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10.

Based on this information given for the believer living at this present time, we are exhorted in the very next verse with these words, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." v. 11.

Lot was taken out of Sodom before its destruction from heaven. Likewise, all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will Be Taken out of this world before its judgment by fire. Meanwhile, holiness of life, godliness and purity ought to characterize the Christian. These things bring great benefits to us even in the life that now is. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8.

Ed.

Self-Occupation

Self-occupation is a great mistake for the Christian. Of course, until a sinner has learned the plague of his own soul, he must be turned in upon himself. Thus he will cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and find salvation and peace in turning to God. So, too, a Christian must be reminded of himself as long as he thinks there is anything good in him. But when he can say with Paul, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," he is privileged to turn from himself to Christ to find his all in Him.

What a relief it is! Instead of thinking about my feelings, my attainments, my work, and my dignity— to live in the joy of the Lord and what He has done for us. And then let Him work in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, in the desire that He may be glorified. This is what is meant by the words, "Ib me to live is Christ"; living is Christ.

Are you thinking of yourself? Then you are in danger of being a Pharisee, or being miserable. Do you long to be happy, or holy? Turn to Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith; find your all in Him.

Summary of Mark

Mark 1-16

It is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Mark to set forth our Lord Jesus Christ as the faithful and obedient Servant, according to the terms of the prophecy.

Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.... Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I sent? who is blind as He that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Isa. 42:1-3, 19

The blessed One was blind to every object but the glory of God, deaf to every call but the voice of God, and so gave us an example of perfect service. It was a service, as described in the gospel of Mark, distinguished by many beautiful and significant features.

First, it began with His temptation in the wilderness, when He "was with the wild beasts." It was like another David who gained the victory in secret over the lion and the bear before he went forth to open conflict with Goliath. This fact is recorded by Mark alone.

Second, it was a service undertaken in secret prayer, Mark alone informing us that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." This statement is the more noteworthy because the evening before after the sun did set, and we know not how far into the night, He was at work. But however busy, nothing must hinder the faithful Servant from personal communion with God.

Third, it was a service promptly rendered. Ten times in the opening chapter we find the words immediately, straightway, forthwith, as indicating the haste and energy with which the obedient Servant did the bidding of Him who sent Him. The Greek word so translated occurs eighty times in the New Testament, and forty times it is found in the short gospel of Mark.

Fourth, it was an unwearied service. Again and again it is recorded, and it is peculiar to Mark, that when He sought retirement for prayer, rest, and sleep, He let the needs of others call Him forth into the activities of His busy ministry. He did not utter a murmuring word at the thoughtless selfishness of grief and want.

Fifth, it was a service that entered into minute details, as if nothing were too small for His notice. Mark alone mentions the fact that He took up the little children in His arms, or rather folded them in His arms. He not only set a little child in the midst of His disciples as the symbol of true greatness, but took him up in His arms. And He took the mother of Peter's wife by the hand and lifted her up. Many such striking incidents can be gathered by comparing the different gospels.

Sixth, it was a service rendered in great tenderness. Mark alone notices that He had compassion on the loathsome leper. And beholding the young ruler, He loved him. The same evangelist tells us more frequently than in the other gospels of the touch of His hand, His looking, His sighing, as if the Holy Spirit would indicate the necessity of love and sympathy for the true servant.

Seventh, it was a service not performed for display, but carried on in secret. So we read that He took the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech aside and when He had healed him, "charged them that they should tell no man." He led the blind man out of the town and when He had given him sight said, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town," and He "entered into a house, and would have no man know it."

This gospel, therefore, as compared with the others, is remarkable both for its omissions and its additions. It gives no account of the genealogy of Jesus, nor of His miraculous conception and birth, nor of the Sermon on the Mount. The title of "Lord" is not given Him by this evangelist or by the disciples until after His resurrection. But He Himself declares only in this gospel, of that day and that hour of which no man knoweth, no, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. This language which has perplexed so many becomes perfectly plain when we remember that it is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in Mark to reveal Him as the faithful Servant. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth."

All the way through the gospel it is service, even in the four parables that are recorded, and in the miracles that are mentioned. Every chapter, except the first, seventh, eighth, and fourteenth begins with the word and as if there were scarcely a pause in His ministry of grace from first to last. Onward He moved with an obedience that never faltered, with a zeal for God's glory that never wavered, with a love for poor sinners that no coldness could chill, with a courage that no danger could shake.

Labor for Others

The opening chapter introduces Him as engaged in constant labor for others. The last verse of the last chapter tells us the disciples "went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

It is important, too, to state that Mark observes the chronological order of events that Matthew does not. So it is easy to follow his simple narrative. First we have His unceasing toil in Israel (chapters 1-6). Second, His rejection by the leaders of Israel (chapter 7). Third, the announcement of His approaching death (chapter 8). Fourth, His journey from the mount of transfiguration to Jerusalem (chapters 9,10). Fifth, His entrance into the city and final address to the people (chapters 11,12). Sixth, His farewell message to His disciples and the crucifixion (chapters 13-15). Seventh, His resurrection and ascension (chapter 16).

In the study of the whole gospel we can only be "beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well." Mark 7:37.

J. Brookes

Shepherd

These words, "I shall not want," are the result of looking at the Shepherd that precedes, not at the pasture that follows.

Mark One

Mark gives us the ministry of the Lord. His account is brief and there are few events which are not recorded by Matthew and Luke. Nevertheless, what a gap there would be in our view of the Savior's life and work here below if we did not have the gospel of Mark!

In none of the other gospels do we have a more characteristic manner of presenting what is given us. In none do we have such graphic, vivid life-touches of our Master, not only what He said and did, but how He looked and felt. Besides, there is the evident design of drawing our attention to His gospel-service. All the incidents chosen and the peculiar mode in which they are handled will be found to bear upon this weighty and affecting theme: the Lord God as the Servant in lowly, faithful ministration of the gospel here below.

The very opening verses illustrate this. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. The voice of one crying," etc. We at once enter on the great business the Holy Spirit had in hand. There is no blowing of trumpets to usher in the king in due style and title. This has its just place in Matthew, where the descent traced from Abraham and David, along the chosen royal line of Solomon too, so admirably agrees with God's object there.

The circumstances before and after His birth follow, all carrying out the same end of presenting Jesus as the true and blessed Messiah of Israel. Luke and John, it could be readily shown, were endowed by the Spirit with equally striking and suited wisdom for maintaining the aim of their gospels respectively.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

It is well, however, in noting the beautiful closeness of the picture here brought before our eyes, to observe that there is no precipitancy, no omission of what is a most important preface for the account of Jesus thus ministering. The previous appearance and services of John the Baptist are alluded to in the opening words. It was more than prophecy, though in accordance, as verses 2 and 3 prove, with the prophets. "The law and the prophets," we are told elsewhere, "were until John" who took a great step in advance "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." This was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, after long silence had reigned as to God's testimony in Jerusalem.

It is touching to see that if we are about to follow the steps of God's faithful and only perfect Servant, the change which the Holy Spirit in sovereign wisdom makes (v. 2) in His citation of Mal. 3:1, points to the divine glory of Jesus. In the prophecy it is Jehovah sending His messenger who would prepare the way before Him. In Mark it is still Jehovah sending His messenger, but it is now before "Thy face," or the face of Jesus Christ. The truth is, Jesus was Jehovah even though He humbled Himself as He did. Matthew elicits the same truth from His name, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." The Jews were the people of none but Jehovah.

It is the more remarkable in the opening of our gospel, for Mark, unlike Matthew, rarely quotes the Scriptures. It is perfectly in keeping with this gospel and its opening verses. If the Lord of glory were coming or comes in the form of a servant and the likeness of men, it was most appropriate that prophecy should not be broken, but bend before Him, and that a new and still more blessed testimony should begin.

John in the Wilderness

Where does this voice of the herald cry, and where was he baptizing? In the wilderness. What, then, was the state of Jerusalem and the people of God? They must go outside to John if they would take their right place before God. What he presented was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The effect was great, not meager, but extensive and not without touching the conscience. "There went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."

All this is here sketched by Mark, clearly but rapidly and in brief, without stopping by the way to set it before us as was needful to the purpose of God in Matthew. There the proud and falsehearted men stood in the place of religious leaders of the day, objects of God's certain and scrutinizing judgment.

John's Special Place

But if John had his own special place, and if his abode, dress, and food witnessed his separation from the evil state of Israel, it was his happier task to testify to the superiority of Christ's person and of His ministry as compared with his own. Nothing is here said of baptizing with fire, as in Matthew and Luke, to both of whose subjects it was requisite. But Mark was inspired to speak only of that part of John's testimony which is directly associated with the Lord's gospel work-baptizing with the Holy Spirit. It is not that under Christ repentance ceased, for in a world of sin repentance is the necessary pathway of a soul that is born of God. Still, the turning of a soul to God, in a sense of sin and self-judgment is different from the divine power which sets evil aside on the basis of a redemption accomplished by the grace of God. This is the characteristic blessing of Christianity.

Yet Jesus, the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, was Himself baptized by John in the river Jordan. He Himself receives the Holy Spirit! What a sight and what a truth! Infinitely above sin and sins (which He did not even know), yet He was baptized with water. He had no unrighteousness to confess, but thus it became Him to fulfill all righteousness. From Nazareth of Galilee He came, the One who was God over all, blessed forever. There He dwelt, as Matthew tells us, so that the prophets' sayings in this might be fulfilled.

The Heavens Opened

Could heaven behold such grace unmoved? Impossible. "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened [cleaving asunder] and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." What meaning that act of baptism had in the mind of God! "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As John says, "Him hath God the Father sealed." It is not merely the fact, but "he saw," etc., which is here recorded.

Though truly God, He was man; though a Son, He became a servant and was now about to enter into His ministry He receives the Spirit as well as the recognition of His Sonship. He had justified God's sentence on Israel, and call to Israel. In grace He had joined the souls who had bowed to it in the waters of Jordan. But this could not be without the answer of the Father for His heart's joy in the path He was about to tread. The one was the fulfillment of every kind of righteousness and not legal only (this in grace, for there was no necessity of evil in His case). The other was His recognition by the Father in the nearest personal relationship, over which His submission to baptism might have cast a cloud to carnal eyes.

Jesus in the Wilderness

"And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him." vv. 12,13. What a picture of His position in a few words of God!

Moses, the lawgiver, had been with God on the mount forty days. Elijah, the prophet, had been in the wilderness with God for the same number of days, sustained without the need of man's food. But what was either miracle compared with the position of Jesus? For Him, the Son, to be with God was, and had been from all eternity, His natural place. But now He was come down to the earth, a Man among men and in the wilderness to which sin had reduced this fair creation, He is for forty days tempted of Satan. Man was not there, but the wild beasts were, as Mark so forcibly adds. There were angels, too, ministering to Him. It was all His wondrous preparation for a service no less wondrous.

Wm. Kelly

Jesus During the Storm

Mark 4

MAR 4

Jesus, in His untiring service of love, entered into a boat and told the disciples to cross to the other side of the lake. "The same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Mark 4:35. The multitude surrounding Him was dismissed, and the boat with its precious freight left the shore. But Satan, "the prince of the power of the air," also knew of the contents of that little vessel. With a storm he tried to sink the fragile little craft with its cargo that was so obnoxious to him. This storm came from Satan, with God's permission, for the glory of His Son and the sifting of the disciples.

This storm was not like the storm in Jonah's case which came from God. What a difference between these two storms. In the latter, a self-willed servant of God was fast asleep, indifferent amidst the tempest caused by his own disobedience. Here in Mark it was the obedient Son of God, whose "meat" it was to do the will of Him who sent Him and to finish His work. The lowliest and most willing of all servants, He slept on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship amid the raging storm, while the furious billows entered the fragile vessel, threatening every moment to send it to the bottom.

But in that little ship there was One greater than Jonah. He slept "the sleep of the just." Here it is not the reasonable apprehension of a heathen shipmaster rousing the indifferent prophet Jonah from his sleep, but the unbelief of the disciples who thought only of their own danger.

Carest Thou not that We Perish?

With harsh reproach and rude hand they awakened their gracious Master from His well-deserved sleep! At that moment they were insensitive to who it was that slept so calmly and peacefully in the hinder part of the ship amid the storm. How could their boat, no matter how fragile, sink and they be drowned, with such a Pilot who was none other than the Creator of heaven and earth, the Son of the living God! Peter had owned Him as such, but how sadly he had forgotten it at that moment. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" What words addressed to such a Master!

As to courage of faith, the prophet Jonah was far superior to the disciples, though his eyes had not seen what theirs had seen, nor his ears heard what theirs had heard. Jonah had bidden the mariners to cast him into the sea. No doubt he believed that God who had sent him with a message to Nineveh, was able to deliver him again from the watery grave to accomplish his mission after he should have learned what God would teach him. But though Jonah was superior in that respect to the Lord's disciples in the little boat, how incomparably inferior in true grace, meekness, and lowliness was he to their Master and his own, who placed him in the depths of the sea in the fish's belly, and then deposited him safely on the shore.

Peace, Be Still

That gracious Master, aroused from His sleep in so rough a manner, now arose in His quiet majesty and power and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still." The wind and the waves were calm, as savage dogs lie down at the bidding of their master. These words of the Lord appear to show clearly that this storm came not from God, but had been brought about by Satan. In the former case Jesus would not have rebuked the wind. The cause as well as the intent why this storm was sent appears to be just the opposite to Jonah's case.

"And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it ye have no faith?" The gracious Master did not begin with rebuking His disciples as we most likely would have done in a similar case. He first rebuked the winds, then His disciples. First He removed the cause of their unbelief, then He reproved their unbelief: first grace, then truth. He dwelt among them full of grace and truth. So it ought to be with us.

"And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Now at last they seemed to become conscious again of who it was that had slept so calmly in the hinder part of the ship, though they had daily heard His mighty words and works.

Do we not too often resemble those disciples in the ship? Like them we enjoy the peace after the storm, after the Lord through His wondrous and gracious intervention has once more strengthened and rebuked our little faith. But where is our peace during the storm? What do we know of the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts (Col. 3:15)? What do we know of that peace of which the Lord spoke before He left this world to enter into glory, through the sufferings of the cross, there to prepare a place for us? How much do we know of this peace amidst the storms of opposition in a hostile world, a peace of which the life of Jesus on earth was the perfect expression? (Psa. 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-28.)

Peace in the Storms of Life

May the Lord in His infinite grace keep and establish us in this, "His peace" in days of general earthquake, without and within. In these days in every sphere of life, be it religious, political, social, commercial or scientific, the storms of uncontrollable human passions are raging around us. It almost seems as if the prince and god of this world proposes to overthrow every divine and human foundation and order, to hurry on professing Christendom with increasing rapidity towards open apostasy.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

A beautiful example of such a peace during the storm we see in the demeanor of the Apostle Paul on his voyage to Rome. He, like Jonah, was to go to the capital of the Gentiles with a message of warning and of mercy. He also, like Jonah, had gone his own way to Jerusalem, but not from the same selfish motive, though not excusable on that account. He also found himself in the fish's belly, so to speak, to be prepared for his mission to Rome as Jonah was for his mission to Nineveh.

J. von Poseck

Peace in Our Souls

If we want real peace in our souls, we'll get it by walking in dependence and obedience.

“Give Ye Them to Eat”

Mark 6

MAR 6

The Savior's voice was hushed. Jesus had ceased teaching the "many things," and the rays of the setting sun were falling upon the faces of that awed and softened multitude. A strange thrill subdued those eager, restless hearts. Time had sped by unnoticed, and nature's wants were all unfelt, when the still silence was broken by words strangely in contrast with the sweet scene where divine love was making poor, weary hearts feel its potent sway. "This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away," the disciples urged, "that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat."

They little thought that the One they thus addressed, whose lowly grace made such intrusion possible, was He who long before, in His own divine fullness, had said, "I will satisfy her poor with bread." Psa. 132:15. "Give ye them to eat," was His gracious rejoinder.

Uncongenial servants as they were, He could associate them with Himself in the service of His love. Certainly they were not up to the privilege conferred on them. They had little heart for the weary, hungry multitude around them, and they had less knowledge of the heart of the One who gave them this command. Completely taken aback, they looked at the hungry crowd; they scanned the desert; they thought of themselves, and the difficulties appeared insurmountable. They did not see His glory, and their faith fell entirely short of the task imposed upon them. The old evil heart of unbelief that long before had questioned, "Can the Lord provide a table in the wilderness" was still there, and to the "Give ye them to eat," they opposed, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

It is very wonderful to see the Lord thus communicating to His disciples His own power, all unwilling and unworthy as they were to share it. It is more touching still to watch the grace that, rising above their ignorance and unbelief, presses them into a service they were so slow to enter upon. But "the poor" must be fed, and they should feed them.

"How many loaves have ye? go and see," He said. Quickly returning, they replied, "Five, and two fishes," adding, as we learn elsewhere, "but what are they among so many?" The helplessness of unbelief could go no further, nor did the Lord parley longer with it, so, without reply, "He commanded" them to make the multitude sit down, on the green grass "in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." Then blessing the loaves and fishes, He broke them and gave them to the disciples to distribute.

One can imagine the feelings of wonder and doubt with which the disciples began their distribution of those recently despised "five loaves and two fishes." What must the eager, impulsive Peter have felt as, in silent awe, he took from the Savior's hands that small portion of bread that was to feed those five thousand hungry people, "besides women and children." How doubt must have

given place to amazement, and awe to adoration, as he broke and gave a piece to this one and that one, here to the strong man, now to a timid woman, then to a lighthearted child, till every mouth was satisfied. Yet the store was undiminished, and more remained after all had eaten and were filled, than there had been at the beginning!

What an acquaintance with Himself, and what an education for a future ministry was the Lord here giving to His disciples! True the impression then was not deep, and not long after, when again called upon to feed the multitude, they were as unequal to the occasion as before. But when the Holy Ghost had endued them with power from on high, with what force and encouragement these scenes recurred to their memories as they went forth to minister for Him, who "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," assured them that not only was "all power given unto Him in heaven and on earth," but that He would be with them "always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20.

And surely they are left on record for our encouragement and instruction too. As servants we have to draw upon the resources of that same Jesus now at the right hand of God, "head over all things to the church, which is His body," who, having led captivity captive, has given "gifts to men" for the blessing of souls and the edifying of the body.

Only nearness to Christ in His present place of exaltation can make the lessons good in our souls, so as to enable us practically to meet the need of sinners and to feed the Church of God. Only as those who have tasted mercy for ourselves, shall we "faint not" under the ministry committed to us. Above all we must look away from ourselves entirely to Him who still says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." All grace and power are in Him, and the greater the need, and the more difficult the circumstances, only so much the more is the opportunity His to meet the wants of His own in spite of everything. As servants, simply subject to Him, we require to be in living and abiding association with that heart ever "moved with compassion" towards the needy, and that hand whose power and resource know no limit.

Enlarged and deep acquaintance with truth alone will not suffice, valuable as that is in its place. Knowledge, of itself, "puffeth up," but "love edifieth." It alone never fails. Our apparent resources may be small, and our knowledge of the Scriptures relatively slight, not even equal to "five loaves and two fishes." Yet even a small portion of them with the love that simply seeks to edify, and the faith that counts on Christ alone, will meet any and every need that comes in our way, while acting under the guidance of Him whose command still is, "Give ye them to eat."

Oh! to be more alive to the marvelous grace of such a command, to the wondrous privilege of serving His people, and of magnifying His blessed name by drawing manifestly on His strength in such a way, that it shall be seen that He, and He alone, is the spring and power of our ministry.

The scene we have been considering simply makes Him manifest. Christ Himself fills the vision of the soul as we contemplate it. The desert place, the absence of resource, the slowness and hardness of heart of the disciples as it were, form the background that throws Him into relief. It "manifested forth His glory," and so should all our service while waiting for Himself.

C. Wolston

Men As Trees Walking

Mark 8

MAR 8

Our Lord, on one occasion, performed a miracle in two parts. The scene was Bethsaida; its record is found in Mark 8:22-26. The other evangelists are silent as to this. A blind man being brought to Him, the Savior led him out of the town and spit on his eyes. Then putting His hands on him, He inquired if he saw anything. The man replied: "I see men as trees, walking." The great Healer touched him a second time, after which he looked up and saw all things clearly. He was then dismissed to go to his home.

The way our Lord acted in this instance was very singular, and its lessons are of an unusual kind. The partial sight of this man represented the spiritual condition of the disciples while the Savior was with them. They only perceived dimly the true character of His gracious mission. They sincerely believed that He was the long-expected Messiah who should sit upon David's throne. But that He must suffer and be made an offering for sin had no place whatever in their thoughts. They clearly understood that such a chapter as Psa. 72 with its kingdom-glories had reference to Him, but it never dawned upon them that Isa. 53 with its predictions of suffering and shame must also find its fulfillment in Him.

He Opened Their Understanding

His post-resurrection conversation on the way to Emmaus cleared away many difficulties for those to whom it was addressed: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" Luke 24:26. His visit to Jerusalem later in the same day cleared up the perplexities of others. "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." vv. 45-47. Henceforth these men were mighty witnesses to a crucified Savior while looking and waiting for His return from heaven as a glorious King.

Imperfect Vision

Many true-hearted believers today are as imperfect in their spiritual vision as the disciples of long ago. They see men as trees walking, so to speak. Very few things are clear to them. For example, many fear that though they are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, they may ultimately find themselves rejected. They fail to understand that there is no condemnation for those whom divine grace has identified with Christ. They are apprehensive that the gift of the Holy Spirit may be withdrawn from them, not perceiving that this priceless bestowal is due to the Savior's blood which makes it secure forever. They imagine that every time the Christian fails, he needs a fresh cleansing in the atoning blood. Their faith does not grasp that the Christian is judicially clean forever and needs nothing for daily failures but the water of the Word of God.

Concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus, they are fearful lest they should then be left behind, not having learned that our translation to glory is the fruit of sovereign grace alone which can never fail. Oh, that all these would go aside once more with the Savior and get another touch from His blessed hand as the poor man of Bethsaida. They would then read spiritual things in God's own light, and their joy would be full forever.

W. Fereday

Fruit in Old Age

Mark 3:14

MAR 3:14

In Mark's Gospel there is the account of Jesus' choosing twelve men to be His disciples. The Bible says, "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." Chapter 3:14. Notice that Jesus chose them that they might first be with Him, and then He sent them forth to preach. To be with Him was fellowship; being sent to preach was service. From this we see that fellowship with God is more important than service, because God desires fellowship before service. Now this may surprise you, but it is God's order. Fellowship with God is even more important than service for God.

The Christian who is crippled with arthritis to the extent that even the slightest move brings a stabbing pain is obviously very limited in what he can do for the Lord. But what about fellowship? Not only can such a person enjoy fellowship with God, but he can also have even richer fellowship now that he is not pressed for time.

A lady in a nursing home recently said, "Years ago I was so busy raising my family, I hardly had time to sit down and read my Bible as I really ought to have read it. Oh, yes, I often read it with my family. We studied it together; we meditated on it in a rather casual way, but we really did not take time to commune with God as we read the Word of God we failed to really meditate. But now I am retired and I have time on my hands. I begin to enjoy meditating on the Word of God, and now I have wonderful fellowship with God." That dear lady is now bringing greater pleasure to the Lord than she was earlier when her time with God was so limited.

Why does God have this special interest in older people? God wants fellowship with Christians, and many people just do not take the time to meditate and fellowship with Him. But older people, with time on their hands, can enjoy delightful fellowship with the Lord. God enjoys this fellowship with senior citizens who know the Savior, and this is some of the spiritual fruit that God has been looking for and waiting for.

Christian Truth

Two Things

There are two things the Spirit of God is jealous to maintain: the glory of Christ as to His Person, and the Lordship of Christ as to His place.

Bible Challenger-04-April V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that identifies the one who is like a strong man, ready for an impending contest.

1. Who was the bridegroom who purchased his wife before many eyewitnesses?
2. What does the friend of the bridegroom do at the sound of his voice?
3. Who was the bridegroom who was comforted after his mother's death?
4. What word describes a land that hears the voice of the bridegroom no more?
5. Who was the bridegroom who caused grief of mind to his parents?
6. For what did a governor at a certain wedding feast compliment the bridegroom?
7. What word describes the five who went in with the bridegroom to the marriage?
8. Who was the bridegroom who asked his father-in-law for a field?
9. With what did the bridegrooms of Bible times bedeck themselves?
10. What was quite unlikely that those of the bride chamber should do while the bridegroom was present?

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-03-March Answers V.05

1. Make me to understand Psa. 119:27
 2. Exceeding broad Psa. 119:96
 3. Declined from Thy law Psa. 119:51
 4. Inclined my heart Psa. 119:112
 5. Trouble and anguish Psa. 119:143
 6. Above fine gold Psa. 119:127
 7. Teach me Psa. 119:12
 8. Iniquity Psa. 119:3
 9. One that findeth great spoil Psa. 119:62
 10. Nothing shall offend them Psa. 119:65
- "O how love I Thy law! it is my MEDITATION all the day." Psa. 119:97.

God Is My Father

He is almighty in power.

He is perfect in His ways.

He is the God of all grace.

He is light—sees all things.

He is love—loves, because He is love.

He has understanding of all things.

He rules all things in perfect wisdom.

Love is the spring of all His ways,

Wisdom the course they pursue—

No power can stay His hand—

Thus all things work together for good.

All things are ordered with that end in view. Hallelujah!

Peace, peace, perfect peace, since such a God is mine.

H.E. Hayhoe

Rejoice Evermore

It is the Lord's mind that His children should now, even in this world of sorrow and death, be happy. He has not only created us in Christ Jesus, but we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him, and the Holy Ghost says, "Rejoice evermore," "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

The source of our happiness, then, is the Lord Himself, and the secret of happiness is believing on Him whom we see not. (1 Peter 1:8.) The measure of happiness we are entitled to enjoy is as unlimited and boundless as glory itself, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Jesus desired that we might have His joy fulfilled in ourselves, and Scripture is written that our "joy may be full."

Abiding Joy

However dark the day, the Christian can be happy if he simply walks in the abiding sense of the Father's love. He has given us a life that enables us to enter into His own thoughts, to enjoy what He enjoys and to live in the good of it because of the Spirit's power within.

Editorial

Fast-moving events in this past year, events that have changed the map of the world, have surprised many people. The greatest changes are in Eastern Europe, but Asia, Africa and other parts of the world are also altered. With the Berlin Wall removed and Communism's control by force greatly relaxed, national and ethnic groups are asserting their "rights" and forming seemingly democratic governments.

Surely these things that are taking place are foreshadows of future events of which much is prophetically revealed in the Bible.

In the visions given to Daniel in Daniel chapter 7, he saw four great beasts come up out of the sea. In verse 2 the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea. The sea is typical of peoples and nations. The winds are various disturbing influences ordered of God in His over-ruling and in judgment, in order to accomplish His purposes in the government of the earth. The source of the winds was heaven. The sea typifies the masses of the people in a state of agitation or even chaotic confusion.

The four beasts are clearly identified as being the four great Gentile powers-that is, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. They sprang up successively as universal empires at a time of revolutionary agitation. They are portrayed as beasts to show their moral features. Not acknowledging God, they are characterized by selfishness, earthly power, gain and cruelty.

The fourth beast is the Roman. He is spoken of as fierce and powerful, tearing and devouring and treading down what he could not devour. Also he is directly antagonistic to God. Rome was in power when Christ was born, took part in His rejection through Pilate and hereafter it will join with Antichrist when he comes. Concise, comprehensive facts are stated about this beast (power) in Rev. 17:8. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is [or shall be present]."

We have seen that the agitated, confused condition of the masses of peoples gave rise to the four great Gentile powers. Just such conditions will, in a soon-coming day, give rise to the revived Roman Empire.

This past year has revealed upheavals of governments and that by the masses of the people. The Chinese revolt of the people was severely put down by armed force. In contrast, the uprisings of the common people overthrew their governments throughout much of Eastern Europe.

The Gentile powers originally received their power from God (Dan. 2). Christ, as He stood before Pilate, owned that power was from God saying, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." John 19:11. At that time judgment was on one side and perfect righteousness on the other. When Christ comes again, judgment will return to righteousness (Psa. 94). At the end, the head of the revived Roman Empire, the beast, receives his power from the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan. (Rev. 13:2 and 20:2.)

The turmoil and mass movements of many peoples seem to point the believer toward two things that develop after we are caught up from the earth, before the coming judgments fall upon this world: Internal pressure of the people in the western world and external pressure from the eastern world will surely be used to bring into existence the revived Roman power.

This can and will easily develop quickly as has been demonstrated visibly in the rapid changes in Eastern Europe this past year. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." 2 Peter 3:17,18.

Ed.

The Heat

That very heat that removes the fair traces of spring, produces the mellowed and matured fruits of autumn. Thus it is also in the Christian life.

Revelation 13

A beast rises out of the sea, the mass of the Gentile people. It is the Roman Empire comprised of ten kingdoms, but having the characteristics of the three previous empires.

Satan gives him his power and his throne and great authority. The "powers that be" will then be, not ordained of God as they are now, but of Satan-political apostasy.

One of his heads (imperial form of government) was slain, but was healed (a resurrection-beast) and the whole earth wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon and the beast, extolling his power. Authority was given him for forty-two months (three-and-a-half years, half-week of Daniel).

He blasphemes God and His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven, embracing all the saved ones. He has authority over all nations. All the dwellers on earth, those who had been professing Christians, worship him.

Another beast comes out of the earth, the sphere of God's ordered dealings. He does not manifest his true character until he speaks; then it is seen to be Satanic by those who have discernment. It is the false Christ, the Antichrist, king of Judea.

He causes the dwellers on earth to worship the Satanic Roman beast and deludes them by working miracles and signs. He brings down fire from heaven and orders all in his dominion (Jews) on pain of death to worship an image of the first beast, to which he has given power to speak. Others yield this power voluntarily; see verses 3 and 8. None are allowed to buy and sell but those who are marked with the name of the beast, or the number—666—of his name.

W. Scott

The History of the Beast

There are two powers now concentrated in Western and Eastern Europe. Zechariah never speaks of the Assyrian. He belonged to the captivity of Israel, though the Jews were restored that Messiah might be presented to them. But the post-captivity prophets do not call the Jews God's people, unless speaking of their future. The other prophets, those before the captivity, never speak of the beast as such, because Israel was owned, God's throne still being there.

Ezekiel goes over from Babylon to Israel again in the land. We have more directly to say to the beast because the time is going on in which they rule: only that in result it becomes open rebellion. There is a raising up of the beast from a seemingly fatal wound in an utterly diabolical character.

God has put into the hearts of a little remnant of the Jews then to look to Him. But the nation blossoms and buds, and seems as if it were beginning a time of full prosperity in its own land. But then it is browsed and eaten down, the resort of beasts and birds of prey. These are judged and Israel is received and blessed. And if, says the Apostle, the falling away of them be the riches of the Gentiles, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead to the world?

All this calls our hearts, beloved, to a far more divine apprehension that our portion is in heaven while Christ is rejected. Christ having been rejected, Christians also are rejected, and Christ being in heaven, their conversation or citizenship is there also; we do not live here anymore, though we pass through it as pilgrims and strangers. What I have to do is to convince the world that there is a power which delivers from it, to manifest Christ and Christ's motives in it. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

The danger for the saints now is that, instead of seeing the evil going on and rising up against the Lord, man is thinking of improving the world and bringing in good. What is before us is that in the last days perilous times shall come. But men are wise in their own conceits, and fancy they will do better than Christ and the apostles-not make Christians for God, but improve the earth. The testimony of God is that the professing church and the world are both ripening up to evil. The Lord is coming to receive us to Himself, and to judge the habitable earth in righteousness, and reign for its blessing, and primarily over the restored Jewish people.

J.N. Darby

The Latin Empire

Turn to Rev. 13 and we shall read of a wild beast which the prophet sees rising from the sea. It partook of the characteristics of the three foregoing beasts of Dan. 7, but it has another added, which was that the dragon, Satan, gave him his power, and seat, and great authority. This it did not have before. It had seven heads and ten horns—seven forms of government, and ten divisions in its administrative power.

John saw one of its heads wounded as it seemed unto death, and the deadly wound was healed. There is no doubt but that this head was its imperial form, which has long ceased to exist: some think forever—the wound was unto death. But the apparently deadly wound was healed and all the world wonders. They worship him, and through Satan they say, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Satan had given him his power and seat and great authority.

This is clearly the little horn of Dan. 7, for the same doings are attributed to him. But we have in Revelation this added—that he was the full expression and instrument of Satan when revived. We read that there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given to him to make war for forty-two months (three-and-a-half years). He blasphemes God and His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven, "the saints of the heavenlies." He makes war with the saints on earth, and overcomes them (as we know from Dan. 7), until the Ancient of days comes.

Turning to Rev. 17, in the explanation of the vision to the prophet, we find the same beast which "was, and is not." It had existed in its one vast empire, the fourth kingdom of Dan. 7; it now had ceased to exist, and "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." It would again appear, but when it does it would be the full expression of Satan: "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Rev. 13:2.

But we must proceed with his description under his last form. There are seven kings, seven forms of government of the Latin empire. Five are fallen, having disappeared when the prophet wrote, and one is, it existed then. Another form, not yet come, was to arise and continue for a brief space. Then the beast, or last head of the Latin empire that was and had ceased to exist would be an eighth form, yet of the seven. (Rev. 17:10, 11.)

There is now a feature to be explained as to the ten horns, not belonging to his former state of existence. The ten horns are ten kings who had received no kingdom then; they did not belong to his antecedents as one vast empire. But they would appear and receive power at the same time as the beast when he would re-exist in his final form. They would have one mind, and they give their power and strength to the beast. They would have each his separate existence, and yet would own the beast as their chief—the expression of the entire. These make war with the Lamb, and He overcomes them. Their end we find in chapter 19.

The rider upon the white horse with the armies of heaven, comes forth at the last. In daring and blasphemous defiance of His authority, the beast and these kings are gathered to make war

against Him that sat upon the horse and His armies. The beast is taken and is "cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone." His armies, too, are judicially slain.

We have one point to mention, to account for the presence of Satan on the earth at this closing scene. He gives his power to the last form of the Latin empire, three-and-a-half years before the execution of the judgment which introduces the kingdom of the Son of man. We turn for this to Rev. 12. There we find the man-child caught up to God and to His throne. This is immediately followed by war in heaven.

The man-child is Christ and the Church, His body. This is apparent if we examine the Scriptures. In the second Psalm, Christ will get the heathen and uttermost parts of the earth for His inheritance, and break them with a rod of iron and so inherit them by judgment. He gives this to the saints in Rev. 2:26, 27. The man-child, embracing both Christ and the Church, is said to be the one who was to "rule [all nations] with a rod of iron," in Rev. 19:15. Besides this, John, in Revelation speaks as the prophets of the Old Testament, linking together the time previous to the ascension of Christ with God's dealing with the earth at His return. He passes over the present interval of the calling of the Church which is never counted in prophecy.

Then Satan is cast out to the earth; rejoicing in heaven follows; woe is pronounced upon the inhabitants of the earth, "for the devil is come down unto you, in great wrath, having but a short time." This casting out of Satan from the heavenlies is important. Satan and wicked spirits are spoken of as being in the heavenlies at this present time. He is termed the "prince of the power of the air," and the Church of God is said in Eph. 6 to "wrestle not against flesh and blood," but wicked spirits "in the heavenlies" (JND).

He then turns his malice against the Jewish saints below, who are the objects of the attention of God. He gives his power and authority to the beast for the 1260 days (forty-two months, or "time, times, and the dividing of a time") before the end of the beast's existence, the closing time of the times of the Gentiles.

F.G. Patterson

Under Judgment

The world won't follow Christ as the crucified One. At the death of Christ, the whole orderly system down here got stamped by God as under judgment, and responsible for the death of Christ. By the cross, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Nothing is so important as for Christians to take the place they ought to be in, of entire separation from what God, in the Scriptures, calls "the world." As to our bodies, we are to take care of them in order to serve the Lord more, but there is such a thing as the lust of the flesh and of the mind, to be watched against.

The Roman Empire

The Roman Empire is more often spoken of in Scripture than is generally recognized. In the vision of the great image by Nebuchadnezzar, four great empires are prophesied of, each being inferior to its predecessor. The fourth is the Roman Empire, which in its last phase is compared to iron and clay, materials which would not unite; the kingdom would be divided in itself. In the visions of Daniel the same four kingdoms are further portrayed. Whereas the first three are compared to known animals, the Roman is compared to some dreadful monster that cannot be named (Dan. 7:7).

The history of the Roman Empire fully answers to the prophecy. There were many changes before the line of emperors, but there was always the democratic element in the ruling power. When there were emperors they depended upon popular choice—mostly upon the soldiers, and the senate endorsed the choice of the army. The emperor exercised imperial power, but had to please the troops. There were two elements at work: the iron and clay, which would not unite. Of the first twelve emperors, seven were either put to death, or committed suicide to escape a more violent end.

There is no empire mentioned in Scripture as succeeding Rome, and the iron and clay elements, as the relics of Rome, are at work more or less in all civilized countries. The same empire is described in the Revelation as a beast that was, and is not, and yet it shall be present, or come.

It is further described as "there are seven kings," or forms of government (Kings, B.C. 753; Consuls, 509; Dictators, 498; Decemvirs, 451; Consular Tribunes, 444): "five are fallen, and one is" (Imperial, B.C. 31; it existed when John wrote), "and the other is not yet come." Rev. 17:10. From this we learn that the Roman empire will be reconstructed: it will be a union of ten kings (ten horns), and will be of the seven numerically, but will be the eighth as being of a new order.

The empire will make a covenant with the Jews for a week (seven years), but will break it in the middle of the week (Dan. 9:27). It will be in close association with another great power, symbolized by a beast (the Antichrist), coming up out of the earth, and both will be energized by Satan (Rev. 13:1-18; 17:8-18). The empire will be used by God to destroy Babylon (Papal Rome) and will then itself be destroyed.

Palestine became subject to Rome in B.C. 63. It was an officer of the Roman Empire that delivered the Lord to be crucified, and it was the Romans who were used by God to punish His people and destroy their city. They in their pride have been displaying this before the world ever since in the Arch of Titus at Rome.

Concise Bible Dictionary

Fourth Beast, Great and Terrible

Daniel 7

DAN 7

The fourth beast was exceedingly strong and had iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped upon the residue with its feet; that is to say, it subjugated the territories of previous empires, absorbing them into its own, not in their full extent, but in their most important parts, and it had ten horns. Here we have the description of the Roman Empire. The fourth part of the great image, of Dan. 2, that is, the legs and feet of iron, the latter mingled with clay, and the fourth beast come in for the fullest and most detailed notice. This is quite understandable. One world empire gives place to another only to lead up to the final one which is the Roman Empire.

In the interpretation of the vision of the great image, one sentence describes the Babylonian empire—"Thou art this head of gold" (Dan. 2:38), and one verse is sufficient for the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires, whereas four verses are needed to describe the fourth empire.

When Daniel would know the interpretation of the vision, the explanation of the four beasts is given in one verse, but nine verses are necessary for the description of the fourth beast and its doom.

The similarity between the vision of the great image and that of the four beasts is striking. In the New Testament, seeing that three world empires had passed away when John wrote the Revelation, and remembering that the New Testament Scriptures were written when the fourth empire was in existence, we should expect that only the fourth empire would be mentioned.

In Rev. 13, when John describes the Roman Empire, like Daniel he sees it in the form of a beast coming up out of the sea. It had a body like a leopard (reminiscent of the Grecian empire), feet like a bear's (reminiscent of the Medo-Persian Empire) and a mouth like a lion's (reminiscent of the Babylonian empire). Like Daniel's beast it had ten horns.

In Rev. 13, we have the New Testament presentation of Daniel's description of the Roman Empire.

Indeed, Daniel and Revelation are so complementary to each other in regard to the Roman Empire and the tribulation of the Jews, that the true understanding of the one helps to the true understanding of the other.

One verse in Dan. 7 needs a note of explanation. "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." v. 12. That means that those empires passed away as empires, but were not destroyed as peoples. They lived on in connection with the world empire then in existence, whereas the Roman Empire will be literally and forever destroyed when Christ comes to reign over the earth.

In the great-image vision this is seen in the stone, cut out without hands, destroying the image; in the four-beasts vision it is seen in the Ancient of days destroying the beast and giving his body to the burning flame.

The description of the Ancient of days is in measure like that of the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The Son of man is brought near to Him, and given an everlasting dominion. As Ancient of days, judgment is committed to His hands; as Son of man He receives His kingdom. It appears to us that these are both presentations of the same person—the Lord Jesus Christ—looked at in different connections.

In the long explanation of the fourth beast that is given we read of a little horn plucking up three of the ten horns by the roots. Rev. 13 puts the same fact before us in a different way. It speaks of seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns on the ten horns. That means that each of the seven heads had its crown, but one of the heads, putting Daniel and Revelation together, must have answered for three horns with their three crowns. This answers to the little horn of Dan. 7:8.

It is not without significance that the great red dragon, Satan, has seven heads and ten horns with seven crowns upon his heads, thus showing whence the Roman Empire will derive its power.

Dan. 7 is very explicit in its interpretation. The ten horns are ten kings. Another king shall arise after them, different from the rest, and he shall subdue three kings, that is, pluck up three horns by the roots. The character of this great potentate is given to us.

The head of the revived Roman Empire will be blasphemous against God; he is to be the persecutor of God's earthly people. He will change the times and laws, and God's earthly people will be in his hand for a time and times and the dividing of time, that is, for three-and-a-half years, during the time that is known as the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21)—"the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7).

The Ancient of days, even their Messiah, will deliver His earthly people; judgment will be set, and the kingdom and dominion over the whole earth will be given to the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him, that is, during the millennial reign of Christ.

A. J. Pollock

Knowledge of Good and Evil

Man was a responsible creature before he fell. Distrust of God and lust were instilled into the soul of the woman. Will was put forth against God, and in the case of Adam it was high-handed will, for he was not deceived (1 Tim. 2:14), and man fell. A breach as wide as the poles came in at once between God and man, an abyss impossible to repair or re-cross. "Man is become as one of Us," said the Lord, "to know good and evil." Gen. 3:22. This he never can unlearn; he never returns to innocence again.

What then is "to know good and evil"? It is something which is said of the Godhead too; "as one of Us, to know good and evil." It is to sit in judgment and pass sentence on good or evil which we find in our own souls. Of David the king it was said by a wise woman of Tekoah, "as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad." 2 Sam. 14:17. This is in reference to the decisions of judgment. So also it is of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:9, and of Israel in Deuteronomy 1:39 and Heb. 5:14.

This is the work of conscience, first to take knowledge of the evil practiced by a will opposed to God, to sit in judgment upon it and to condemn, and second, to apprehend the good while opposed to it and to approve of it without the power to perform. This was fallen man with a conscience; he was responsible before he fell, distrusting God and willfully transgressing His command. He possessed an ability, even when fallen, to pass sentence upon his own actions by the knowledge of good and evil. He recognized good that he had not the power nor desire to practice, and evil that he was not able to avoid!

Then at last he was driven out of the presence of God, for he had lost his place on such ground forever. These three things marked his state: (1) Distrust of God. (2) Sin committed in that distrust. (3) His place irrecoverably lost.

These three things are reversed by the gospel. His confidence is restored by faith in Him as the Savior; his sins are removed which had been committed in distrust and he is brought into a new place in Christ before Him.

The Eye of Christ

Though Christ can be grieved at a thousand things in us that no eye but His can see, yet none is so easily pleased as He by our little endeavors of love.

The World

How few Christians understand what it means when the Word of God says "the world." We think of creation, of this globe. But in Rom. 12 God speaks of the world system—this world. Satan is its god and its prince. It reminds me of a large department store with many departments, and upstairs in the office is the manager. Satan is the manager of this great world system.

ITS RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT: Any man or woman can go and enter into a little religion without Christ, get a good feeling, get excited, emotional, religious and be as proud as is possible. They can be proud of that empty, cold, modernistic religion but without Christ.

THE SOCIETY WORLD: Young people dress to kill, wear the latest fashions, and enjoy the glass, the ash trays, the dance, the vanity of it all trying to outdo each other and acting as if they really had found happiness. Instead, they have that empty feeling—those wasted hours, unprofitable, and after all, nothing but a headache, or a heartache the next morning.

THE BUSINESS WORLD: Here is pretended concern over fellowmen, but each out there is only for self, promotion, and self-exaltation.

THE SPORTS WORLD: Speed, action, and ungodliness are evident. We find foul language, seeking to put self forward, and prizefighters, poor slaves of men, whose bodies are punched until the mind is foggy. Satan, the manager, causes the seasons to extend from baseball into the hockey season, the hockey season into the golf season, etc.

"They are idle," cried Pharaoh. "Keep them busy, no straw, and yet the same number of bricks." And so today Satan takes away the straw from God's people and cries, "They are idle; they want to be separated from this world so they can worship their God. Keep them busy, take away the straw so they have to work overtime-no time for prayer or Bible reading, no time for Christ, no time to sit at His feet to hear His word."

Such is the world, but why? Because "sin" is here and because there is a spot in this very world in which we live where the world—this present evil world—dared to nail the Christ of God to Calvary's cross, choosing Barabbas, a robber, murderer and gang-leader in place of God's Christ. The world wanted Barabbas, and they have Barabbas, for his spirit is loose and there are not enough jails or penitentiaries to hold all the criminals. The great majority of them are loose and many of them leaders in society. Such is the world which will soon feel the stroke of divine judgment. Thank God we are not of it, and we will be caught out of it before judgment falls, for we shall hear that shout, the voice of our Beloved!

E. Wakefield

Brief Outline of the Future

The rapture of the Church having taken place, Jews and Gentiles will again be dealt with as such by God, and judicial dealing and actings in grace will characterize His ways. He will deal judicially with Christendom, as the New Testament says, and Revelation describes. He will deal, too, with His earthly people, and notably with that portion of them known as the Jews. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel and the Psalms especially take up this subject. He will deal in judgment, too, with the world, and make all hear of His glory (Isa. 13:11; 26:9,18, etc.). And when the Lord takes His kingdom, He will reward His heavenly saints, judge and reward His earthly ones, Israel (Psa. 1) and Gentiles (Rev. 7). He will judge, too, the living nations for their treatment of His brethren (Matt. 25) and finally judge the dead (Rev. 20). But before He rewards His earthly people, He will deal in fearful judgment with the Beast and Antichrist and their followers (Rev. 19), and with the king of the north. Certainly before He judges the dead He will also deal with Gog and all his multitude (Ezek. 38; 39).

Now for some details: Judicial dealing with the earth, preparatory to the Lord's return, commences with the opening of the seals. War, famine, death, and wild beasts, God's four sore judgments (Ezek. 14:21), will be sent among men. Constituted authority within the area of God's visitation at that time will be broken up, as described under the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17), to the dismay of rulers and all. Meanwhile, God will have been working in grace, and martyrs will have proven their constancy to His truth (Rev. 6:9), a work which, then seen as begun, will go on among the twelve tribes of Israel, and Gentiles also, till the Lord appears. Of this Rev. 7 speaks, telling of the sealed ones of the twelve tribes, and of the great company of the Gentiles, to come out of the great tribulation. These last are only seen after they have come out of it (Rev. 7:14). Here, then, God is seen working among the twelve tribes, before the Beast appears in the prophecy, and the special trial of the Jews, as such, begins.

The second judicial dealing of God with the earth is set forth in the trumpets. The fourth part of the earth felt the effect of the opening of the fourth seal. The third part of the trees, of the sea, and the living creatures in it, and men on it, the third part of the rivers and fountains of water, and of the sun, moon, and stars, feel the effects of the first four trumpets (Ch. 8). In the trumpets the ungodly are smitten with terrible judgments, for these are not sealed like those in chapter 7.

During the progress of these judgments the Beast of Dan. 7 and 9 and of Rev. 11 and 13 will have appeared in his true character. This turns attention directly to the Holy Land, and to the Jews in it. Brought back, the majority in unbelief, and not outwardly owned of God (Isa. 18:5, 6), the temple will have been rebuilt (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:4) to be desecrated by the image of the Beast (Dan. 8:12; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Dan. 12:11), placed there by Antichrist, who himself will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 2:4). By him, upheld by the Beast, the political head of the Roman empire, sacrifices to God will be made to cease, the prelude to the destruction of the temple, the place of God's sanctuary, by the king of the north (Dan. 8:11; Psa. 74:7). The Antichrist under the Beast will make true sacrifice to cease, substituting in its place the

worship of the image of the Beast. The invader from the north will raze the temple to the ground.

But before this destruction takes place, apostasy will have manifested itself among the Jews. Christendom will already have been destroyed (Rev. 17:16) by the Beast and the ten horns—the Roman empire in its last form comprising seemingly only the western part of the old empire, for Antichrist does not form one of the ten kings, and the northern power arises out of the eastern part of the old Roman empire (Dan. 8:9-12). The whore destroyed, the way will be opened for the worship of the Beast, since with her destruction every vestige of Christianity vanishes, it would seem, from those who had openly professed to own it (2 Thess. 2:4).

During that time of apostasy among the Jews there will be a testimony in Jerusalem itself—the two witnesses (Rev. 11:4-8)—for 1260 days which is 18 days less than the last three-and-a-half years of the Beast's reign. The beast had power to continue 42 months = 1260 days. During this time his power remains unchecked. At its conclusion, divine power in judgment will commence its dealings with him and his followers.

There will be martyrs during the Beast's persecution (Rev. 12:15; 15:2, 3), though probably not confined to Jewish saints. A company of Jews will be kept faithful on earth throughout it (Rev. 14:1-3), who will be able to join in the special song of those in heaven who had been martyred by the Beast. The two witnesses unburied three-and-a-half days will ascend to heaven, when the third woe will quickly come, and all heaven rejoice at the coming of the kingdom in power. Shortly after the days have elapsed, the vials will be poured out, and the Lord (Rev. 19) will appear to destroy the Beast and Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:8). These are especially marked out for appropriate and everlasting punishment, and are cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

During all this history, the ten tribes do not appear within the scope of the prophetic vision, which has for its sphere the Holy Land, and the Roman Empire in its last form. God, however, will have been working among them (Rev. 7).

Turning now to that power of the last day, called in Daniel the king of the north, the Jews being in their land, he will come down on them to possess it—this, the real solution of the eastern question, we have set forth in Old Testament prophecy. The Jews, in weakness and fear, make a covenant with the Beast for seven years (Isa. 8:12; 28:18; Dan. 9:27), but in the end to no purpose, as God has already forewarned them. For the northern power will enter the land after the apostasy is established by Antichrist, and will capture Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1, 2; Psalms. 79), and go down into Egypt (Dan. 11:42, 43). While there, tidings out of the north and the east troubling him, he returns with great fury. Are these tidings that the Beast has been destroyed by the Lord? Later the Assyrian besieges Jerusalem, but he is destroyed by the Lord in the land (Zech. 12:1-8; Isa. 29:1-7; 14:25; Joel 2:20; Psalms. 76), and the prayer of Psalms. 83 is answered.

God's glory displayed in judgment, the ten tribes are then brought back, so the whole nation is restored (Isa. 11:11-16; 66:20; Ezekiel. 20:38). The temple, built by the Jews in unbelief, desecrated, and destroyed, will be rebuilt. In Ezekiel we see it, but do not read of its being built. The prophet sees it all erected. Does the Lord do it (Zech. 6:13)? The sessional judgment of Matt. 25 takes place, perhaps, about this time, after which Gog invades the land (Ezek. 38 and 39), when the people are dwelling securely. That cannot be till after the destruction of the northern power. Perhaps Isa. 33 refers to this.

Gog dealt with, peace outwardly will remain unbroken, till Gog of Rev. 20 comes against the camp of the saints and the beloved city—Satan's last effort, to be signally and forever frustrated, and the way at last to be prepared for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3).

Bible Challenger-05-May V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that tells the manner in which we are to keep the precepts of the Lord.

1. Something the Israelites were promised to be free from in exchange for attentive ears.
 2. That which is said to those seeking to please God when personal faith is wanting.
 3. That which was done first when the woman of the parable discovered her lack.
 4. One word that describes how a certain man, said to be eloquent and fervent, was prepared for his ministry.
 5. Something for which the one who procureth favor is ever watchful.
 6. Something all who love the Lord should surely seek to follow, but here spoken to certain women.
 7. The desire of an apostle for a lawyer and his companion to ease their journey.
 8. Something that a root of bitterness, if allowed to flourish, may cause, leading to defilement.
 9. One of four physical attitudes that are daily assured, that would be an opportunity for parents in Israel to instruct their children.
 10. Someone whom a troubled king requested wise men to find that he might be a worshipper.
- Answers to these questions will be found in next month's issue of Christian Treasury.

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-04-April Answers V.05

1. Boaz Ruth 4:9,10
2. Rejoiceth greatly John 3:29
3. Isaac Gen. 24:67
4. Desolate Jer. 7:34
5. Esau Gen. 26:34,35
6. Good wine John 2:10
7. Ready Matt. 25:10
8. Othniel Judg. 1:13,14
9. Ornaments Isa. 61:10
10. Mourn Matt. 9:15

"Which is as a BRIDEGROOM coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." Psa. 19:5.

Nearness to Christ

Nearness to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. (Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves.)

Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, if it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the Church of God, so dear to Christ, is dishonored in this world, if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need, and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love because of their necessity.

Men taught of God, for His service, go forth from a place of strength, where they have learned their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Jesus is everything in the presence of God, and Jesus is everything for them in all things, and everywhere. Such men, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are real helps for the children of God; they will not contend for a place, or a distinction, or for authority, among the scattered flock. The communion of a man with God about the Church will show itself in a willingness to be nothing in himself, and such a one will rejoice in his heart to spend and to be spent.

Many thought of the Church, but it was rather the Church in power. There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel, recounted in the book of Ezra.

Although heir of the place which Solomon had occupied in days of prosperity and glory, he spoke not of his birth, nor of his rights. However, he is faithful in all the path of separation, of sorrow, and of conflicts he is obliged to pass through.

If we speak of our testimony upon the earth, it will soon be evident that all is but weakness, and, like the seed lost upon the wayside, the testimony will likewise end to our shame.

J.N.D.

Editorial

And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast.... And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.... And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Such is the language in the Revelation given to the Apostle John. Who is the woman? How and when does she get the power to mount the beast?

Last month's issue of Christian Treasury identified the beast as the revived Roman Empire and the imperial personal head of it. This month we consider what Scripture makes known about the woman that rides the beast.

Upon the woman's forehead is written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. It is a picture of Rome as a religious system. Rev. 17 presents Babylon as a woman and chapter 18 as a city. She is the false church. She is, at the end, all of the profession of Christianity that is left upon the earth after the rapture of the true Church to heaven.

The general character of ecclesiastical Babylon is that of the great active Idolatress that has gained power over the mass of nations.

The last decade, the 1980's, has revealed a marked increase in the power of Vatican City. Pope John Paul II has traveled extensively and has received the heads of states of powerful nations at his sixteenth-century Apostolic Palace. In his meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev he was able to chat with him in Russian without using an interpreter. The near breakdown of communism in Eastern Europe has opened the way for popery to gain much power, and Rome is even trying to attract the Eastern Orthodox Catholic branch back to Rome after one thousand years of separation.

Sometimes great events cast their shadows ahead of them even as the first rays of dawn are seen in the eastern horizon ahead of the sunrise. The unrest in much of the world and the desire for some great spiritual leader to take over is even now directing the masses of the people to be ready to receive the seduction of the great Corruptress.

The coming judgments are for a period of seven years. The last three-and-a-half years the beast pursues his career. During the large part of this forty-two months is the time when the woman rides the beast.

This shows that she has the first three-and-a-half years to gain control.

The heavenly saints will be taken away before the judgment falls upon Babylon. They are not referred to in the exhortation in Rev. 18:4, "Come out of her, My people." This is spoken to God's earthly people in that coming day. However, its principle fully applies now, for the essence of Babylon is the union of the world with the name of Christ. What is directly written to us is, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." 2 Cor. 6:17.

For a better understanding of "the woman" and a particular description of her and of her judgment, we suggest reading Revelation from chapter 16:17 through chapters 17 and 18.

Ed.

Babylon the Great

Babylon the Great is also called MYSTERY... THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (Rev. 17:5). Some great religious system is alluded to with whom the kings of the earth had had illicit intercourse, and by whom the merchants of the earth had been made rich. It had also been guilty of shedding the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It is compared to a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

Could there possibly be drawn a more vivid and lifelike portrait of the worldly and idolatrous system of the apostate Church whose center is at Rome, than is here drawn by the pen of the Holy Spirit? To make it doubly sure as to who is represented by the description, it is added, "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." (v. 9.) The seven-hilled city is a well-known appellation of Rome.

It is further revealed that the ten horns (the ten kingdoms of the future Roman Empire) will make war with the woman, make her desolate and naked, will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Heavenly hosts are called on to rejoice over the fall of that seductive and soul-destroying system. (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:118; 18:1-24; 19:1-3.)

It should be noted that though papal Rome is one of the worst of the antichrists, and the one that has had sway for the longest period, yet she is not what is called in Scripture the Antichrist or Man of sin. She is rather the anti-church. The Antichrist also is found in the Revelation as a beast having two horns like a lamb, and speaking as a dragon, and also as the false prophet. (Rev. 13:11; 20:10.)

Communion

There is no communion in conscience. In it I am alone. So are you. In order to enjoy communion I must have nothing to settle with conscience. A purged conscience is the basis of communion.

Corruption and False Profession

It was in the days of the fourth Gentile monarchy that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in humiliation on the earth. Judea was then a Roman province, as was evinced by Caesar's image and superscription appearing on the coins. The power to inflict capital punishment seems to have resided in the Roman governor alone. Hence the Jews were unable, except by his consent, to achieve the death of the Holy and the Just One who delivered Himself, and was delivered of God into their hands.

The Roman Empire thus partook, with the Jewish people, in the awful guilt of rejecting and crucifying the Prince of life. And should it be urged by any that Pontius Pilate was only a subordinate agent and representative of the imperial power, the answer is evident: the imperial power itself afterward ratified most fully the deed of its representative by shedding torrents of Christian blood.

It is true that after centuries of persecution, the empire became nominally Christian.

Masterpiece of Deception

But this outward adoption of Christianity by the imperial power of the world only brought the latter into intimate combination with that "mystery of iniquity" which had even then been working for a long time in the bosom of Christianity itself. From this combination resulted that masterpiece of Satanic deception which is presented to us in the Apocalyptic vision—Babylon the Great, the corruptress of the nations. From this vast system of worldly Christianity, of a Christian profession adorned with the world's magnificence, enriched with its wealth, and supported by its power, the saints of God are called to withdraw. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The Lord grant to us both to understand and to heed the warning!

When the true Church has reached the end of its exile and pilgrimage on earth by being translated to its home and dwelling-place in heaven, the false professing body will still be found in unhallowed alliance with the wealth and greatness of this world. But even more, it claimed the place of undoubted supremacy over the world. "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" will even then be her haughty and scornful boast. But "therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

The earthly instruments of her downfall will be the imperial power itself, and the ten subordinate, confederate kingdoms, which will own fealty to the resuscitated Roman empire. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

Usurped Dominion

The fourth Gentile Empire, which in its unity as a consolidated whole and according to prophetic intimations has ceased to exist, is to reappear. To that empire thus revived, Satan, who will have been with his angels cast out of heaven, is to give his power and throne and great authority. Gentile power, originally of God, will thus in its last state be energized by Satan and identical with his usurped dominion as "the god" or "prince of this world."

The eighth head of the fourth empire, when it reappears, will be sustained in his place by the dragon himself. Satanic miracles wrought by one who exercises all the power of "the beast" in his presence will be part of the means by which men will be induced to worship the beast and receive his mark. Death will be the penalty of refusal, and judicial delusion from God having fallen on the nations where the light of Christianity has shone, Satan's triumph will appear to be all but complete. "The beast" and the ten kings, having overthrown Babylon, will forthwith make war with the Lamb.

Open Revolt

Corruption, of which Babylon is the seat and center, will be exchanged for open, undisguised revolt on the part of the beast or imperial power of the earth. "Spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16:14 "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army." Rev. 19:19. REV 19:19.

Of the issue of such a contest, who can entertain a doubt? Christ and His saints will come forth from heaven. The leaders of the confederacy against Christ, "the beast and the false prophet," more infatuated than Pharaoh when he rushed after the Israelites into the bed of the Red Sea, will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire. Their armies will be slain with the sword of Him that sits upon the horse. The winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God will be trodden by the heavenly Conqueror, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This awful judgment will be quickly followed by others, upon one host of adversaries and another until "all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," shall have been gathered out of the kingdom of the Son of man. Satan being bound, the reign of Christ with His risen saints will continue for a thousand years. But in these closing scenes, Israel—the Jews—have an important and conspicuous part as well as in the millennial kingdom which succeeds.

W Trotter

Revelation Seventeen

A detailed vision concerning papal Rome and her connection with the beast is seen in chapter 17 of Revelation. There is judgment on the great harlot that influences many peoples (v. 15). A woman is seen sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast (the imperial power which supports her and which she controls) full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

She is greatly adorned, in contrast to the white raiment of the Church. Her idolatry is the source of ecclesiastical and moral wickedness, and she is seen drunk with the blood of saints and of martyrs.

In verse 8 the Roman empire which was, but is not now in existence, is seen to re-appear from a diabolical source. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. It is Rome's well-known situation.

There are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come. Each king represents a different form of Roman government: (1) Kings, B.C. 753. (2) Consuls, B.C. 509. (3) Dictators, B.C. 498. (4) Decemvirs, B.C. 451. (5) Military Tribunes, B.C. 444. (6) Imperial, B.C. 31.

The sixth form existed when John wrote, and the seventh is still future. It is also an eighth, but is of the seven and goes into perdition. It is seventh numerically, but eighth as being a new kind and resurrection number.

It will be a federal empire in verse 12, to the head of which ten kings will give their power and strength. They will make war with the Lamb, but He will overcome them, being Lord of lords and King of kings. The kings will be used of God to punish and make desolate papal Rome which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

W. Scott

Bits and Pieces

All intelligence in divine things depends upon a state of soul.

Joy will ever rise in proportion to prayer and thanksgiving.

To have power in prayer you must have purity in life.

Conscience is the real guide to knowledge. In God's presence sin is not measured by transgression, but by what God is.

Babylon

Revelation 17 and 18 REV 17 REV 18

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." This is a saying much to be remembered. It teaches us that we are not to make ourselves the judges of what sanctification or holiness is. God's Word is to determine this, because holiness is that character or mind which is formed by God's Word or truth.

We are apt to think that our own moral sense of things is the rule of holiness. But the Word of God claims to be such a rule: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. An act may be unholy, though done with a good conscience, because "the truth" and not the conscience is the rule of holiness.

If that rule were applied to many a thing which the moral sense or the religious sense of man approves, how it would change its character! And the Lord cannot change His standard of holiness, though He may be infinitely gracious to the shortcomings of His saints.

A Place Apart

Those words, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth," have their own force and value also. Thus in the whole of His utterance in John 17, the Lord strongly takes a place apart from the world, and puts His saints in the like place, praying that they may be kept there. In this sense, I believe, He speaks of sanctifying Himself. Through all this Church age He is apart from the world and the earth, and sanctification depends on our communion with Him in that separated place. "The truth," testifying as it does of Him, links us with Him in that place. Sanctification is thus "through the truth," leading us to fellowship with an unworldly Jesus.

We may see instances of such sanctification from the beginning. When the ground was cursed for man's sake, holiness was separation from it as in the persons of the antediluvian saints. Uncleanliness was cleaving to it, as did the family of Cain.

When the earth again corrupted itself, and God judged it by the scattering of the nations, holiness was separation from it as in Abraham. Apostasy was a clinging to it in spite of judgment as Nimrod did.

When Canaan was judged, Achan's sin savored of the, apostate mind, but Israel became a holy people by separation from it, and from all people of the earth by the ordinances of God and the sword of Joshua.

But Israel revolts. The circumcision becomes uncircumcision and with them all on the face of the earth or in the world becomes defiled, and holiness is separation from it in companionship with a rejected and heavenly Christ.

The Whole System is Judged

The whole system, the world, is the judged or cursed thing now. It is the Jericho. While the camp lingers in the wilderness, we may be at work or on a mission to draw out the Rahabs. But we cannot seek the improvement of Jericho, or display the resources and capabilities of the world. The world including other thoughts, is also any moral or religious system or undertaking which does not act in company with a rejected and heavenly Christ. Such doings would be unholy, not according to "the truth," however morally conducted or benevolently intentioned.

To glory without going on to "perfection" in a crucified Christ will not, if alone, be the "perfection" in this age. There must be companionship with a rejected Christ also. Babylon, the mystic Babylon of the Revelation, may be brought to boast in a crucified Christ and be Babylon still. For what is it as delineated by the Spirit? Is it not a thing worldly in character as well as abominable and idolatrous in doctrine and practice?

Rev. 18 gives us a sight of Babylon in its worldliness, as chapter 17 does more in idolatries. Babylon of old, as in the land of Chaldea, was full of idols and guilty of the blood or of the sorrows of the righteous. But it had also this mark: it displayed greatness in the world in the time of Jerusalem's depression. So it is with the mystic Babylon. She has her abominations in the midst of her, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus stains her. She is disclosed even more fully as great and splendid and joyous in the earth during the age of Christ's rejection. She is important in the world in that day when the judgment of God is being prepared for the world. She can glorify herself and live deliciously in a defiled place.

The Kings—Her Friends

It is not that she outwardly ignores the cross of Christ. She is not heathen. She may publish Christ crucified, but she refuses to know Christ rejected. She does not continue with Him in His temptations, nor consider the poor and needy Jesus. (Luke 22; Psa. 40.) The kings of the earth and the merchants of the earth are her friends, and the inhabitants of the earth are her subjects.

Is not, then, the rejection of Christ the thing she practically scorns? Surely it is. And again I say that the prevailing thought of the Spirit about her is this—she is that which is exalted in the world while God's Witness is depressed and she is in defiance of that depression, for she knows of it. Babylon of old well knew of the desolation of Jerusalem. Christendom externally knows and publishes the cross of Jesus.

Babylon of old was very bold in her defiance of the grief of Zion. She made the captives of Zion to contribute to her greatness and her enjoyments. Nebuchadnezzar had done this with the captive youths, and Belshazzar with the captive vessels.

Christendom Glorifies Herself

This was Babylon and in spirit this is Christendom. Christendom is the thing which glorifies herself and lives deliciously in the earth, trading in all that is desirable and costly in the world's esteem, in the very face of the sorrow and rejection of that which is God's. Christendom practically forgets Christ rejected on the earth.

The Medo-Persian power is another creature. He removes Babylon, but exalts himself (Dan. 6). This is the action of "the beast" and his ten kings. The woman, mystically Babylon, is removed by the ten kings, but then they give their power to the beast, who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, as Darius the Mede did.

This is the closing crowning feature in the picture of the world's apostasy. But we have not reached it yet. Our conflict is with Babylon and not with the Mede. Our conflict is with that which lives deliciously and in honor during the age of Jerusalem's ruins, or of the rejection of Christ.

J.G. Bellett

Three Mystic Women

There are, in the New Testament, three mystic women treated as symbols of evil, and these three appear to us to indicate three stages in the progress of ecclesiastical corruption. The first is the woman in Matt. 13 who took leaven and hid it "in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Is not this the commencement of the evil? It is the first introduction into the unleavened mass of professing Christendom of those corrupting principles of which we have seen such ample proof in apostolic times. It was then that "the mystery of iniquity" began to work. Then we have, in Rev. 2:20 "that woman Jezebel," symbolic, as we have seen, of Romanism as a system, established and bearing children amid that which had once been the Church of God. Jezebel was not a daughter of Israel, but a Zidonian princess whom Ahab, king of Israel, disobeyed the law of God in marrying. It was for her sake that he went and served Baal, and made a grove, and did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were above him, and, in short, sold himself "to work evil in the sight of the Lord." Jezebel was the instigator of all this, and the ruthless, heartless persecutor of God's people. Still she could use God's name, and proclaim a fast, and pretend great horror of blasphemy, and this even at the very time when, by treachery and false witness, she was perpetrating the murder of Naboth of Jezreel. Such is the divinely selected symbol of Popery!

But there is a third mystic woman, who is introduced to our attention in Revelation and who is described as "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication," and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk. The apostle sees her as a woman sitting "upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." This woman is "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." "And upon her forehead," says the apostle, "was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." Such is the last view Scripture affords us of corrupt Christianity—papal, no doubt, as to that which mainly fills the scene, but not exclusive of anything under other names, which shares the papal spirit and character. This woman is not a harlot merely, but the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth! Jezebel may symbolize her as a corruptress and mother of children within, but to set forth her seduction of the nations, and the pomp and magnificence of her rule, she is shown to us as here, seated on the beast, arrayed in gorgeous apparel, with her golden wine cup in her hand, with which she makes the earth's kings and inhabitants drunk. And she is in the height of her glory, when the vengeful stroke descends. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

One difficulty as to this interpretation must not be passed over. Babylon the great forms the subject of two chapters in the Apocalypse. It is from chapter 17 we have chiefly quoted, and if it stood alone, there could be no difficulty in recognizing ecclesiastical corruption, of which Rome is the head and center, in the woman there described. "Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," would of itself establish this interpretation. But in chapter 18, when the fall of Babylon has been declared, we find all the merchants, and shipmasters, and sailors bemoaning her downfall. The entire description in chapter 18 suggests the idea of a vast maritime, commercial power. This, as is well known, Rome is not, and here is the difficulty to which we refer. But we have only to suppose the extension of Rome's influence over those regions in which she once reigned paramount, and the difficulty vanishes at once. We do not say that this will be accomplished but our sad abuse of the light and blessings of the Reformation on the one hand, and the present aspect of religious society in these countries on the other, make this solution of the difficulty possible.

We cannot now enter into the details of Babylon's overthrow. They connect our present subject with the past and future history of the fourth Gentile monarchy. This again will be found to link itself with the prophetic history of the Jews' return to their own land, and their re-establishment there. The Antichrist, the man of sin, will be found connected with corrupt Christianity as having paved the way for him, and having prepared men's hearts to receive him. It has always been so. Religious corruption sears the consciences of those who are its agents or its dupes, while, by its manifest hollowness and hypocrisy, it outrages the natural conscience of the spectators, and provokes them to discard religion altogether.

W. Trotter

Wisdom for Our Pathway

If you want to get on, keep on praying.

Our difficulties should be food for faith-not material for failure. Convert every difficulty into prayer.

Delay is not denial. God will come in at the right moment. "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him."

God is behind everything, and there is nothing behind God.

Whatever humbles me, helps me. Not a particle of pride will enter glory. "The proud He knoweth afar off." Psa. 138:6. See Isa. 66:2.

Leave off judging other people, and judge yourself. Rom. 14:12, 13.

The Church and the Tribulation

Perhaps no erroneous doctrine has been more detrimental to the souls of God's children than that those who compose the Church of God will have to pass through "the great tribulation." Such a statement subverts God's revelation of the Church as the body and Bride of Christ. It reduces the heavenly people to Jewish associations and robs them of the watching and waiting attitude for Christ to come at any time. Such, more or less, merge into a political view of the Lord's coming by looking for events, instead of Himself, or for antichrist instead of Christ. Thus the affections, conscience, and hope of the soul become seriously damaged by it.

Nothing can be clearer in the Lord's farewell address to His disciples before going to the Father than that left them by giving them the blessed expectation of soon seeing Him again. Between the coming of the Holy Spirit and His return from heaven, He did not put a series of events to be fulfilled. So we are told that the early Christians waited for God's Son from heaven.

The part of Scripture that has been perverted to support the doctrine is Matt. 24. But a brief glance at it will show that the "coming" referred to by the disciples in their questions to the Lord was not His coming for us, but His coming to Jerusalem when we come with Him, and every eye shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (See Matt. 23:39; 24:3.) Those who are mentioned there will go through the tribulation. They are "His elect," which is a term applied by Isaiah to the blest remnant of the Jews.

The reference to the following things clearly marks it out as the time of "Jacob's trouble" that he will have to pass through and out of which he will be brought.

1. "The Sabbath day"
2. "Judea"
3. "Fleeing to the mountains"
4. "Flesh saved"
5. "The abomination... spoken of by Daniel the prophet"
6. "The great tribulation, such as was not... no, nor ever shall be." It is preceded by the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom" of God, not of the grace of God as now preached. It is "the hour of temptation" coming upon all the world, from which the Lord promises to save us. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from [out of] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10.

It is interesting to observe that when our Lord referred to His rejection by the Jews—Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes—He said, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name [the antichrist], him ye will receive." John 5:43. This we know from other scriptures is how the unparalleled tribulation will be brought about, and in retributive justice, the very tribes which rejected the Messiah will go through it. The ten tribes will not be

gathered together till after this, when the Lord actually comes out of heaven (Matt. 24:31).

C.H. Mackintosh

Bible Challenger-06-June V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that tells of something opened that yielded expensive gifts for a young child.

1. Something a householder was apt to have, thereby instructing those who were well instructed in Old Testament law.
 2. The inhabitants of certain houses who are in marked contrast to those where trouble is found.
 3. Something Moses was doing when he turned his back on the wealth of an entire nation.
 4. The manner in which those who were chief gave gold and silver and garments to underwrite a notable rebuilding effort.
 5. That which is often done by those who break through, adding to the ruin of moth and rust.
 6. One of two things attributed to the prince of Tyrus enabling him to acquire great riches.
 7. Something in season that the Lord promised Israel to bring blessing to the work of their hand.
 8. The unusual containers mentioned for a valuable deposit, reminding us that excellency belongs to God.
 9. A strange place in which nine men found a full rebate for that which had been purchased earlier.
- Answers to these questions will be found in next month's issue of Christian Treasury.

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-05-May Answers V.05

1. Diseases Ex. 15:26
2. Impossible Heb. 11:6
3. Light a candle Luke 15:8
4. Instructed Acts 18:25
5. Good Prov. 11:27
6. Every good work 1 Tim. 5:10
7. Nothing be wanting Titus 3:13
8. Trouble Heb. 12:15
9. Liest down Deut. 6:7
10. Young child Matt. 2:8

"Thou has commanded us to keep Thy precepts DILIGENTLY? Psa. 119:4.

Fears

Fears, founded on your own badness, disturbing and hindering your peace with God, are as senseless as trust in your own goodness for giving a ground of peace.

Submission to Authority

Submission to authority does not in the smallest degree hinder the believer from paying honor to the powers that be, for that is clearly our duty (Rom. 13:1-7). This "honor" is not at all based upon their personal character; we have nothing at all to do with their origin, how they got their power, or how they use their power. All that we have to do, as believers, is to own God and the magistrate. Perhaps the magistrate, or the king, does not own God himself. That is a serious thing for him, but it does not change our relation. Our duty, even if the kings or the magistrates were all infidels, is to acknowledge them to be God's ministers, no doubt blindly serving, but still accomplishing in their position God's purpose, though they little think it themselves. In short, we are bound to pay this honor to the powers that be, and it is no question what their particular shape may be. It may be a monarchy or an empire, or a republic, or whatever men may own for the moment. Our business is to render honor and subjection to the higher powers. This makes the Christian's path extremely simple, and I press it, beloved brethren, because we are in a time when altogether different views prevail. The spirit of the age is totally against what I am now saying. I give you, therefore, full warning as to it.

You must not expect to find what I am now saying in the thoughts of men, in the mouths of men, in the writings of men. Exactly the opposite is being suggested. Men regard themselves as the source of power, not God. They think that the particular form of government is purely a question of man's will. I grant you it may be man's will as the mere outer source of it. But what people forget is this: it is God who governs, even though wicked men may be the instruments that come forward publicly. Our part is not with the choice of instruments at all, but to own God in whatever He allows for the time being to have power upon the earth. And this duty the Lord Jesus Himself has shown us in the most clear and decided manner, for there were very different thoughts in Israel when the Lord Himself was here. But He has touched upon this question and shown it in that memorable answer of His to the Pharisees and the Herodians when He demanded of them to produce the coin, and pointed to the image and superscription of Caesar, and gave them this decisive word: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. 22:21.

This is our responsibility today, but how great the change when all things in heaven and on earth shall be put under the King, "the Great King." The Lord Jesus will be not only the acknowledged Jehovah, but King over all the earth. What was only in a partial and boastful manner said of the king of Persia, who was called "the great king," will be emphatically and intrinsically true of Him and of Him alone! Then how infinite the blessing when the heavens and earth shall all be united to His praise, and all shall be the fruit of His grace, and all shall be joined to His glory! This is what we wait for, and we know that by the grace of God we shall then be with Himself on high. We shall be with Him and shall appear with Him in glory when He appears in glory But this was only a partial type, and so much the more partial because the state of things was real, and in confusion where God held the reins only providentially, though it might be by men who were heathen. Such is the state of the times of the Gentiles. And the times of the Gentiles, you will remember, began

with Nebuchadnezzar, and will go on till the Lord Jesus appears in glory. We are in the times of the Gentiles now, only we are called out of the world by the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

Bodies of Glory

What a thought it is that the Lord Jesus knows where to look for and where to gather up every one of His own from the dust of death! He makes the dust give up the body which was laid in it to make each one a body of glory fashioned like His own, and to set each heart in His own presence and glory.

The very highest point you can turn to is the Son of man in the glory of the Father. Turn from that to the other utter extreme point, this Son of man rising up and coming down from that height, down to the dust where Satan has been allowed to separate the component parts of the bodies of those that sleep in Him. Each one is to stand up as a witness of the truth that He is the Resurrection and the Life, each one starting up from the dust of death at the first word from Him, the Firstborn from the dead, the Firstborn of many brethren, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. That to my soul is so unutterably sweet, so divinely and perfectly gracious.

What if God had made His Son head over everything, if He had not formed the hearts of His people for that Lord Himself! If He had once thrown the gates of heaven open, all that is in there would not be the volumes to my soul which I find in this word, "Forever with the Lord."

The thought that I have to meet the Lord Himself to be forever with Him touches the very quick of my heart. Does that Lord who has loved me with so patient a love, and kept me with so holy a care from the time He first gave me life, does He say, "You shall meet Me"? Yes, and more than that: He is coming down to meet me in the air! These eyes of mine shall see Him, these ears shall hear Him, the One who loved and gave Himself for me, putting forth this last expression of His love for those whom His Father gave Him before the foundation of the world. And this is no transient meeting, but caught up to dwell forever with Him.

What did the dying thief know about Paradise? He did know it was to be with Him on whom he had cast his soul for eternity. I don't care where I am if I am with Him. Everything is in that "with Him" and it is that which we get in the intermediate state: absent from the body and present with the Lord. If I left the body, it would be to be with Him who is the teeming fountain of all the blessing now flowing down to my soul. If in the New Jerusalem, it would be a poor place without Him. Without Him, what would be all the brightness of heavenly glory? For me there is only that one thing—I shall be forever with Him.

A Hive of Bees

Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thess. 5:13.

Be content with such things as ye have. Heb. 13:5.

Be careful for nothing. Phil. 4:6.

Be ye all of one mind. 1 Peter 3:8.

Be pitiful. 1 Peter 3:8. Be courteous. 1 Peter 3:8.

Be ye holy; for I am holy. 1 Peter 1:16.

Be ye kind one to another. Eph. 4:32.

Be kindly affectioned one to another. Rom. 12:10.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. 2 Cor. 6:14.

Be ye separate, saith the Lord. 2 Cor. 6:17.

Be not conformed to this world. Rom. 12:2.

Be sober. 1 Peter 5:8.

Be vigilant. 1 Peter 5:8.

Be of the same mind one toward another. Rom. 12:16.

Be strong in the Lord. Eph. 6:10.

Be ye thankful. Col. 3:15.

Be ye doers of the word. James 1:22.

Be ye steadfast, unmovable. 1 Cor. 15:58.

Be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness. Phil. 3:9.

Be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools. Eccl. 5:1.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.

1 Peter 3:15.

Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matt. 24:44.

Fellowship

Fellowship with Christ helps us, most of all, to fellowship with others. The gushing fountain springs of mighty rivers do not originate from the basin where they are first visible. They have a secret connection with a hidden, unfailing, exhaustless reservoir of unknown distance and depth. By continual supplies received from this source, the fountain overflows, and the streams flow on and come into fellowship with other streams having a similar reservoir. At last they all unite in the mighty ocean. So let us all draw from the hidden, unsearchable fullness of Christ, the exhaustless reservoir—hidden from the eye of flesh, but known to the eye of faith. In due time after refreshing many a thirsty land on our way, we shall come into the full ocean of joy prepared for the whole Church of God.

Love

We have never known a single instance of anyone's complaining of want of love in others who was not failing in love himself. The best way to get water out of a dry pump is to pour a little in.

Editorial

Everybody is interested in the weather. We are all affected by it and we want to know ahead of time something about whether it will be hot or cold, dry or raining. Weather prediction today is more accurate than it used to be, and yet some of the old reliable signs are still useful.

When in the land of Palestine, our Lord spoke of two of these signs. He said, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass." Luke 12:54, 55.

Next, He gives them a very sharp exhortation that we who are living today also ought to apply to ourselves. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" v. 56.

Certainly there are many indications or signs today that, when seen in the light of Scripture, tell us much about the times in which we live. It is right, then, for the Christian to look for and understand what is revealed in God's Word about current events and try to see where they fit in God's plan. We always ought to remember that God's plan is always to exalt Christ. This He has already done in placing Him at His own right hand. Soon God will exalt Him on earth as well as in heaven, but some events must take place before God publicly displays His Son as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Another scripture that we can apply to ourselves for our profit is what is said about the children of Issachar: "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chron. 12:32.

Recently many brethren have taken a keen interest in the changes throughout Europe and in the exodus of so many Jews from Russia. Questions arise concerning the ten kings and the revived Roman Empire, and also about the two beasts of Rev. 13.

This month's Christian Treasury informs us about the second of these two beasts who is called the False Prophet, or the Antichrist.

In writing about him, the first thing we can definitely state is that Christians shall not know him, for he is not revealed until after the rapture. This is important and also is a comfort, for he cannot work his wickedness while we who have the Holy Spirit are still on the earth.

We do not say that the Antichrist is not alive now on the earth, but that he is not known nor will be known while we are here.

The quick changes of power that we have recently seen in nations should be a reminder that after the rapture that person to whom Satan gives great power may quickly rise up. The Antichrist—a Jew—will work closely with the first beast of Rev. 13 who will be a Gentile. Together they are Satan's last attempt to take over the earth. Read Rev. 19 and 20 to see the end.

Ed.

The Power of Satan Deceiving Men

The Characteristics of the False Christ: Precisely the Opposite of Those of Christ

The false Christ as the man of sin presents himself without restraint in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. This is the culminating point in his character as an apostate who has renounced grace. The 9th and following verses of 2 Thessalonians 2 develop his positive and deceitful activity by which he seeks to win men. This explains the mixture of atheism in will and superstition.

In relation to the lying power of Satan and his efficient work, he presents himself in the character of Christ—he is the Antichrist assuming consequently a Jewish character. It is not only the pride of man exalting itself against God, but the power of Satan in man deceiving men, and the Jews in particular, by a false Christ. The conditions are such that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. We may remark that all these characteristics are precisely the opposite of Christ—falsehood instead of truth, iniquity instead of righteousness, perdition instead of salvation.

The Occasion of the Evil and the Scene in which it Develops

It is to a power like this, of lies and destruction, that man—having forsaken Christianity and exalted himself in pride against God—will be given up. The apostasy (that is to say, the renunciation of Christianity) will be the occasion of this evil; Judea and Jewry will be the scene in which it ripens and develops itself in a positive way.

The Antichrist Allied with Jewish Unbelief; Satan's Throne Among the Gentiles Strengthened; Idolatry Brought In

The Antichrist will deny the Father and the Son (that is, Christianity). He will deny that Jesus is the Christ (that is, Jewish unbelief). With the burden upon him of sin against Christianity, grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit, he will ally himself with Jewish unbelief in order that there may be not only the full expression of human pride, but also for a time the Satanic influence of a false Christ. This false Christ will strengthen the throne of Satan among the Gentiles, occupied by the first beast, to whom the authority of the dragon has been given.

He will also set up his own subordinate throne over the Jews, as being the Messiah whom their unbelief is expecting. At the same time he will bring in idolatry, the unclean spirit long gone out, who then returns to his house which is devoid of God.

The Judgment of Antichrist and its Means: The Return of the Lord Jesus in Glory

And now we consider the destruction of this one whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the manifestation of His presence (or of His coming). The first of these means characterizes the judgment; it is the Word of truth applied in judgment according to the power of God. In the Revelation it says that the sword proceeds out of His mouth. Here in Thessalonians He is not spoken of in the character of a man of war, as in Rev. 19. The spirit of His mouth is that inward and divine power which kindles and executes the judgment. It is not an instrument; it is the divine source of power which executes its purpose by a word. (Compare Isa. 30:33.)

But there is another aspect of this judgment. The Lord, the Man Jesus, will return. His return has two parts—the return into the air to take His assembly to Himself, and the public manifestation in glory of His return.

The Lord's Public Manifestation in Glory: The Obedient Man who Humbled Himself Destroying the Lawless One who Exalted Himself

In the first verse of 2 Thess. 2, we read of His return and our gathering together unto Him. In the same chapter in verse 8 is the manifestation of His presence publicly in creation. At the time of this public manifestation of His coming He destroys the whole work and power of the wicked one. It is the Man formerly obedient and humbling Himself on the earth, exalted of God, and become Lord of all, who destroys the lawless man that has exalted himself above everything and made himself as God, instead of being obedient to God.

The Taking Away of the Assembly and the Apostasy Necessary Before Satan Displays His Power in the Man of Sin

This evil—on the side of Satan's influence—was already working in the apostle's time, only it was bridled and kept back until that which restrained it should no longer be on the scene. Then should the wicked one be revealed. To sum up: the taking away of the assembly and the apostasy were first necessary; then this man should present himself as an unbelieving Jew, and the power of Satan would be displayed in him.

The Far Different Future of the Thessalonian Believers as Companions of the Lord Himself

Now this Satanic influence was for those who had rejected the truth. Of the Thessalonians (to whom he had given these explanations respecting the day which they believed had already come) the apostle thought very differently. God had chosen these "brethren beloved of the Lord" from the beginning for salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, to which He had called them by Paul's gospel (and that of His companions), and to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus. How different was this from the visitations of the day of the Lord, and the circumstances of which the apostle had spoken. They were numbered among those who should be the companions of the Lord Jesus Himself in that day.

J.N. Darby

Strength

Self-confidence is weakness because it asks no help from God. Self-distrust is strength when it casts itself on divine power. The strength God promises is for the burden He appoints, not the needless burdens we pick up ourselves.

The False Messiah

One special person, a man, a Jew, an apostate, is the Antichrist of the prophetic scriptures.

Some expositors regard the Antichrist as the civil head of the Roman Empire, but this is not so. He is the false messiah, the minister of Satan among the Jews in Jerusalem working signs and displaying wonders through direct satanic power. He sits in the temple of God then set up in Jerusalem, and claims divine worship. The Beast (Rome), the false prophet or the Antichrist, and the dragon (Satan) are deified and worshipped, counterfeiting the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The apostate nation of Israel accepts the Antichrist as king.

In no sense is he a great political power. True, he influences Christendom, but religiously, not politically. The government of the western world, civil and political, is then in the hands of a great Gentile chief. It is he whose throne is in Rome who rules politically under Satan. The Antichrist has his seat in Jerusalem, the head of Gentile dominion in Rome. The two men are ministers of Satan, confederates in wickedness. The one is a Jew, the other a Gentile. Both exist at the coming of the Lord in judgment, and both are then consigned alive to the lake of fire—an eternal doom.

The term Antichrist is used only by the writer of Revelation, and by him four times (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7), and once in the plural (1 John 2:18).

From these texts we gather several important points: (1) The rise of antichrists is a definite mark of "the last time"; they are apostates. (2) The Antichrist sets himself in direct opposition to what is vital in Christianity—the revelation of the Father and of the Son—and also to the distinguishing truth of Judaism, Jesus the Christ (1 John 2:22). (3) The holy Person of the Lord is also the object of satanic attack. This is fully developed in the coming Antichrist in whom every form of religious evil culminates.

Paul, in one of his earliest and briefest epistles (2 Thessalonians), sketches a personage characterized by impiety, lawlessness, and assumption who towers far beyond all the world has ever seen—a character clearly identical with the Antichrist of John. They are one and the same person.

It is evident that Paul had personally instructed the Thessalonian Christians on the solemn subjects of the coming apostasy or public abandonment of Christianity, and consequent upon this apostasy, the revelation of the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3). His letter added to his former verbal instruction.

Three descriptive epithets are used of the Antichrist: (1) The lawless one. (2) The man of sin. (3) The son of perdition. The first intimates that he sets himself in direct opposition to all divine and human authority. The second states that he is the living and active embodiment of every form and character of evil—sin personified. The third shows that he is the full-blown development of the power of Satan, and as such perdition is his proper doom and portion. This frightful character usurps God's place on earth, and sits in the temple then set up in Jerusalem, claiming divine

worship and honor (v. 4).

His religious influence, for he is not a political person of any account, dominates the mass of professing Christians and Jews. They are caught in Satan's snare. They had already given God up, had publicly renounced the Christian faith and the essential truth of Judaism, and now in retributive justice He gives them up to the awful delusion of receiving the man of sin while believing him to be the true Messiah (v. 11). What a lie! The Antichrist received and believed on instead of the Christ of God!

If verse 9 is compared with Acts 2:22, a remarkable correspondence is shown. The very same terms are found in both texts, namely, power, signs, and wonders. By these God would accredit the mission and service of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22). By the same credentials Satan presents the Antichrist to an apostate world (2 Thess. 2:9, 10).

The Lord himself refers to the Antichrist and to his acceptance by the Jews as their messiah and prophet (John 5:43). In the book of the Psalms he is prophetically written of in his character as "the man of the earth" (Psa. 10:18), and also as "the bloody and deceitful man" (Psa. 5:6). These descriptive epithets are in themselves characteristic of the wicked in general in the coming crisis, yet there is one person, and only one, to whom in the fullest sense they can refer. It is the character of the Antichrist that is before us in these and other psalms.

Daniel, in chapter 11 of his prophecy, refers to three kings: the king of the north (Syria), the king of the south (Egypt), and the king in Palestine (the Antichrist). The wars, family alliances, and intrigue so minutely detailed in the first thirty-five verses of this interesting chapter have had an exact historical fulfillment in the history of the Syrian and Egyptian kingdoms formed after the breakup of the mighty Grecian empire.

In verse 36 the king is abruptly introduced into the history. This king is the Antichrist whose reign in Palestine precedes that of the true Messiah, even as King Saul preceded King David, the former pointing to the anti-Christian king; the latter to Christ, the true King of Israel. This portion of the chapter (vv. 36-45) is yet future, carrying us on to the time of the end (v. 40). The king exalts himself and magnifies himself above man and every god. The pride of the devil is embodied in this terrible Jewish character. God's place alone will satisfy his ambition. What a contrast to the true Messiah, to Jesus who humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

That the Antichrist is of Jewish descent seems evident from Dan. 11:37, as also from the consideration that otherwise he could have no claim even with apostate Jews to the throne of Israel. The king, or the Antichrist, is attacked from the north and south, his land, Palestine, lying between the two. He is unable, even with the help of his ally, the powerful chief of the west, to ward off the repeated attacks of his northern and southern enemies. The former is the more bitter and determined of the two. Palestine is overrun by the conquering forces of the north, but its king, the Antichrist, escapes the vengeance of the great northern oppressor, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes of infamous memory is the prototype. The Antichrist is the subject of the Lord's judgment at His return from heaven (Rev. 19:20).

In Rev. 13, two Beasts are seen in vision. The first is the Roman power and its blasphemous head under the direct control of Satan (vv. 1-10). The second Beast is the personal Antichrist (vv. 11-17).

The first is characterized by brute force. It is the political power of those days, and the one to whom Satan "gave... his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority" Chapter 13:2. The second Beast is clearly subordinate to the power of the first (v. 12). It is religious, not political ends he has in view. Religious pretension is supported by the might and strength of apostate Rome; thus the two Beasts act together under their great chief, Satan. The three are jointly worshipped.

The second Beast, or Antichrist, is identical with the false prophet, named three times in chapters 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. The respective heads of the rebellion against Christ in His royal and prophetic rights are two men directly controlled and energized by Satan. It is a kind of trinity of evil. The Dragon has given his external power to the first Beast (Rev. 13:2). To the second he gives his spirit, so that having this spirit it speaks as a dragon (v. 11). Finally, Zechariah refers to the Antichrist as the idol shepherd utterly disregarding the flock (Israel) over whom he assumes royal, priestly and prophetic power. But his boasted authority (his arm) and vaunted intelligence (his right eye) by which his pretensions in the land are supported, are utterly blasted, while personally he is cast alive into the eternal abode of misery, the lake of fire (Zech. 11:15-17; Rev. 19:20).

In our judgment, therefore, the fallen star under the first woe unmistakably designates the Antichrist. To whom else of the apocalyptic personages could the description apply? The spiritual aims and religious pretensions of Satan are supported and enforced by the Antichrist, while his temporal sovereignty on earth is established in the kingdom and person of the Roman prince.

Now the agony here depicted is that of soul and conscience, not bodily anguish. The Antichrist seems the devil's chosen instrument in the infliction of the former, whereas in the latter kind of torment the brute force of the Beast is let loose, indulging itself in scenes of cruelty and bloodshed, tormenting the bodies of men.

W. Scott

Uplook and Outlook

We must look above our path to be able to walk in it. A Jew, who had the secret of Jehovah and who waited for the Messiah, was pious and faithful according to the law. A Jew who had only the law assuredly did not keep it. A Christian, who has heaven before him and a Savior in glory as the object of his affections, will walk well upon the earth. He who has only the earthly path for his, rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it. He will become a prey to worldliness and his Christian walk in the world will become more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and this consequently will glorify Him and make Him known to the world. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive above our path to be able to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing also the fear of the Lord to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

The Antichrist

Revelation 13:11-18 REV 13:11-18

No less a personage than the Antichrist is introduced in Rev. 13. Again and again his appearance on the scene is predicted, both by prophets of the Old Testament and by apostles of the New. Now at last we are permitted to see him emerge into view, and to read the character of his power and kingdom as delineated by the Spirit of God through His servant John. In a few brief words this diabolical instrument is described: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." v. 11.

Unlike the first beast of this chapter who rose up out of the sea (out of the masses of the people in a state of lawless confusion), the Antichrist comes up out of the earth. The earth is a symbol of organized and ordered government. We learn, therefore, that he gets his place in a regular governmental or political manner, obtaining his sway after a legal form. Consequently his position will be in accord with the civil and political arrangements of the period.

Before proceeding to consider the account here given, it may be well to answer two or three questions to enable the reader to pursue the subject more intelligently. First, it may be inquired, Have we any information as to who the Antichrist will be? From a passage in Daniel it appears that he will be a Jew, an apostate Jew. Speaking of "the king" who undoubtedly is the Antichrist (compare Dan. 11:36 with 2 Thess. 2:4) he says, "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers" (11:37), that is, Jehovah as revealed to Israel.

Our Lord's words point to the same conclusion. He said, speaking to the Jews, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43.

Out of the Jewish Nation

The very contrast drawn with Himself shows that our Lord had Antichrist in view, and it is thus sufficiently plain that this false usurper will spring out of the Jewish nation.

This conclusion, together with many indications in the Revelation, enables us with certainty to determine the next point as to the place and seat of his power. It will be Jerusalem, for at that time the Jews will have returned in unbelief and will have built their temple (see ch. 11) and as a consequence will be morally ready to receive a false Christ (Matt. 24). The Apostle Paul declares plainly that this "man of sin," "the son of perdition," will sit "in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. We know the temple will be at Jerusalem.

Lastly, we answer the question as to the period indicated. These events take place after the rapture of the Church and before the appearing of Christ.

This agrees with the Apostle's statement in 2 Thess. 2. He says, "And now ye know what withholdeth that he [the man of sin] might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [restraineth] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." vv. 6-8.

The Spirit of God in the Church (though the mystery of iniquity already works) restrains and will restrain the manifestation of the evil in the person of the "son of perdition" until the Spirit of God departs with the Church. Then room is made for the revelation of this incarnation of evil, and he will continue until destroyed by the Lord Himself at His appearing. It is clear, therefore, beyond all question, that the interval between the Lord's coming for His saints and His appearing in glory is the period of Antichrist's rise and power.

Returning now to our chapter, two things are specially noted. First, this beast had two horns like a lamb.

Prophetic and Kingly Power

Claiming to be the expected Messiah, he imitates and assumes the appearance of the true Christ. He was like a lamb in the vision, and moreover, he had two horns. That is, he had two of the forms of power which Christ as the Messiah will exercise. These are here the forms of prophetic and kingly power. Satan could not now give the third form, that of the priest, for he had lost his anti-priestly place when he was cast down out of heaven. (See Rev. 12:9.) The other two he bestows upon his blind tool that he might lure therewith the Jewish nation to destruction. As ever, he will resort to imitation in order to deceive the unwary, and to accomplish their eternal ruin (2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Tim. 3:8). Assume whatever appearance he may, he cannot morally change his nature, for he spake as a dragon. The dragon is Satan (Rev. 12; 13:2, 4), hence, if lamb-like in form, his speech betrays him.

Those taught of God, in spite of his pretensions, will discern his true character, for the sheep know the voice of the good Shepherd and they know not the voice of strangers (John 10). So too, as we read in John's epistle, the babes in the family of God warned against the many antichrists already in the world, shadows and forerunners of the Antichrist, are reminded that they have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. No saint of God, therefore, need be led astray, however specious the deception presented.

We have next the twofold form of his power—what may be termed civil (or governmental) and religious power.

Religious Power

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Rev. 13:12. We gather from the first part of this description that Antichrist will be a kind of administrative deputy of the imperial head of the Roman Empire, and consequently that he will be sustained in his position by all that monarch's forces. There may be a special reason for this. It is evident from other scriptures that Antichrist, during his sway, will be exposed to attacks from the "king of the north" (Dan. 11:40-45).

It would seem from another prophecy that Antichrist will enter into a league with the Roman power to make common cause against his adversary. (See Isa. 28:14-22.) This may account for the fact here stated that he exercises all the power of the first beast before it. In return for the Roman support, he assumes the office of prophet to the imperial head, and compels men to worship the first beast. It was a common thing for Roman emperors in the past to demand divine honors.

As we learn here, the same thing will be witnessed in the world's history. The almost miraculous resuscitation of the imperial governmental form of power, when the "deadly wound" is healed, will make the world wonder after the Roman beast, and will at the same time prepare the way for its deification. The poor world with all its vaunted wisdom and enlightenment, will be unable to distinguish between divine and satanic power. And the culmination of its progress and civilization will be seen in the worship of the image of a man. Men will readily fall into the snare under the blinding influences of the strong delusion which God, in judgment, will send upon them.

Miraculous Displays of Power

"That they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned [judged] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12.

Moreover, he will sustain his claims by miraculous displays of power. Like Elijah, he will cause fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and even as the Lord Himself, he will work miracles to accredit his mission (compare 2 Thess. 2:9) and to prove the first beast's title to divine homage. Thereby he will deceive "them that dwell on the earth," and induce them to "make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." v. 14.

He is permitted to go still further under the inspiration of Satan, for he will have "power to give life [not life, but breath] unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." v. 15.

Nebuchadnezzar went far when he erected his image of gold in the plain of Dura, and issued a decree that all men should worship it with the penalty of the burning fiery furnace if they refused. But Antichrist will go still further, for his image, with its diabolical breath and the mouthpiece of Satan in its utterances, will fill the minds of its worshippers with fear and dread.

Commerce Regulated

All, except the elect of God, will be constrained to obey the command of Antichrist, and to offer their homage to this creature of hell. They would not have God, and now they must worship Satan. Alas for man when he falls under the unhindered power of the devil!

Antichrist proceeds to regulate even commerce. He will cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." vv. 16,17. He will thus form a vast organization, composed of all except those whose names were written from the foundation of the world in the slain Lamb's book of life, outside of which it will not be lawful to buy or sell. Every member of it must bear the mark of allegiance to the beast in order to possess the liberty to trade. Under the mask of the welfare of the empire, all will be subjected to this awful tyranny under the pains and penalties of the deprivation of the most common liberty of the individual.

Foreshadowings of this frightful abuse of authority are frequently seen even in this tolerant age. This should afford sufficient warning to those whose eyes are opened, that the most absolute despotism may often be cloaked under a profession of the most liberal ideas. Also it gives an indication of the ultimate goal of modern politics under the concealed guidance and inspiration of Satan.

The chapter concludes with the number of the beast, which is six hundred and sixty-six. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man." Many have been the attempts to unravel this mystery, but all have been in vain. We conclude from the analogy of Scripture, that it will be impossible to discover the secret before the beast's appearance.

Divinely Forewarned

When at length he shall come upon the scene, those who have the wisdom of God will be able to identify him by the number given. They will thus be divinely forewarned. The indication here afforded is consequently for those who will be in the circumstances described.

It may be helpful to some if we add that in order to obtain a complete view of the Antichrist, the various scriptures on the subject must be combined. Here we have his actions in Jerusalem and his relation to the imperial head of the Roman Empire. In Daniel we see him menaced by the king of the north, or the Assyrian. In 2 Thess. 2 he is presented in relation to Judaism which he seeks to set aside and supersede by claiming divine homage for himself. But in John's epistle he is seen as the denier of the Father and the Son, that is, of Christianity as so revealed (1 John 2:22; 2 John 7).

What a contrast between the Christ of God and the Antichrist of Satan! And let it not be forgotten that the mystery of lawlessness is already working. Many antichrists are abroad at this moment in the world who, by their specious and subtle reasonings upon the Word of God, are fast preparing the minds of men for the total rejection of all revealed truth. Thus they accept the guidance of Satan in the place of that of the Holy Spirit of God.

E. Dennett

Coming and Appearing

Many of the passages which relate to the appearing of the Lord to judge this earth have a character so peculiarly their own, and differ so widely from those that refer to His coming for the Church, that it seems unaccountable how they ever could have been applied to it. For instance, in Rev. 1:7, His appearing is announced by saying: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Again, "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30. And, "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:27. Here, His coming is with clouds; it is like the lightning flash, which spreads from one end of heaven to the other. Every eye beholds Him, and terror and dismay follow.

When He comes for His saints, as related in 1 Thess. 4, He does not come with clouds, which are symbolic of providential power and judicial authority. He is not seen by every eye, nor do we read of any such effects being produced. There is no symptom of anything judicial. He comes purely on a mission of love when He descends from heaven to take to Himself the Bride which He has purchased with His own blood and which He has chosen to be His heavenly companion forever. His concern is with the Church—with His saints, and with them only—to take them to Himself forever, for such is the desire of His heart. He comes as a Redeemer, a Savior, a bridegroom, and every idea is excluded but the fulfillment of the purposes and promises of love. He comes to present the Church to Himself—"a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing., but that it should be holy and without blemish."

W. Ord

Get Up—Go Down

The sure way to get up is to go down. Such is the law of the heavenly road. A man who makes much of himself saves others the trouble of doing so. There is no need for two people to do the same thing.

Opposer of Christ

The name Antichrist signifies an opposer of Christ. It is used only by John in his first and second epistles, though those opposed to Christ are referred to by others under different names. It is important to distinguish between an antichrist and the Antichrist. John says, "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists," whereas "he is [the] Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:18, 22. He is the consummation of the many antichrists. To deny Jesus Christ come in the flesh is the spirit or power of the antichrist, and results in a departure from the special revelation of Christianity: "they went out from us." 1 John 2:19. (Also 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7.) Now this clears the ground at once of much that has obscured the subject. For instance, many have concluded that Popery is the antichrist, and have searched no further into the question, whereas the above passage refutes this conclusion. Popery does not deny the Father and the Son, and in Rev. 17 and 18, Popery is pointed out as quite distinct from "the false prophet" which is another name for the Antichrist. It is fully granted that Popery is a Christ-dishonoring and soul-deceiving system, but where God has made a distinction we must also do so. Besides Popery there were and there are many antichrists which, whatever their pretensions, are the enemies of Christ, opposers of the truth, and deceivers of man.

As to the Antichrist, it should be noticed that John makes another distinction between this one and the many. He speaks of the many as being already there, whereas the one was to come. In 2 Thess. 2:3-12 we read of something or someone that hinders that wicked or lawless one from being revealed, although the mystery of iniquity is already at work. John wrote much later and from his letters we learn that the revelation of the Antichrist is still future, though doubtless the mystery of iniquity is getting ripe for his appearing. That which hindered then and still hinders the manifestation of the Antichrist is doubtless the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. He will leave the earth at the rapture of the saints.

This passage in Thessalonians gives us further particulars as to this MAN OF SIN. His coining is after the working of Satan. That is, he will be a confederate of Satan and be able to work signs and lying wonders with all deceit of unrighteousness in them that perish. Those that have refused the truth will then receive the lie of this wicked one. In Rev. 13:11-18, the anti-Christian power or kingdom is described as a beast rising out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. Here we read that he will do great wonders, making fire come down from heaven, with other signs or miracles.

In the description in Thessalonians he sets himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped, and sits down in the temple of God and puts himself forth as God. The Jews will receive him as their Messiah (John 5:43). In Rev. 13 this counterfeit of Christ's kingdom is openly idolatrous. He directs the dwellers on the earth to make an image of the beast (named in verse 11, the future head of the resuscitated Roman Empire) to which image he gives breath, that it should speak and persecute those who will not worship the image.

Also he causes all to receive a mark on their hand or their forehead that they may be known to be his followers, that none else should be able to buy or sell. We thus see that in the Revelation the anti-Christian power, also called "the false prophet," will work with the political head and with Satan—a trinity of evil—not only in deceiving mankind, but also, in Ch. 16:13-16, gathering together by their influence the kings of the earth to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The three are cast alive into the lake of fire. (Chapter 19:20; 20:10.)

In the Old Testament we get still another character of this wicked one. In Dan. 11:36-39 he is called "king." Here he exalts himself and speaks marvelous things against the God of gods. He will not regard the God of his fathers (showing he is a Jew) nor "the desire of women," that is, the Messiah of whom every Jewess hoped to be the mother. He exalts himself above all. Here again he is an idolater, honoring a god that his fathers knew not. In Zech. 11:15-17 he is referred to as the foolish and idol shepherd who cares not for the flock, in opposition to the Lord Jesus, the good Shepherd.

This man of sin will "do according to his own will" just what the natural man ever seeks to do. In contrast to this, the blessed Lord was obedient and came not to do His own will. May His saints be always on the watch against the many false prophets in the world (1 John 4:1) and be loyal to their absent Lord, while beholding His beauty in the sanctuary, and reflecting Him more down here in their earthen vessels.

Concise Bible Dictionary

Bible Challenger-07-July V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word denoting that which may very well accompany our efforts of salvation (preservation) in the absence of any human benefactor.

1. One of three verbal barbs aimed at a governor who thought it inconvenient to listen further.
2. An additional instruction for the rulers of the earth, beyond serving the Lord.
3. The name of an aged priest whose heart's longings as to an armed conflict went beyond his concern for the welfare of his two sons.
4. A remarkable decree of a mighty king to those in his dominion after he observed the delivering power of the living God.
5. The response of the infernal beings to the one God which we do well to follow.
6. What a jailer called for after his midnight awakening.
7. A man who was much distraught at the second presentation of savory meat.
8. What are they that shall not abide the indignation of the living and true God?
9. The term of endearment given to a man by a special messenger to impart understanding.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-06-June Answers V.05

1. Things new and old Matt. 13:52
2. Righteous Prov. 15:6
3. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches Heb. 11:26
4. After their ability Ezra 2:69
5. Steal Matt. 6:19
6. Understanding Ezek. 28:4
7. Rain Deut. 28:12
8. Earthen vessels 2 Cor. 4:7
9. Sacks Gen. 43:23

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their TREASURES, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Matt. 2:11.

Faith

Faith never makes light of danger, for it knows what we are. On the other hand, faith never faints at danger, for it knows what God is.

Communion

The secret of our collective joy and comfort is individual occupation with our glorified Lord Jesus. When each heart is rejoicing in the Lord, then we can have fellowship one with another, worship the Father in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and delight in the thought that "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Thanks be unto God, who hath called us "unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1:9.

Communion is the Christian's watchword. Our blessed Lord would have us share with Himself "the words"—divine communications—which the Father gave Him. (John 17:8.)

He gives us His peace, that calm, unperturbed state, which flowed from confidence in the Father's love, so that He would have us be without heart-trouble, or fear, during the whole time of His absence. He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27.

He would have us share His joy. He said, "These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." John 17:13.

As to love, He wants us to know that the Father loves us as He has loved Him. (John 17:23, 26.) And, to crown the whole, He will share with us His glory. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." John 17:22. Oh to be kept in the constant enjoyment of this sweet communion!

H.H. Snell

Editorial

"Listen to me!" "Pay attention, please." Nearly all of us have received these clear commands many times from our parents or school teachers. There was always a reason. We may have been disinterested, lazy, sleepy or just occupied with our own thoughts and desires.

Often God Himself tries to attract our attention and what He has to say is always very important. We have an example of this in Luke 9:44 where our Lord Jesus says, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears."

The Creator has made man with two avenues to his soul—the ear and the eye. Prov. 20:12 reads, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them."

God wanted a creature with whom He could have communion. Sin interrupted that communion, but God still spoke to man. Into Eden He went to speak to Adam and Eve, our first parents, who were hiding because of sin.

Many centuries later God used writing as a means of reaching man.

The ear, then, surely is the most important avenue to the soul. Hearing's advantage over reading is that no special schooling is necessary in order to learn. When we do read, though, the written word has an abiding, unchangeable character that is not evident in the spoken word.

When the Lord Jesus came, the Word was manifest in the flesh, was seen, looked upon by John and the disciples, and even handled (1 John 1:1).

Certainly we should be very interested and pay close attention to what God says to us. Let us take heed. Let us read the Bible, God's Holy Word.

Job says, "Doth not the ear try words?" (Chapter 12:11.) In Psa. 50:7 it is written, "Hear, O My people, and I will speak." And in Psa. 94:9 we read, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" Two verses farther down it tells us that He knows even our thoughts. It is futile to try to hide from God.

Proverbs tells us to "bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise." (Chapter 22:17.) Then in verse 20 it says, "Have not I written to thee excellent things?" We say, "Yes, indeed." And don't we want to know what God has for us?

Twice in Matt. 13 our Lord says, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." In the Revelation, the last book, it is notable that the ear is singular and over and over again it says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." It is as though finally God says that if you only have one ear, use that. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17.

In this issue, several articles emphasize the need to hear. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools.... Be not rash with thy mouth.... Let thy words be few." Eccl. 5:1, 2.

Ed.

Take Time to Hear

Do you remember that in the parable of the Sower some of the seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked it? Then the Lord told us that thorns were a picture of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and that they sprang up and choked the Word, so it became unfruitful.

How sad if the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches make it impossible for us to care about these things that are a joy to the heart of the Lord. How sad if we are too busy with other things, perhaps business or study or even the Lord's work—to take time to hear from the Lord these things in which He has delighted for so long, and which He has taken the trouble to tell to us.

Every individual saint is called to have fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3). The whole Church, meaning "the called-out ones," is called to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). Do you remember those gracious words of the Lord Jesus in John 14, "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"? Compare also John 14:3; Rev. 21:3; 22:3.

The Lord desires the fellowship of His people now, and He desired it in the days of old also. He desired it so much that He thought of the difficulties that might arise when His people came together to meet Himself, and He provided for these difficulties. We all know that it would be impossible for us to rejoice before the Lord if we were worrying about our cares at home.

When all the men left their homes to go up to meet the Lord, who would protect the homes from the enemy? What about the Philistines who were always ready to come down on the Lord's people? Would it be safe or right to leave their wives and children unprotected to go up to meet the Lord as He desired? The Lord knew all these dangers and difficulties so He gave the special promise, "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." Ex. 34:24.

The God who could think of these things and take special care of His people in those days, will not forget them now in these days. He tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25), and will He not take care of those who hear and obey His Word? They will not lose by it. Is not this a special word to us, for around us we see our neighbors making no difference for the Lord's Day, but going on with their own affairs in business and pleasure as if the day were their own? May we not be tempted to follow their example.

But when we know the deep desire of the Lord's heart to have us with Himself and around Himself, may we let nothing hinder us, and we will surely find in eternity that we have not lost by it. The Lord's promise still stands true, "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Sam. 2:30. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." That is, put God's things first, "and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

G.C. Willis

The Ear

A Figure for the Heart's Devotedness

There are three scriptures which refer to the ear and which unfold to our souls the heart of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened [digged]: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psa. 40:6-8.

The ear is that organ by which we receive instruction. It speaks of man's place before God in obedient responsibility. When God formed man out of the dust of the ground, He formed (digged) an ear for him as the hearing member of his body. (A sculptor with his hammer and chisel does so in the marble.) Adam, though, turned a deaf ear to God's instructions and became disobedient. A hearing ear, however, receives instruction and obeys. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17.

Those animal sacrifices of the Old Testament and various other offerings could never glorify God with respect to sin. There was One, though, who "was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Prov. 8:30. "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." Heb. 10:5-7. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from which the Lord quoted here, gives the real sense of the ears being opened, or digged, in Psa. 40—that is, becoming a man before God, for whom obedience is the only right course.

This, then, is the incarnation of God's Son, of whom we read in Phil. 2:6-8: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation [emptied Himself], and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And so, referring to "the days of His flesh," it is said that "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." (Heb. 5:7, 8.) He was the perfectly dependent and obedient man. Never was there another like Him. The fulfillment of His Father's will was everything to Him. He would rather die than fail to do it in any respect. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2.

2. "The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Isa. 50:5, 6.

Having observed the character of Christ's coming into this world and with the cross in view, now we see the character of His walk through it. In this expression, His ear is opened moment by

moment as He goes, that He might know the Father's will as to His service. He says: "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38.

Further He says: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." Isa. 50:4. He would, in all lowliness, serve the needs of all whom He met, but as led by the Father. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Never did He take a step or speak a word without first receiving instruction from His Father: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." John 12:49, 50. As He ministered to the needs of the weary, He did so in perfect dependence and obedience.

Not only do we see the Lord as the perfect servant here, but we also behold His perfect confidence in His God: "For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." He was, therefore, "not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the sniffers, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Even with the shadow of the cross before His soul, we read: "When He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from [out of] death, and was heard in that He feared." Heb. 5:7. And again, we hear Him say: "He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life." Psa. 16:8-11.

This is the continual dependence upon the Father's guidance for every step—for every word. He was always the man of faith, the dependent and obedient One, and the perfect servant.

3. "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." Ex. 21:5, 6.

Here we see a Hebrew servant, whose time of service is finished, but who, because he loves his master, his wife, and his children, will not go out free. He states his purpose plainly and is then taken to the judges and to the door or the doorpost. There his ear is bored through with an awl as a mark of perpetual servitude.

How beautifully this pictures the heart and way of our blessed Lord and Savior! We hear Him say to His Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4. We also hear Him say: "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." John 14:31. And of Him we read: "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." John 13:1.

When His public ministry here was over, the Lord might have returned to the glory with all honor. He would not do so, however, without first completing that work of Calvary, which so infinitely glorified God His Father in all His nature. And had He not completed that work, He would have to return without securing for Himself a heavenly bride and a family for God. No, His love for His Father and His love for His people kept Him here until all had been done.

He would state His desires and go under the judgment of God for God's glory and our blessing. His side would be pierced with a spear and His hands and feet with nails to secure both. Those wounds will always be our delight to behold in the Father's house above.

In the meantime, His service of love continues. As our great High Priest, He appears in the presence of God for us in love to secure our feet in the way, and as our Advocate to restore us to communion with the Father when we do sin. (See Heb. 4:14-16 and 1 John 2:1, 2.) Even now He girds Himself and comes forth to wash our feet. (See John 13:4-10.) He also leads the assembly in praise to our God with singing. (See Heb. 2:12.) In addition, He is sanctifying and cleansing the Church "with the washing of water by the Word" until He takes her to Himself. And in how many other ways is He serving our needs and comforting our hearts through our desert journey today!

Not only does this Servant serve His own in these ways now, but wonder of wonders, He will serve them forever! He says to those that are watching that "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12:37. Even in the glory, it will be His delight to minister to our hearts the blessings of heaven. Such is His loving heart. He has committed Himself eternally to the Father's service and to that of His redeemed myriads.

So His ears have been opened (a body prepared for Him) to do the Father's will in everything, but especially with regard to Calvary's work. Also, His ear has been opened to receive instruction with respect to ministering to the needs of those weary ones He would meet in His path down here. And finally, His ear was bored through, committing Himself in devotedness to the service of His Father and to that of His own both now and forever.

Now, the word to each of us is: "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Rev. 3:13. And also we are told, "Take heed therefore how ye hear." Luke 8:18. In our little service, then, whether toward God or toward man, may we be attentive to our Lord's word to us. May our affections be so engaged with Himself that when His command goes forth, we might hear it and do it heartily. May the Spirit of Christ give His character to our service as we wait upon Him in dependence and with devoted hearts. Only then will we experience power in our service and have the conscious sense of His approval resting upon it.

D. Graham

Thy Servant Heareth

In every age the servant character is marked by the Holy Spirit as one of special value. It is, in fact, the only thing that will stand in times of general declension. Of this we have numerous examples in Scripture. When the house of Eli was about to fall before the divine judgment, Samuel occupied the position of a servant whose ear was opened to hear. His word was, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth."

When all Israel had fled from the face of the Philistine champion, the servant character again stood prominently forth. "Thy servant will go and fight," etc. The Lord Jesus Himself had the title of servant applied to Him by Jehovah in the words of the prophet, "Behold, My Servant." Furthermore, when the Church had failed-when it ceased to be "the house of God," and had become the "great house"-the servant of the Lord was told how he ought to carry himself.

And last, it is mentioned as one of the special features of the heavenly Jerusalem that "His servants shall serve Him." And now, when a carnal and worldly spirit threatens to swamp so many, what is the remedy? A little of the mind of the servant. A little of that spirit which would lead us to say, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." The Lord grant us more of this spirit!

The intelligent reader will, of course, understand that the foregoing observations are not designed to interfere with the Christian's privilege of sonship, but merely to awaken a more earnest desire to be used for Christ and His people.

C.H. Mackintosh

Reward

We receive reward for our labor, but as to our place, we all get the same glory as Christ: "when Christ... shall appear," we—that is, all Christians—"shall... appear with Him in glory." When you come to labor, it is a very different thing, and reward is accordingly. The Thessalonians will be Paul's crown, but they will not be ours; that is clear. We know not how this will be accomplished, but in glory Paul will have them as his crown, yet he will not take away Christ's crown. It was all grace that did it, though Christ is pleased to reward the labor when it is faithfully done, owning, not me, but the grace of God that is in me. Loving obedience to Christ, not reward, is the motive for labor. The anticipated reward gives encouragement, especially when the servant faces trials or opposition.

Hearing and Following

A lack of apprehension of two great points, hearing and following, is notable at this present time. The quietness of communion is little known or enjoyed in these busy, active days. How truly the moment speaks loudly of unrest and unreality, and how little is known, even among the saints, of that deep, personal, unexpressed joy in Christ.

The satisfaction of the heart in the personal nearness of the Lord, the being in His company for the simple joy of it, is true communion. Thus it is we have a common mind with Him, which is the meaning of communion. When this is the case, we know the mind of our Lord and Master, and this is what qualifies us for every service as Christ's confidential servants. It is well to bear in mind that the amount of our service or the laboriousness of our work does not of itself make us confidential servants.

There is a very intimate connection between the two attitudes of soul we are considering. In fact, they are dependent on one another. It is very blessed to see the producing and maintaining power of hearing and following Christ. He and He alone is the source and spring of communion—accessible to each listening heart. To be a good listener, one must be both free and at rest.

Slavery-Liberty

The blessed Son, always the Father's delight and always in the bosom of the Father, came into a world of slavery and sorrow to bring liberty to the captives, as well as relief of conscience and rest of heart to every weary soul. His work and Person alone can give freedom and rest. It is mournful to see how little of either exists around us. The activity or restlessness of the age infects the saints, not only in the things that relate to this life, but even in their relationship with God. They often do not enjoy a fixed, settled peace.

At the present time, with many there is but little if any rest. I long to see His people possessing conscious knowledge of union with Christ glorified in heaven. This knowledge alone can impart rest of heart, and detach from earth and its things! Here the soul listens, absorbed with Him who is its rest. The ear, once engaged with these sounds, now does homage at His feet and waits upon His words, knowing how to interpret all the tones of His voice and to treasure them up in the soul.

Sweet Fruit

What is more blessed than an ear at leisure from self and its surroundings waiting on the word of Jesus? Then one sits down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to the taste (Sol. 2:3, 4). Is not this the house of wine where He delights to entertain His own, during the weary hours of this night which is soon to end? It is surprising how little any of us knows what real solitude with God is. How is it possible to grow in personal acquaintance with Christ if the solitude of His company is not sought after and cultivated by His saints? I do not undervalue the outward means of instruction and soul refreshment which abound on every hand, but personal communion with Him must have the preeminence.

Consider the history of Elijah. Remarkable servant of God though he was, it is clear that his life inwardly was not sustained in proportion to his outward testimony. With him the fire, wind and earthquake were everything, and when outward testimony excited the malignity of the enemy, as is usual, his faith was not equal to the pressure. But notice the tender way of Jehovah with His poor servant.

First: He is called to go and stand before the Lord, proving that solitude is useless unless it is with God. We may be as isolated as he was, under a juniper tree or in a cave (1 Kings 19:4, 9), but that is only the solitude of disappointed nature. There is neither liberty, nor rest, nor listening in that. Oh no, it must be with God. "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord."

Second: The demands of nature must not be yielded to. This is typified by the prophet's fasting forty days and forty nights. His provisions were from Jehovah's hand—even a "cake baked" and "a cruse of water." These were supplies outside of nature, in the strength of which all nature's claims could be set aside.

Third: The consequence of the first two actions is that the prophet listens. He hears "a still small voice," and thus receives communications and commissions which previously would have been unintelligible to him.

We find our pattern of hearing and following in John 10. "My sheep hear My voice... and they follow Me." John 10:27. The Shepherd's voice is heard and known by the sheep, so they follow Him who goes before. In the passage we see the blessed Lord scorned and reproached, leaving the ancient fold of Judaism and going before His sheep. He is the security to all His own. His departure was the way and the authority for the sheep to follow Him, come what might, their hiding-place from danger, and their safe conduct for the way. Their security is knowing His voice, and they follow as they know it.

Has your heart found One whom you now follow? Is He your one object day by day? It is blessed to be allowed to serve, but many a one who is not following serves in this day. Oh, for more distinct going forth from all around to follow a rejected Lord and Master, and to esteem it our holiest joy to tread the path He has walked in. It may be rough, but it has been trodden by Him who has left His own mark upon every rose and every thorn.

Conscience: Purged or Quieted

There is an immense difference between a quieted conscience and a purged conscience. Man with false religion gives the former; the latter is effected only by the blood of Christ.

Seven Wonders

Recently I came across an interesting list of man's accomplishments entitled, "Seven Wonders of the World." They were all found in the United States and are as follows:

1. The largest arch on earth. It is made of stainless steel and has a span and height of 630 feet. It contains an elevator to the top for a commanding view. Located in St. Louis, Missouri.
2. The tallest building. The Chicago Sears Tower is 1,454 feet high (approx. 180 stories). Located in Chicago, Illinois.
3. The Longest Span Bridge. The New York Harbor single span suspension is 4,260 feet long and has two 700-foot towers.
4. Most Gigantic Sculpture. Five-and-one-half million tons of granite was removed to depict Chief Crazy Horse galloping into battle. It is 561 feet high and 641 feet long. Located in South Dakota.
5. Highest Monumental Column. It stands 570 feet high with a base of 47 feet tapering to 30 feet at the observation tower. Located in Houston, Texas.
6. Most Massive Concrete Structure. The Grand Coulee Dam, located on the Columbia River in Washington, contains no less than ten-and-one-half million tons of concrete.
7. The Tallest Tower. A TV transmitting station located in North Dakota is 2,063 feet high.

As we consider the above achievements, we must admit that they do declare man's God-given cleverness and ingenuity. Man is wise enough to remove from the earth the minerals needed to make steel and concrete and with these to reach out and up with clever design. We notice however, that man as always has his limits. He can reach out just so far and up just so high, then must return to earth, to which he is so bound. Witness his efforts with the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). See also Eccl. 7:29.

Now turn to yet another seven wonders, this time not dealing with man's activity but having to do with the eternal God, who indeed created man and brought all his surroundings into being. Of the many glorious wonders concerning God, let us select just seven to ponder. They are:

1. Creation
2. Man's fall and total ruin
3. The incarnation of Christ
4. The Lord's death
5. The glorious gospel
6. The rapture

7. The coming judgment

Creation

To describe the amazing wonders of God's handiwork in creation adequately and yet briefly is impossible. Let us look at just two wonderful aspects. First we view God's infinite love and wisdom in creating an environment so perfectly suited to man's every need and full enjoyment. Secondly we learn how God formed man in His own image and likeness. Man could not only delight in all that surrounded him, but commune with the Giver and Sustainer of all things, his God. The exquisite harmony and balance of nature and the super abundance of all around him that his senses could enjoy was a grand testimony to God's profound love and interest in Adam, the first man. God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good. (Gen. 1:31.) Adam could survey his surroundings, his wife, and himself and could say with the psalmist, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psa. 139:14.

Man's Fall and Total Ruin

It is indeed sad to learn from the Word of God that man sinned and fell from his first estate, and was driven from the garden of Eden to find himself separated from God, subject to death, and his life become a drudgery on the earth. In spite of God's lavish display of His love and goodness to them, our first parents succumbed to Satan's lie and thus forfeited all! Truly this is a wonder to contemplate.

The Incarnation of Christ

From the palace of His glory,
From the home of joy and love,
Came the Lord Himself to seek us,
He would have us there above.

It is an amazing fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, descended from heaven and came into the very world His hands had made. Being sent of His Father, He became a man that He might offer Himself a sacrifice for sin and thus be our risen and glorified Savior (1 Tim. 1:15). O what a grand testimony to the heart of God. What a glorious and wonderful mystery (1 Tim. 3:16).

The Lord's Death

Perhaps the most profound words in the Bible are these: "The Lord's death." 1 Cor. 11:26. When we pause to consider those deep, meaningful titles that belonged to Him, such as "The Word" of John 1:1, the "I Am" of Ex. 3:14, the "Mighty God," the "Prince of Peace" of Isa. 9:6, etc., we ask how could this beloved One submit Himself into wicked hands of sinners and be slain on the cross? O wonderful truth. He became a man that He might do this very thing, and in so doing, fully glorify God as to the question of sin and man's guilt and thus make atonement for our souls. O wonder of wonders:

The Lord of Glory crucified

The Lord of Life has bled and died!

The Glorious Gospel

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. "Ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Before the world was formed and man created, there was the Son of God in past eternity, delighting in the sons of men, with the grand design to redeem man and bless him forever. Wonder of wonders—He loves me now and will love me forever!

The Rapture

The Lord Jesus called Lazarus from the grave in John 11. His voice is soon to be heard again when he calls all the redeemed from the grave and those alive on the earth at the present time. What a glorious display of power and victory that will be (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; John 14:3). How cheering and precious, for us who know Him, to contemplate. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

The Judgment of the Lost

As to this seventh and last wonder, let us simply quote from the Word of God! "And I [John] saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15. This solemn scene describes the lost ones standing in space and speechless before a holy God to be condemned to hell forever. Truly, an awful, fearful sight.

May we, the redeemed of the Lord, be always found thanking and praising our loving God and Father for our great deliverance from the wrath to come and for having brought us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us
from our sins in His own blood, and hath
made us kings and priests unto God and His
Father; to Him be glory and dominion
for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. 1:5, 6.

W. O'Brien

Bible Challenger-08-August V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that tells how a prophet prayed to restrain the forces of nature for a set time.

1. Words used describing charity (love) in the assembly as more to be coveted than any of the Spirit gifts.
2. A confessed life-style by someone who received, for saying it, a blow on the face.
3. The seemingly strange response to the mourning (among other things) of those dear to the heart of an apostle.
4. The reason given why the writer of an epistle did not pen a fifth gospel.
5. The name of the high priest who had a repairman at the door of his house.
6. Something a servant longs to see, indicating his daily toil is over.
7. Something a young woman said upon seeing a disciple sitting by a fire.
8. One of two "why" questions that was asked on a famous porch.
9. A contrived religious function to explain the unexpected absence from a king's table.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-07-July Answers V.05

Temperance Acts 24:25

Rejoice with trembling Psa. 2:11

Eli 1 Sam. 4:13

Men tremble Dan. 6:26

Believe, and tremble James 2:19

Light Acts 16:29

Isaac Gen. 27:33

Nations Jer. 10:10

Greatly beloved Dan. 10:11

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and TREMBLING." Phil. 2:12.

Hearers of the Word

It is the same rain which falls upon the rock, as upon the soil at its base, but the rock remains barren, while the soil becomes fruitful. Is, therefore, the rain at fault, or is the result due to the nature of the soil?

So the Word of God falls upon different hearts, and some continue barren and unfruitful, while others yield fruit a hundredfold. The fault lies in the hardness of heart of the hearer.

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11:28.

A Wise and Willing Heart

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it." "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring." Ex. 35:5, 29.

"And every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded" "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded." Ex. 35:10; 36:1.

The difference between a willing heart and a wise heart appears to be that one is qualified to give and implies devotion, the other is fitted to work and requires divinely-given wisdom.

As God expects from each young believer "a willing heart" and as to many He has given a "wise heart" as well, this chapter (Ex. 35) will furnish us all with much instruction and encouragement.

We find three things connected with the first service here spoken of: Firstly, it must flow from true devotion, "a willing heart." Secondly, it was accepted equally whether little or much. And thirdly, it was all done "to the Lord." Now this service does not flow from gift ("wise-hearted" service does) but is within the compass of the little child just saved or of the aged Christian, of the most uninstructed or the most enlightened child of God. It does require a heart for the Lord.

It may consist in little things or great, giving one tract or a million, contributing some mite towards the fund of a preaching room, or hiring a dozen gospel halls, giving a cup of cold water or feeding five thousand. The amount of the gift is not the question, but what is of all importance is whence it comes and whither it goes. It must proceed from a willing heart and it must be done to the Lord, and thus the fragrance of the gift will reach far beyond the recipient, right up into the presence of Him to whom it is done. Think of this, dear young believers, and study well the lessons of this chapter. Surely some timid, retiring souls will be comforted and encouraged when they read of the man who brought his humble offering of shittim wood and goat's hair, and they may be led to consider if there is not some little work they can do for Christ. I am persuaded that none are exempted from this service.

There is a service, as we have seen, dependent upon gift (Ex. 36) and a very blessed one, one in which women are included (Ex. 35:25, 26). But there is also a service not dependent on any gift (save that of eternal life) and which God expects from each of His children. It is interesting too to see that the "wise-hearted" service depends in measure upon "willing-hearted" as the latter brought the materials which the former used. So now, many a young believer cannot preach who can yet invite souls to the gospel and visit them afterward. Many are not able to write a tract who can yet assist to circulate it. Those who are not able to lecture or speak to Christians can still help to provide a room for those who can; they may not even be able to teach a class, but yet can visit the scholars.

The great secret is not to be above doing little things Many a one brings nothing because he cannot bring gold and precious stones, and has nothing but goats' hair or badgers' skins.

Let such learn a lesson from the study of this chapter, and not wait for great things or a "wise heart" before they render the service of a "willing one!" "God loveth a cheerful giver." "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. 8:12.

Loss of Communion

Nothing can ever make up for the loss of communion with God.

Broken Vessels

Broken vessels are often better than whole ones to show forth the sufficiency and grace of Christ.

Read the Bible to Your Children

While I was reading a chapter of the blessed Word of God, the door softly opened and a little girl of four quietly entered the room. I was reading Luke 7 aloud and continued without speaking to her. As I finished the touching story of the woman who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, she whispered, "Mamma, that is such a sweet story. Please read it again."

Equally pleased and surprised I said, "There are other pretty stories in this chapter. Shall I read it all?"

An eager "Yes" and a spring into my lap was the answer. I slowly began to read the story of the centurion's servant. Interrupted by questions and explanations, we finished this and then read of the widow of Nain. The quick sympathy of childhood found vent in tears and then smiles for the stricken mother's sorrow and rejoicing.

Then we came again to the story of the woman who "loved much." This was the little one's favorite and her comment was, "Don't you wish the dear Savior were here now, so we could do something for Him when He was so tired?"

Christian mothers, our little one is just like yours, no different. We buy no "simplified Bible stories." We just feed her with the pure milk of the Word, unadulterated. You may do the same with like results to yourselves and your little ones.

Editorial

Which is greater in the Christian home, the need of the children or the privilege of the parents? Never has there been a time when children needed protection, loving care and instruction more than at the present time. Parents, now as always, have the privilege to protect and show loving care and to give instruction in righteousness to those in their family whom they love so much.

Parents need to have wisdom, energy, and a desire to fulfill their responsibility and privilege in their home. The wisdom for this is found in God's Word. In prayer we can ask for the energy and desire to complete properly our responsibility and privilege with our children.

We find a pattern in Psa. 78. The first verse says, "Give ear, O My people, to My law: incline your ears to the words of My mouth." It is not just, "Read my lips," but it is clearly stated truth from God to which we are to pay attention. Then it speaks of "a parable" and "dark sayings of old." These are proverbs and much wise instruction found throughout God's Word. In short, we need the Bible! Do you read it? Frequently?

Verse 3 says, "We have heard and known, and our fathers have told us." This is God's way of passing on truth, wisdom and instruction from one generation to another. Where do you and I fit in this chain?

First, no doubt, it is as a child; then after some years as a parent. Later in the chain of privilege and responsibility it is as a grandparent. So in verse 4, "We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord."

Again we ask: "Which is greater in the Christian home, the need of the children or the privilege of the parents?"

Verse 5 says, "He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children." Then more follows: "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children." And it tells us why: "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."

Next in verse 8 we are warned about failure in our human history: "And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God." Our children are exposed to this kind of people in their school life and in the neighborhood around us. Even rebellion is taught and put forth as "a right" that belongs to man.

These last days are perilous times (2 Tim. 3). These things are here: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good."

Without telling you where to find it, but desiring that you will search for it and read more, we put down a few words from the wisest man. He said, "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live."

Ed.

Nearness to Christ

My purpose is to take from the following verses some applications for ourselves that I believe will be helpful to us in the pathway into which the Lord has called us.

Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto
him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath
made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto
me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the
land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto
me, thou, and thy children, and they children's
children, and thy flocks, and thy herds,
and all that thou hast: and there will I
nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine;

lest thou, and thy household, and all that
thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your
eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin,
that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.
And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in
Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye
shall haste and bring down my father hither.
And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck,
and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.
Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept
upon them: and after that his brethren talked
with him. Gen. 45:9-15.

GEN 45:9-15

The first message Joseph sent to Jacob was this: "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt." Then immediately he says, "Come down unto me, tarry not." If we are to live for the Lord's glory in this world, we need to get before our souls the present position of the Lord Jesus Christ-He is our exalted Lord. Apprehending that, everything else falls into perspective. Every provision has been made for us.

Just to know that He is Lord is not enough; God would have our souls drawn to Him. Earlier, in making himself known to his brethren, Joseph had said to them, "Come near unto me" (v. 4). Now the Lord says to us, "Come near to Me." Has the Lord Jesus Christ taken hold of your heart?

Come Near Unto Me

Do you enjoy the fact that God has exalted Him, has raised Him from the dead, set Him at His own right hand, and made Him Lord over all? If that makes your heart rejoice, how easy it will be for you to come near to Him—then you can trust Him in everything!

He is Lord of all! God has committed everything into His hands and He has made every provision for you. You need this provision because there is still a famine in the world, but there is no need to fear because we dwell by Him. We dwell in the land of Goshen, in a good land, and He has made every provision for us.

Joseph says, "And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me" (v. 10). Do you know the delight of being near to the Lord Jesus Christ? This invitation is not just for ourselves, but it is an encouragement to those of us who have families and grandchildren. He says here, "Thou, and thy children, and thy children's children." God wants our households to be blessed.

God has many things to say to us, not only as parents, but as grandparents as well. Grandparents have an important function in communicating the truth of God to their children and grandchildren.

Joseph goes on to include "thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast." Everything that we have is to be brought near to the Lord.

Everything Brought Near

That is the secret of a happy Christian life—to draw near to Him and walk with Him.

"There will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty" (v. 11). I want to be very plain in commenting on this verse. No matter how much you accumulate of this world's goods or how much you provide for your children, you are going to come to poverty unless the Lord nourishes you and your children. But if you walk in dependence on the Lord and near Him, and if you occupy yourself with His position as the Lord of all, realizing that He has purposed to sustain you through the years of famine, you will never come to poverty no matter how little you have. Closeness to Christ is our insurance against spiritual poverty.

Joseph says, "There will I nourish thee," and the Lord will nourish us. We want His nourishment for our souls, for our families and households. God delights to bless households, but this requires us to be near to the Lord Jesus. We must be occupied with His place as Lord of all. All is in His hands, and if we are walking in communion with Him and in subjection to Him, what can we fear for our households?

Think of that wise woman in Prov. 31, that woman of worth who was not afraid of the cold. A godly mother and father are not interested only in making sure their children have an education, money, clothing and things of that nature. It is nice to have them, but if our focus is on these things, we have lost the focus of the Christian life and our treasure in heaven. Our focus is to be upon our Lord in glory. Our goal for our children and grandchildren should be to see them receive a "well-done" from the Lord. We should want this first rather than that they get a prize for some achievement, although that, too, can be for the Lord's glory.

Our Focus Our Goal

I believe every parent that is in communion with the Lord will desire what is of eternal value for their children and grandchildren.

We find a lovely expression in the 13th verse, "Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt." What an occupation! It will produce godliness, happiness and harmony in the assembly—our telling each other of the glory of God's beloved Son. God has such delight in glorifying Him, should not we have delight in speaking of His glory?

In John 20 we learn that Thomas was not present when the Lord first appeared in the midst of His brethren in resurrection. The disciples did not go to Thomas and say, "Thomas, you should have been at meeting! What were you doing?" That would have produced antagonism. We read that they said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" How that speaks to our hearts! I don't know what went on in Thomas's heart, but he was there with them the next Lord's day.

Joseph goes on to speak not only of his glory in Egypt, but also "of all that ye have seen." It is not just doctrine we want to talk about with one another, but what we have taken in and enjoyed. What has power in our hearts is what we have seen and enjoyed. It is one thing to be able to recite a creed that has all the proper words in it about the Lord's present position at the right hand of God, but it is another thing to say, "Oh, I have seen it."

Not Just Doctrine

Sol. 1:4 says, "Draw me, we will run after thee." If the Lord draws your heart and mine after Him, it will have an effect on others, because we will speak of Him and His glory.

What affection there was in Gen. 45:14, 15! "He fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren." It is a precious thing when you feel the Lord's affection for you, when you feel that kiss of love.

The affection between Joseph and his brothers had an effect in Pharaoh's house too. In verse 16 it says, "The fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well." If affection is going out to the Lord Jesus and there is an enjoyment of His love, the fame of it will go out to others also. As Pharaoh's house recognized that these men were Joseph's brethren, so even unbelievers will recognize that we have been with Jesus.

"Regard not your stuff." (v. 20.) That becomes easy once we learn of the glory of God's beloved Son and have laid hold of real riches. But sometimes we contract that spiritual disease of wanting to have this, that and the other thing, and have so much regard for our stuff. Why is that? It is because we have lost sight of heavenly treasure, heavenly riches. "Thyself our treasure in a brighter sphere." The lesson we want to remember is "Regard not your stuff." It has no eternal value; it is all going to be left behind.

It is one thing to hear admonition; it is another thing to heed it. "And the children of Israel did so." I find that to be the hard part in my life, and I'm sure some of you might find it the same. Do we really do what we are exhorted to do? The children of Israel did.

Journey Homeward

"And Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them..." and this is what really touches my heart: "He gave them provision for the way."

God has given us every provision that we need for the pathway. The Lord Jesus Christ provides all the sustenance we need for our journey homeward.

"So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way." Do we need to have this here? Yes, for the Lord knows our hearts. The bane of the Church of God from Pentecost until now has been the quarreling that goes on among those who have every provision made for their pathway. Getting our eyes off the Lord Jesus, we get to quarreling among ourselves and we fall out on the way. This is a tendency in our hearts that the Lord Jesus knows, and so He calls attention to it.

"And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive." What a wonderful thought for our souls. We also have a living Savior! Joseph is a wonderful picture of our living Savior here. "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." Look at Eph. 1:22, "[God] gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body." What a wonderful thought!

"Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." Unbelief. Oh, what a weed it is in our hearts! It is too much for him: "And they told him all the words of Joseph." If there is a fainting heart of unbelief, what is the remedy? It's not arguing or proving things to one another.

Not Arguing

It's just the words that Joseph said to them. "He saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him." Have you seen the wonderful provision the Lord has made to carry you all the way home? When he saw that, "the spirit of Jacob their father revived."

Do you know someone with a faint heart? If you want to encourage that one, tell him the words of Joseph, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Show him the wagons. Let him see a testimony of the Lord who has all the provisions for the pathway. It will cheer and encourage the fainting heart and revive him.

Israel says, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." We are on our way to see Him. That thought should exercise our hearts. It will encourage and revive us.

R. K. Gorgas

Christ the Center

I cannot make Christ the center of my efforts, if He is not the center of my thoughts.

The Need of Instructing Children

We feel deeply for our children growing up in the atmosphere which at present surrounds us, and which will become still darker and darker. We long to see more earnestness on the part of Christians in seeking to store the minds of the young with the precious and soul-saving knowledge of the Word of God.

The child Josiah and the child Timothy (see 2 Chron. 34; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15-17) should incite us to greater diligence in the instruction of the young, whether in the family, in the Sunday school, or in any way we can teach them. It will not do for us to fold our arms and say, "When God's time comes, our children will be converted, and till then our efforts are useless." This is a fatal mistake—God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6. He blesses our prayerful efforts in the instruction of our children.

And further, who can estimate the blessing of being early led in the right way, of having the character formed amid holy influences, and the mind stored with what is true and pure and lovely? On the other hand, who will undertake to set forth the evil consequences of allowing our children to grow up in ignorance of divine things? Who can portray the evils of a polluted imagination, of a mind stored with vanity, folly and falsehood, of a heart familiarized from infancy with scenes of moral degradation? We do not hesitate to say that Christians incur very heavy and awful responsibility in allowing the enemy to preoccupy the minds of their children at the very period when they are most plastic and susceptible.

True, there must be the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. It is as true of the children of Christians as of any other, that they "must be born again." We all understand this. But does this fact touch the question of our responsibility in reference to our children? Is it to cripple our energies or hinder our earnest efforts? Assuredly not. We are called upon by every argument, divine and human, to shield our precious little ones from every evil influence, and to train them in that which is holy and good. And not only should we so act in respect to our own children, but also in respect to the thousands around us who are like sheep having no shepherd, and who may each say, "No man cared for my soul."

May there be an awakening to a sense of our high and holy responsibilities to the souls around, and a shaking off of that terrible deadness and coldness over which we all have to mourn.

C.H. Mackintosh

Great Essential

To enjoy the Lord for what He is in Himself, must ever be the great essential for all true service for Him here.

Care and Caring

Whatever produces a care in us produces God's care for us.

The Need for Brotherly Love

Zechariah 7-8

ZEC 7

ZEC 8

Zechariah prophesied in the days when a remnant returned from captivity to Babylon (Ezra 5:1). Joy blended with sorrow when the temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt (Ezra 3:12,13). Then it appears that the majority of the people fell into an empty formalism.

The day came when a delegation was sent to Zechariah asking him if it were necessary to continue to mourn in the fifth month. It was in the fifth month Nebuchadnezzar had reduced Jerusalem to rubble (2 Kings 25:8). What a sad day it was for her who had been great among the nations (Lam. 1:1). Perhaps the people felt that since a nominal recovery had taken place it was not necessary to grieve over their former sorrows and God's government upon them.

The Lord's words to Zechariah in Zech. 7:5, 6 are most searching: "Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?" (Contrast this with 1 Cor. 10:31.) The fifth month marked the destruction of Jerusalem, while the seventh month marked the assassination of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25:25). The Lord exposed the people's hearts. To ask the question if mourning were necessary was only to show the sorrows were not properly felt nor God's chastening hand regarded. Perhaps these fasts were carried on because it was felt to be appropriate.

How much do we outwardly continue on with today simply because it is deemed suitable, but it is not done as a true response from the heart? A sense of obligation to meet our responsibilities is not sufficient in itself to maintain us in any exercise the Lord may lay upon us. The questions we raise often indicate our spiritual state. The people sought to cover their insensitivity to the Lord's voice in pious expressions.

The message continued. "Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?" Zech. 7:7. The people had disregarded previous prophetic ministry. Perhaps they wanted ministry "for their day," yet their error was in not heeding the words of the earlier prophets. They did not need a new line of teaching, but they needed to follow the teaching God had faithfully given. Some might argue, "But those days were better than today." Just so, and the reason things were not as they once were is indicated in the following verses:

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the

stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as He cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts: but I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate. Zech. 7:9-14.

The face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 1 Peter 3:12.

In a word, the people's sin lay in their attitude and actions to one another, especially to those in need. Is there a tendency to minimize brotherly love in stressing the superior quality of divine love? We should never set one truth against another. Philadelphia means "brotherly love."

When the Lord is given His rightful place in Zion in a coming day, Jerusalem will be characterized by truth and holiness (Zech. 8:3). Compare also Revelation 3:7. The old and young will mingle in happy harmony together (Zech. 8:4-6). As the ministry of the former prophets is heeded, great blessing will result for all Israel (v. 7-17). "For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew." v. 12.

The months that were noted for fasting, the fourth (the month the enemy first entered Jerusalem), the fifth and seventh, will be known by joy and gladness, truth and peace. A positive testimony will be rendered to other nations (vv. 18-23). What blessed results flow from obeying God's Word and giving brotherly love its due place among God's people. We are to value and contend for all truths of Scripture, yet not in a bitter and harsh manner.

God connects His character of judge with the manner in which we serve and with our relations one to another. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. Let brotherly love continue." Heb. 12:28, 29; 13:1. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." James 5:9.

W. Brockmeier

If Need Be

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness." 1 Peter 1:6. What a singular combination! Paul says, "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." 2 Cor. 6:10. You will have noticed that it is not "in heaviness" at one time and "rejoicing" the next, but both blended together. Yes, we have much to mourn over, yet much to rejoice in. There is joy underneath our tears, and sorrow mingled with singing. "For a season, if need be," or, if you need them. By God's grace, there is the qualifying clause. They are only for a season, but, the Apostle says, you need them. Let us not forget that the joy will wax greater till it ends in everlasting joy; the heaviness is only for a season. It will have an end and soon, praise God!

B.F. Smith

Breaking Bread at Troas

The discourse was long and they had not yet broken bread; the weather was hot and there were many lights. Such is human weakness that all this so affected Eutychus that he was overcome with sleep, as Paul was long preaching, and fell down from the third floor where he was sitting by the window. He was taken up dead by the men. (Acts 20:5-12.)

Paul naturally interrupts his discourse, goes down and throws himself on him, declaring that life is still in him. The separation had not yet taken place; he was stunned by the fall and if the power of God had not interposed, he would have been caught in the clutches of death. Life, however, had not yet gone out of the body, and by the Spirit Paul so works on it that the functions of life are restored. The bonds between soul and body are reestablished.

In the case of the child restored to life by Elijah (1 Kings 17:21, 22) the soul had already left the body and returned to it. From these cases, as always elsewhere, we see that the soul is entirely distinct from the body; though in our present state it works by means of the body, yet it is in its habitation. Life in this world is the activity of the soul by means of the functions of the body, the activity of which is restored by sleep, because we are feeble. When the soul leaves the body, the man is definitively dead, but the activity of the soul by the functions of the body may be interrupted, as is partly the case in sleep. This action is reestablished if the soul have not left the body, if God does so or permits it.

In its highest part—the spirit, the soul in relation to God is alas, at enmity against Him! It will not and does not submit to Him.

Spirit, Soul and Body

With its inferior part, it works in the body—marvelous creation! In relations with God above, and with nature below, it is a mixture of creature thoughts which seek to rise to God but cannot. It is responsible to God according to the nature it has originally received from Him. When born of God, it receives a totally new life in which it is in relation with God according to grace and redemption. It is a life animated by the Spirit which it receives from above and which makes of the body an instrument for the service of God. Possessing this life, we know that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I have said this in reference to Eutychus because in these days the simplicity of the truth regarding the soul is lost sight of by many.

Paul then goes up again and having broken bread, talks even till daybreak, comforting much the souls he saw perhaps for the last time. He then departs, leaving Eutychus alive to the joy of the brethren. Paul sends on his companions by ship, and goes himself on foot, desiring to be alone.

For us, this is often a wise thing: to be alone, apart from men, but alone too, with God where we can think of Him. Also where we can think of ourselves before Him, of the work as He sees it, and where in His presence responsibility is felt instead of activity before men. No doubt this activity ought to appear in His presence, because it is holy, but at all events the activity of man is another thing than to place oneself before God, such as He is for us. It is not less true that this communion with Him as His servants, gives and sustains a blessed confidence in Him, an intimacy of soul with Him, full of goodness and of grace.

Paul had instructed his companions to take him in at Assos which they do. From thence they proceed to Mitylene, to Chios and finally to Miletus, half a day from Ephesus. Paul had determined not to stop there, desiring if possible to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. If he had stopped at Ephesus, he must have remained some time, as he had labored there for a long period and with great blessing. He passes on, therefore, sending from Miletus for the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, the center of the work in that region.

It is evident that the Apostle was preoccupied with the circumstances in which he was placed, with the apparent end of his career. This thought, it is probable, exercised an influence over him when he went alone on foot to Assos. Also it was the cause of his long speech at Troas.

J.N. Darby

Having and Wanting

When brought to have nothing but Christ, the soul finds it wants nothing but Him.

“They That Sow in Tears Shall Reap in Joy”

This scripture (Psa. 126:5) is a real encouragement to those who have the privilege of laboring among the young in the Sunday school.

Our labor is sowing the seed, the good seed of the Word of God. We endeavor Sunday after Sunday, rain or shine, to sow the precious seed, and the character of the soil many times causes us exercise, sorrow and disappointment.

In our scripture we get one of those precious "shalls" which so often encourage. It says, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The reaping time shall come. When? We are not told. It may be our privilege to see the seed fall on good ground and bring forth fruit which delights our hearts. But it may be that the seed of the Word will be hidden away for years until God the Holy Spirit recalls it to the mind and applies it to the heart. Even then it can do its work and bear fruit for the eye of God, perhaps and most likely, never to be seen by the sower on this earth.

We sow with a view to the future, knowing the harvest time must come. Surely the reaping time will only be in its fullness when we get home to glory, when the Lord of the harvest comes, bringing His sheaves with Him. What a harvest that will be! What a harvest for the Savior when He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. We shall share His joy as gathered there together around Himself and see those for whom we have watched and prayed with many tears. While each one is filled with rapture at the sight of our blessed Redeemer, how thankful we shall be that we were permitted to be one of His sowers while He waited in patience over this poor sin-stained world.

Shall our children, those who attended our classes, be present in that day? Oh, dear fellow-laborer, be in earnest. Be sure you sow the right seed, the Word of God, which is "quick [living] and powerful," and sow it in tears. The Apostle could say that he served the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears, and he "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." How earnest he was for those among whom he labored. Does not this show that we should speak feelingly, lovingly and earnestly?

Do our children really know that we long for their salvation? Does our message convey the solemnity of refusing the Savior? Are we really sufficiently touched by the love of Jesus ourselves so as to touch others?

May the Lord give us to speak with that earnestness, that ardor and that warning, even with tears, which will reach the hardest hearts in our classes. But before we can do this, let us remember to be in earnest and on our knees before the Lord for each dear child. The Lord alone knows the burden on our heart and sees the tears as we plead for His blessing on the seed sown, without which our efforts are in vain. The Lord who put the desire in our hearts will assuredly bless His Word in His own time and way according to His precious promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Jonathan

1 Samuel 18:1-4

1SA 18:1-4

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

What an exquisite picture we have here! It is a picture of love stripping itself to clothe its object. There is a vast difference between Saul and Jonathan in this scene. Saul took David home with him in order to magnify himself by keeping such a one about his person and in his own house. But Jonathan stripped himself to clothe David. This was love in one of its charming activities.

Jonathan, in common with the many thousands of Israel, had watched with breathless interest what took place in the valley of Elah. He saw David go forth single-handed to meet the terrible foe whose height, demeanor, and words had struck terror into the hearts of the people. He saw that haughty giant laid low by the hand of faith. He participated with all in the splendid victory.

But Jonathan saw more than this. He saw not merely the victory, but the victor and that filled his heart. Jonathan did not rest satisfied with saying, "Thank God, the giant is dead and we are delivered and may return to our homes and enjoy ourselves." Oh no; he felt his heart drawn and knit to the person of the conqueror. He did not value the victory less, but he valued the victor more. He found his joy in stripping himself of his robes and his armor in order to put them on the object of his affection.

For us Jonathan provides not only a lesson, but a rebuke. How prone we are to be occupied with redemption rather than the Redeemer—with salvation rather than with the Savior! No doubt we should rejoice in our salvation, but should we rest here? Should we not, like Jonathan, seek to strip ourselves in order to magnify the Person of Him who went down into the dust of death for us? We should and all the more because He does not exact anything of us.

David did not ask Jonathan for his robe or his sword. Had he done so, it would have robbed the scene of all its charm. It was a purely voluntary act. Jonathan forgot himself and thought only of David. So it should be with us and the true David. Love delights to strip itself for its object. "The love of Christ constraineth us." And again, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Phil. 3:7, 8.

Oh, for more of this spirit! May our hearts be drawn out and knit more and more to Christ in this day of hollow profession, and empty, religious formality! May we be so filled with the Holy Spirit that with purpose of heart we may cleave unto our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Things New and Old

Sin in the Flesh

Someone asked, What is the flesh? What is there more in man than body, soul and spirit? The Apostle tells Christians to whom he is writing, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23. The reply given was that Adam before the fall had body, soul and spirit, but that after the fall there was in him, in addition, a will in rebellion against God—sin (that which the Word of God calls "the flesh"), something which "lusteth [or struggleth] against the Spirit" in the man in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8.) It is certain that there are few words more frequently employed in the Word of God than "the flesh," and no subject more often and carefully treated, bound up as it is with the whole doctrine of the "new man."

J.N. Darby

Righteousness and Peace

It is only God Himself who could bring home a banished one, or provide salvation for a sinner, for to accomplish this, there must be a ransom, a price adequate to the redemption. God alone could furnish that. All the angels in heaven would fail in the attempt: an eternal value must be paid for an offense against God. God alone can yield an offering which shall carry infinite value in it, such as sin demands. Power cannot supply it; love cannot supply it; it is God Himself, whose person has infinite value, that alone can supply it. Power once attempted this, and failed awfully. David on the throne of Israel undertook, by a simple word or decree of power such as his throne carried, to bring back a banished one. But this ended in greater mischief, and the throne that had attempted this was, as it were, forfeited by the act.

God has, however, done it-because He can sprinkle blood on the throne, such as the throne can accept. He can and has allied righteousness with peace in this great matter, and His banished are brought home under sure and clear title to see His face and to walk in His presence. His own throne is not only guiltless but glorified. New powers array it. Mercy and truth with their several glories, and they too in their brightest shining, adorn it; they have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Bible Challenger-09-September V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form one of the words used in the comparison of the greatness of our God acting in our lives to our own limited powers of even thinking such thoughts.

1. Some things an Apostle suffered in making known his love by letter to his converts.
2. One of the places where a forewarned monarch found, not rest and respite, but a multitude of loathsome creatures.
3. A class of people that is promised pardon by forsaking their condemning thoughts.
4. One of the tribes of Israel that contributed to the joy of proclaiming a new king by bringing rich provisions.
5. One of three things we might very well expect a thief to do.
6. The stated limitation of the reproductive process of living creatures as decreed by the Creator.
7. What the chief of sinners said the grace of God bestowed on him was.
8. Certain dwelling places allowed to prosper in seeming conflict with God's holy nature.
9. The plaintive lament by one who gladly spent more and more of himself to show forth pastoral love.
10. A father's description of his son who was soon to begin a grandiose building project.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-08-August Answers V.05

1. Excellent way 1 Cor. 12:31
2. All good conscience before God Acts 23:1
3. Rejoiced the more 2 Cor. 7:7
4. Needful for me to write... and exhort Jude 3
5. Eliashib Neh. 3:20
6. Shadow (of a sun dial) Job 7:2
7. This man was also with Him Luke 22:56
8. Look ye so earnestly Acts 3:12
9. Yearly sacrifice 1 Sam. 20:6

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed EARNESTLY that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." James 5:17.

True Confidence

We need confidence to have courage to obey, but true confidence is found in the path of obedience.

Homeward Bound

He who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21) also controls the destinies of democracies. He allows the winds of public opinion to blow one way or another, to the end that what He has determined shall be done.

Our acquaintance beforehand with the final result of the world's politics, our being fully persuaded that our Father's will is being done now, and the conscious knowledge of our portion in a better sphere, should keep us tranquil and composed no matter what happens in this or any other country. We who have been informed of "things not seen as yet" should not only be submissive to the will of God in such matters, but really have no will of our own whatever, no more than an angel would have who was sent from heaven into the world on a certain mission. But Christians are constantly in danger of forgetting that they are not of this world, even as He is not of it.

When the Lord Jesus was here, politics were bad, but He did not lift a finger or utter a word to change them. When the Apostle Paul labored here, they were still worse, but not once did he express a wish to change things, or give instructions to Christians to help do so, or even to pray that it might be changed. In the days of the ruthless and capricious tyrant Nero, Paul wrote of the emperor's agents that they were the ministers of God for good (Rom. 13:4). We are exhorted to "fear God. Honor the king," to "obey magistrates" and the "powers that be," while we pass through this world. And while doing so we can sing: We are but strangers here, Heaven is our home.

P. Wilson

Editorial

Among the Jews who are trying to make aliyah (return to their homeland) is a group that the Supreme Court of Israel refuses to allow entry into their land. The High Court of Justice ruled unanimously against them on December 25 of last year. They are called "The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America," and "The International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues." The court held that Jews who believe in Jesus are "members of a different faith" and so have left the Jewish people.

These Messianic Jews believe the Scriptures teach that God brought eternal atonement for sin to Jews and to all the nations through the sacrificial death of Yeshua the Messiah, the Passover Lamb of God. Also, they hold that God then removed the temple and the sacrificial systems because it was His will.

In effect, the Supreme Court's ruling is that the Messianic Jews' faith in Yeshua of Nazareth renders them non-Jewish. It is estimated that the Messianic Jews number about 100,000.

Besides these current events being intensely interesting, there are two things that especially impress us. First, it is that the hatred of the Jewish nation is just the same today as it was 2000 years ago when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

The second thing is more puzzling to understand. It is this: if these Messianic Jews truly believe in Jesus of Nazareth, they should not want to return to Israel. A full understanding of the Scriptures would show them that believing in Jesus as Christ and Lord makes them a heavenly people with heavenly blessings. Also, the light of prophecy would show that Jews who do not truly believe, and who are gathering in Israel now, will be left there after the Church is caught up to heaven, and then follows the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:47). This will be the seven years of tribulation of which Jesus said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Matt. 24:22.

Peter preached Jesus of Nazareth to the "men of Israel" in the second of Acts saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

By baptism, the Jews of that day disconnected themselves from the Jewish nation and their guilt in crucifying their Messiah and so were saved from the sentence, pronounced by God, of national judgment yet to fall upon them. Again we state that this is the tribulation. The time of the execution of that sentence is drawing near. The fig tree is tender (Matt. 24:32-35), a national symbol of Israel. The "children" are back in the land. We refer to the people who answered Pilate, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. 27:25.

Ed.

Questions and Answers

QUES. "If thou be the CHRIST"—who is the Christ to the Jewish mind? (John 10:24.)

ANS. The Jews to whom Jesus was talking in this 10th chapter of John were not ignorant of the Old Testament, but rather, they knew of the coming of Messiah—Anointed—Christ (Dan. 9:25, 26). Even the woman of Samaria knew that (John 4:25).

QUES. In John 10:30 Jesus said, "I and My Father are one." Why did the Jews in verse 33 call His statement blasphemy?

ANS. Although the Jews should have known that Jesus was their Messiah and received Him as God manifest in the flesh, the Lord's Prayer for them as He hung on the cross shows that they did not. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

The Source of All Good

God is the Source of all good. Every blessing we enjoy comes down from Him. He is the Father of lights, who is unchanging in His love and grace, and in whose dealings with us there is "no shadow of turning." His face is ever towards us.

The Feast of Trumpets

The Church period, in a figurative sense, comes between the feast of Pentecost and the feast of trumpets. During this period, from 7th Sivan to the end of the three months, Tammuz, Ab, and Elul, there is no feast to Jehovah.

The Israeli year begins on 1st Tisri (Sept.-Oct.), at the time of the feast of trumpets. However, the feast cannot be celebrated as prescribed until there are priests with Urim and Thummim.

At the present time the feast is called Rosh Hashana and is celebrated as a two-day holiday. (The two-day celebration is probably based on Lev. 23:32.) During the two days, according to tradition, the Heavenly Court decides all that is to happen to all beings during the coming year.

From 1949 to 1999 there are fifteen possible convocations which fall on a Sabbath in 1st Tisri. For the purpose of these remarks, the last four are shown as follows:

1986 Sat., Oct. 4 and Sun., Oct. 5

1989 Sat., Sept. 30 and Sun., Oct. 1

1996 Sat., Sept. 14 and Sun., Sept. 15

1999 Sat., Sept. 11 and Sun., Sept. 12

Seven inclusive years deducted from 1996 is 1990, and seven from 1999 is the year 1993.

Mayor Teddy Kollek points out that 1996 will be the 3000th anniversary of King David's making Jerusalem the Jewish capital.

"And here we are," he said, "while so many others have disappeared in three millennia. How are we to account for it?" "What will be relevant in the 21st century?" Israel is already starting to ask.

Now starts the 21st century, argues the Israeli philosopher Yirmiyahu Yovel. The 20th century was not only brutish but short. It started in 1914, with the conflict President Woodrow Wilson called "the war to end all wars."

It ends, Yovel claims with some intellectual justification, in 1989. This year, the most heavily armed parts of the world learned that force is not strength.

W. Bothwell

The Peace of God

The presence of God settles everything, even in everyday life. We have cares, and when we take them to God, they are changed in a moment. You never come out of God's presence with the same perspective as you had when you went in. You see things in their true character.

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6, 7.

Responsibility and Election

Responsibility and election are two lines of truth which run side by side in the Word of God. To our natural minds it may seem that one is not in accord with the other, but we must remember that we are finite in our understanding while God is infinite. Our minds are at peace in these matters when we bow to God's revelation and accept the truth of His Word. In Isa. 55:8, 9 we read, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." With the Lord's help may we seek to learn about God's thoughts and ways as revealed in His Word, and we will see how consistent they are, for as Prov. 8:9 says, "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."

Back in a past eternity God had His purposes, as we read in Eph. 3:11, "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here we can see that God's purpose came before man's responsibility, for God would not be God if He did not know the future (Acts 15:18). He made this world to be the platform to accomplish and display His purposes (Prov. 8:22-36), and He placed a man and a woman here, and put them in a place of responsibility. We know the story of Adam and Eve and of how they chose to disobey God, and so in responsibility all was spoiled. Was God to be frustrated in His purposes? Never! So He acts in grace, and clothes Adam and Eve in coats of skin. God made the coats of skin through the death of a substitute, for an animal must die. This was God's sovereign grace to them, not because they deserved His gracious provision, but because He is love as well as light.

Adam and Eve

He cannot pass over sin, and so, though they must be driven out of the garden, they go out clothed through the death of a substitute which had died in their stead. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22.

As we read on in God's Word we find this wonderful grace of God acting according to His own sovereign choice, and reaching out to man through the sacrifices of Abel and Noah. Abram is called out from idolatry, and Jacob is chosen instead of Esau. Judah was chosen to be the tribe from which Christ would be born. Each of these men we have mentioned was responsible, and each failed, but they were chosen and blessed according to God's plan. It is not for us to question God's way, for "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. 9:20. Again in Job 33:12, 13, "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters." Our peace and blessing are in accepting His grace and goodness provided for us through the work of redemption, accomplished on the cross of Calvary by His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's character is unchanging. He is light as well as love. He must punish sin, but He delights in mercy. He offers salvation to all, but when all refuse (for left to ourselves we would all refuse), then He acts according to His sovereign choice. There is no one who is elected to be lost, for God's salvation is offered to all, to "whosoever will," but if a sinner refuses God's offer of pardon, he will have to meet God as a Judge, and he, as a responsible person, will be judged for his sins and for his own decision to reject Christ.

Light and Love

But can we who are saved boast that we are better, or that we are more wise than others, or that of our own free wills we accepted Christ and God's offer of pardon? No! Here sovereignty and election come in. We were "chosen... in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), and so we cannot glory in ourselves or in our good choice, but "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:31. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. Again we read, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." John 6:44. There had to be a work of God in us by the Holy Spirit, as well as a work of God for us through the redemptive sacrifice of the Lord Jesus at Calvary, or we would never have been saved. This does not set aside or change man's responsibility, but it is when all has failed in our responsibility that God steps in with His sovereign choice for blessing. God created men and women as responsible beings, and it is sad when they blame God for the choice they make to go on in their sins and reject His goodness. If they would only come, He says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

Some may say that they will wait to see if they are elected to be saved, but if they will come as sinners, they will receive a welcome and a pardon through the precious blood of Christ. Then they will know that they were chosen, elected and predestinated for blessing. If they refuse, they will decide their own case, for they, as responsible people, have refused God's pardon.

Sad when they Blame God

God who knows all beforehand, knows where you will be tomorrow, but as a responsible person you must use the means He has provided for your life day by day, and how much more should you avail yourself of His wonderful provision for your soul's salvation. "Be not faithless, but believing." John 20:27.

It is remarkable how consistent the Scriptures are in connection with the work of Christ on the cross in this matter. We read that Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:15), and that He gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6). He is the propitiation (mercy seat) for the whole world (1 John 2:2), but the Bible never says that He bore the sins of all. It says He bore the sins of "many" (Isa. 53:12; Heb. 9:28). If He had borne the sins of all, no one would be in hell, for God is righteous, and if the sinner's debt of sin were paid by the Lord Jesus, God would not require a second payment. Here the truth of election and responsibility come together. God would not be God if He did not know the future, nor could we rely upon the prophetic Scriptures.

But the Scripture says He died for all. No sinner will be sent to hell because he was born in sin (Psa. 51:5), for the blood of Christ is on the "mercy seat" and the way of access into the presence of God has been provided for every man and woman, for God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. If a person refuses the way of access that has been provided, then he must be punished for his sins, for Christ did not bear them. If a baby or child dies before it can make its own decision, then he or she comes into the blessing of the Father's will, for "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. 18:14.

To Seek and to Save

Christ's death was necessary to save that little one, for He came not only "to seek and to save" (the adults, see Luke 19:10), but also to save these little ones who had not gone astray by their own wills (Matt. 18:11). His death and blood-shedding opened up the way of blessing for all who would not refuse His pardon.

Now it is important to see that the Lord must have ALL the glory, and so it is not only His sovereign will that draws us to Himself, but also that keeps us in His hands, for "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:28. It is true that we, as believers, are responsible to read His Word and keep near to Him, but it is His power that preserves us, and will bring us safely home to glory. So we read of our responsibility in Phil. 2:12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and then in the next verse, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Would any Christian want to take the credit to himself that, after God had chosen him and saved him by sovereign grace, then from that point on it depended on his own faithfulness? We are most surely responsible to live to please the Lord Jesus, but here again we have the sovereign goodness of God that works this in us. Both go together in the Word of God, and one is never out of harmony with the other. Would any devoted Christian take credit for his own faithfulness, or would he not, while feeling his responsibility, say that he just praised the Lord for putting right desires in his heart and giving him the power to please Him? Even at the judgment seat of Christ when the Lord rewards any faithfulness to Him, we will cast our crowns at His feet saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power." Rev. 4:11.

There is, of course, the government of God in our lives as believers for self-will, and God our Father may have to chasten us in love for our profit (Heb. 12:10).

Present and Eternal Consequences

His sovereign love to us is unchanging, but privilege brings responsibility, so that, even though saved by grace, every act in our lives has its present as well as its eternal consequences in loss or gain

(1 Cor. 3:14, 15). While all our sins were borne by the Lord Jesus on the cross and will never be charged against us in judgment, they will surely be accounted "loss" in the day of manifestation if, as believers, we have lived unto ourselves and not unto Him. We were chosen for blessing, but here again responsibility comes in, for they run together in our lives even as believers.

As to the preaching of the gospel, since the message of salvation and pardon is to all, we are responsible to proclaim it to all. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20. Only God knows who are the elect, but He wants all to know of His love and His willingness to pardon.

The sweetness of God's love is to be made known to all, even if it is refused by many, so Paul could say, "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

Responsible People

2 Cor. 2:15, 16. In Acts 13 God's servants preached the Word, and those who refused it are said to judge themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." Acts 13:46.

They, as responsible people, refused God's offer of salvation, and then God acted in sovereignty and "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. This did not hinder the apostles from continuing to preach (verse 49) and as they "so spake" the gospel in love, God granted His blessing, and "a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." Acts 14:1.

One feels that the knowledge of these things, both as to salvation and as to our walk as believers, is very important. The truth of God always exalts and honors the Lord Jesus Christ, as we read in John 16:13,14, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.... He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Man's thoughts always bring some glory to himself, even in the things of God, but as we learn the truth of God we see that, while leaving man fully responsible, it gives all the glory to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. "According as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:31. "That no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:29. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:36.

G. H. Hayhoe

Eternal Life

How is eternal life obtained? We are told, by law-keeping. I deny that. A law was not given which could give life; Christ had, or rather was, eternal life before He kept law. Eternal life is not obtained by law-keeping. What does the Scripture say? The subject is one of deep importance. Justification being one aspect of salvation, the other part of it, so to speak, is eternal life.

The direct doctrine of Scripture is as plain as possible; that I shall state. The Jews had connected it with the law, as they had righteousness. This connection will require more attention than the simple truth itself. The Lord, while presenting Himself to their responsibility during His lifetime, speaks in a guarded way upon it. Once rejected (and He is so viewed all through the gospel of John), all is distinct and simple. The notion of our getting life by His law-keeping is not only not found in Scripture, but is contrary to every idea the gospel gives of it.

Let us first state from Scripture the simple truth on the subject. The simplest, fullest, and most direct statements of what eternal life is are to be found, perhaps, in 1 John (the main object of the whole epistle being to show what that life is). "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" 1 John 1:1,2. Here we have eternal life, first with the Father, but manifested in the Person of Christ.

So in the last chapter: "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." He is the true God, and eternal life. This, then, is most definite and distinct. The life is in the Son; He is eternal life. So in the gospel of John: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1:4. "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. He is a life-giving Spirit; He quickens whom He will.

All this is plain; life is in the Son, or He is life. He has it in His Person; He communicates it. It is given of God, not won. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. "I," says Christ concerning His sheep, "am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

We may now see how it is obtained. It is the Spirit working by the Word. We are born of the Spirit, and, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." James 1:18. Hence John 5:24, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." So Paul's witness was "the savor of life unto life," or "of death unto death." The form or character of this is resurrection.

Election

There is much strength and blessing to the soul from the doctrine of election, but perhaps not that character of blessing which is commonly understood to flow from it. For it is commonly resorted to by a saint when he trespasses. That is not, I believe, the use which the Holy Spirit makes of it for our souls in Scripture.

If the saint sin, he has an Advocate. The blood and intercession of Christ are for the need of his soul then: if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive. It is not, therefore, the remembrance of the doctrine of election, but it is confession—the remembrance of Jesus in heaven, which meets the need of the conscience.

The truth of the divine foreknowledge of us, of God's having elected us personally and predestinated us to a most blessed destiny, is rather for the saint as he walks in uninterrupted grace before God. It is for the joy of his heart rather than for the peace of his conscience. It is for the putting of very boastful and triumphant language into his soul, by teaching him what anxious and everlasting interest God has had in all that concerns him. For it tells us that we were the subject of the divine counsels—when God was all alone—before the foundation of the world; before the activities of creation began, we were before His thoughts. And this is the witness of our deep interest in Him. It is always so. It is always the mark of special favor. The doctrine of election and predestination puts us in that place of favor with God.

We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and were then predestinated to the adoption of children by Him. It was simply according to His own good pleasure, or to His purpose taken in Himself, or hid in God from the beginning (Eph. 1).

We are the called according to His purpose, or as the fruit of His foreknowledge and predestinated purposes (Rom. 8:28).

His grace was given us in Christ before the world began, though it is only now made manifest (2 Tim. 1:9).

He promised us eternal life before the world began, but did not manifest that word of promise till due time to ourselves (Titus 1:2, 3).

He is shown as the lamb slain for us and foreordained before the foundation of the world, though not manifested till these last times (1 Peter 1:20).

In all these ways, ourselves and our glorious and happy destiny, we have been the subject of the counsels of God when He was in the simple solitude of His own mind and affection. He wants us to have joy in knowing how near our interests have been brought to Him, and from what deep sources our blessings have gushed forth.

We have some expressions of this order of things in Scripture. When the Lord smelled the savor of Noah's sacrifice, He said in His heart that He would not again curse the ground. But that was just

His own purpose and grace. It was then the secret of His own bosom. In due time, however, He made His purpose and grace known to Noah, and then Noah took the blessing in a way of peculiar sweetness. He took it as coming forth from the deep, well-advised and thoroughly approved counsels and affections of the heart of the Lord Himself (Gen. 8, 9).

So it was afterward in Jacob and the sons of Joseph; he adopted them before he saw them. He gave them the place of the firstborn in the family while as yet he had not looked on them, for his eyes were dim for age. All the desire of his heart had been toward them while they were personally not manifested. When the blessing does come, it comes with all its value. The warmth of Jacob's heart and tongue came with it. It is sealed and doubly sealed before Ephraim and Manasseh enjoy it, so that they may know that their adoption had been the delightful theme of the father's counsel and promise. It had been the subject of his thoughts and affections before it is manifested to them.

Thus, surely does the doctrine of election set the saint down in rich and happy pastures. The sinner need not think of it; it is not for him. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is at his door as it were, telling of redemption.

His purpose and His course He takes,

Treads all my reasonings down,

Commands my thoughts forth from their depths

And hides me in His own.

J.G. Bellett

Seven Aspects of the Eternal Purpose

1. The Father of glory should have children. 1 John 3:1, 2.
2. Christ should have a bride. John 17:6, 9, 11; Heb. 2:13.
3. God's light (Old Testament) and love (1 John 4:9) should be manifested.
4. God should be glorified in Christ. John 17:4.
5. All things should be gathered together in Christ. Eph. 1:10.
6. We should be to the praise of His glory. Eph. 1:11, 12.
7. All things should be subdued unto Christ. 1 Cor. 15:28.

A. Maurer

Please Add Up

"How much has God done for you?"

"When did His purpose of doing you good begin?"

"How many mercies have followed you all the days of your life?"

"When will they stop?"

God's Purpose and Rest

In the revealed purposes and counsels of God we can look into a scene which reminds us of a family at home. We can see the Father's joy in His children, and the children's joy in their Father and in the Son in whom all is made known and bestowed. The Father will have His eternal delight and joy in His children, and in His house. Christ has His own eternal and peculiar delight and joy in the Church. These two truths are brought before us in Eph. 1.

THE FIRST line of blessing brought out is that of the Father and the children, "That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." God, in His eternal purpose, purposed for Himself and His own delight, a family, and marked us out in Christ for the adoption of sonship.

THE SECOND we find at the end of the same chapter, "And gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all," that is, the Church.

"Christ also loved the church" refers to eternity, when the Church was given to Christ in His own eternal counsels. This was when He loved us. When He gave Himself for it was not in eternity, but was in the past. The loving and the giving are both in the past. What is the present? "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" is the present. What is the future? "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

The Father and the Family—

Christ and the Church

What a wonderful thing it is to see these two truths, the Father and the family, and Christ and the Church. We enjoy the Father's love and delight in the children, and Christ's love and delight in the Church. When the Father has His children according to His purpose all will be complete. How long will that last? It will last forever and forever. All had its origin, not in time, but in eternity. All had its origin in the love and wisdom of God.

The Church of God is His dwelling-place. In Ephesians 2:22 it is, "Builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Then in Rev. 21:3, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The Church's relationship to God is the house character and His dwelling-place; with Christ it is His body. These are two distinct lines of truth. One is relationship to God, the other to Christ.

Attributes of God—Character of God

When God rests again, He won't rest in the works and fruits of His creative power. He will rest in the fruits of redemption, a redeemed creation. It is evident His joy will be very much more full in a redeemed creation, for mere creation only tells of the power and goodness of God. But redemption tells of His love and the holiness of His righteousness. In short, it tells of His character. In creation we might say that we see the attributes of God, but in redemption we see Himself, His whole character and being—what He is in Himself. It is in this that God will rest eternally.

In Lev. 23, God has told us in what He was engaged. Those feasts begin with rest and creation; they end in the fruits of redemption—a new creation—the eighth day. They began with the Sabbath. Because the Sabbath was broken, God began again. How did He begin? He began with the Passover, and that is redemption. All that comes between, until the seventh feast with its eighth day, are the ways of God.

W. Potter

The Spirit of Obedience

The wisdom of God is far superior to man's, and a little boy or girl, however young, can be kept from all the evil that is in the world on the simple principle of subjection and obedience to the Word of God. You don't need to know all the evil that is in the world. You don't need to plan against some clever enemy. You just walk in obedience to the Word of God, and I am sure you are going to be kept, no matter how dark the day, no matter how difficult the path. There is just one simple principle that will keep you faithful to the end; that is, the spirit of obedience.

H.E. Hayhoe

Forming Character

We may remember our condition as sinners, but we are to enjoy our condition as saved (Eph. 2). We may remember condemnation now, as in glory we shall remember the toil and contradictions of the pilgrimage. But salvation is to be our subject now just as glory will be then.

Booths were made in the feast of tabernacles, but they were only remembrances in order to enhance present joy in the fruitful land, and in their cities and villages. That their father had been a Syrian, ready to perish, is to be remembered by the Israelite worshipping in the midst of his inheritance, but his basket of first fruits is to be his object (Deut. 26).

So it is in Neh. 8. The law rightly caused the people to mourn, but the day was the first day of the seventh month, a day of blowing of trumpets. Mourning under the law must give place to joy in the Lord and form the character of the people.

ADAM: What formed Adam's character as we see him and his company in Gen. 4? It was the redemption he had learned. He is happy in God there and a stranger on the earth.

NOAH: What formed Noah's character in the ark? The redemption he was then proving. He was not handling the gopher boards of his house to see whether they were doing their duty by keeping him safe, but opening the window in expectation of the new world.

ISRAEL: What formed Israel's character in that paschal night in Egypt? They were feeding on the Lamb whose blood at that moment was sheltering them. They were not anxiously inspecting the scene of judgment outside to see if the Angel had passed by.

MOSES: What gave Moses a character when he was in the Mount with God? He had quaked and feared at the foot of the hill, but all that is laid aside and left behind. With unveiled face he is in the presence of God, having been introduced to Christ in the shadows of good things to come.

THE BELIEVER: What is to give the believer his experience and form his character? Salvation: the consciousness and certainty of being pardoned and accepted will form the believer's character. The joy of the Lord is to be his strength. He is to know himself as brought near by the blood of Christ, though remembering that he was a Gentile, a sinner uncircumcised, far off, without God and without hope, a child of wrath even as others.

NEHEMIAH: In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah He teaches the congregation of Israel that the joy of the Lord is to be their strength. The law had caused them to mourn, but the day which brought them together was the feast of trumpets. Their experience and their character were to be formed by that day, not by the law. They were to rejoice themselves, and with largeness of heart seek to make others as happy as themselves. How very full of blessing this is.

God is now to be apprehended by us in grace; we are to know Him as love, and find our dwelling-place in Him. The law may have taught us to deal with Him as righteous and think of Him as a judge. The gospel teaches us to know Him in grace and gives us communion with Him as our

Savior.

As the gospel prevails over the law in this dispensation, so is it to prevail in our experiences. Many of us are feeble, hindered by nature and by Satan. The Lord will surely comfort the feeble-minded and support the weak. But we must recognize that this is His way and that it ought to be our way.

Words of Truth

Bible Challenger-10-October V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the inclusive word denoting all individuals who are destined to engage in the remembrance of the Lord.

1. The divine response to those having error in their hearts.
2. An apt description of those that were barred from even seeing the good land of promise.
3. A time frame to be much observed for a memorable out-bringing.
4. A single word denoting the invariability ascribed to the truth of the Lord.
5. A quality observed in one man which led to the preservation of eight souls.
6. One of two words Jesus used to describe the people who desired something to see.
7. Figurative weapons, easily concealed, that some have used to destroy the poor and needy.
8. That which the high priest burned at the time of lamp-lighting.
9. A quantity of manna that did not spoil though kept much longer than some that did spoil.
10. The holy entity in which those who have been called out of darkness are now viewed.
11. Something great which a great king attributed to the most high God.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-09-September Answers V.05

Affliction and anguish of heart 2 Cor. 2:4

Bedchamber Ex. 8:3

Unrighteous Isa. 55:7

Naphtali 1 Chron. 12:40

Destroy John 10:10

After their kind Gen. 1:21

Not in vain 1 Cor. 15:10

Tabernacles of robbers Job 12:6

Less I be loved 2 Cor. 12:15

Young and tender 1 Chron. 22:5

"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." Eph. 3:20.

God's Counsels and Man's Responsibility

The counsel and foreknowledge of God do not lessen the responsibility of men, though shallow minds may be disposed to think so. And God can, if He please, make the devices of evil men work out His ways although He never originates the evil, for that would make Him the author of it. Israel's history illustrates these points.

Long before Isaac was born, God told Abraham that his seed should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and that they would be oppressed four hundred years. Their stay in Egypt, therefore, was foreseen. In time, the brethren of Joseph conspired against him, and he was sold as a slave and carried down to Egypt. Later Jacob and the rest followed him there. Thus, by their hateful devices they helped to fulfill that which had been foreseen and foretold. But did that excuse their evil deed? Not at all. God's hand was not in their wickedness, though He made it sub-serve His ends—a very different thing.

So it was with putting to death the Lord Jesus. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, but this did not make those who crucified Him less responsible. God certainly did not move their hearts to do this; the devil did. But He made Satan's malice and man's hatred to work out His counsel, thus showing His wisdom, while leaving them wholly responsible for their deeds.

The Prodigal

Luke 15 LUK 15

It is God's right and privilege to come amidst sin and sinners, to come near to sinners. This may not suit a moral man, but it suits God because He and He only can deliver out of sin. The picture of the prodigal in Luke 15 is drawn to show that nothing save death can put the sinner beyond the reach of grace.

We see the prodigal doing his own will, and this is the secret of all sin: And notice, whether we are living in vice or not, we all at some time or another have turned our back on God. This is our history as men.

Parents understand how the prodigal's father felt. Our child sins against us and we feel it. Yet we sin against God and do not feel it, nor do we care about the fact that if we do not feel it, God does.

Any person who lives beyond his means looks rich for a time. And the sinner wasting his soul seems happy, but not for long, for liberty of will is just slavery to the devil, and the devil is a hard taskmaster.

"No man gave unto him." There is no giving in the far country, not even of "husks." Satan sells all, and dearly. Our souls are the price. Satan sells everything.

Would you find a giver? Then you must come to God. Necessity finds God out.

Editorial

This month's Christian Treasury features Luke's gospel. In January, Matthew was the subject and in April it was Mark. It's delightful for the Christian to view these wonderful word-pictures of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Scholars admire Luke for his classic and flexible Greek. This also carries over beautifully into our language. The reader will discern quickly the wisdom of the Spirit of God in using Luke as the penman to write about Jesus as the Son of man.

The Gospel of Luke and its sequel, Acts, are unique in that they are books of important historical events. Yet, even though Luke took part in many of these, he never once alludes to himself. The only way he allows us to hear of his presence is where he changes the pronoun occasionally from "they" to "we," as in Acts 16:8 and 11, etc. Such modesty is surely a fitting example for us as Christians today. We should always seek to exalt Christ and at the same time hide ourselves.

Paul speaks of Luke as the beloved physician. Though he belonged to an honorable profession, it was not in those days an honored one. Under Roman rule those who sought to cure were assigned to a low place, but those whose mission it was to kill were given high honors.

One commendation for Luke, personally, that we must not overlook is in the last chapter that Paul wrote where he says, "Only Luke is with me." These are indeed affecting words. Paul was about to be offered up and surely he deeply appreciated Luke's presence with him.

This third Gospel is distinguished by its display of God's grace to man. What characterizes Luke's account of our Lord is that he presents to us Christ Himself, and not His official glory as Matthew does. It is Himself as He was a man upon the earth, moving among men day by day. Christ's genealogy here does not stop with Abraham as in Matthew, but goes all the way back to Adam.

Luke had an exact and intimate knowledge of all from the beginning and he found it good to write in order to Theophilus, that he might know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed. In this way God has provided for the whole Church by the teaching contained in this living picture of Jesus. Now you and I owe much to this man of God for what we can learn and understand about Jesus, the Man who is God.

"That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" were some of the words spoken by Simeon to Mary (Luke 2:35). As we trace our Lord Jesus through this Gospel we can see that He did reveal hearts.

Another special thing to notice is what the hearers said when Jesus read from Isa. 61 in the synagogue at Nazareth. "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Luke 4:22.

Ed.

The Lord Jesus at Prayer

Several scriptures in the Gospel of Luke bring before us the Lord Jesus as a perfect, dependent Man in prayer. We shall consider these prayers.

"Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." Luke 3:21, 22. Here the Lord had just identified Himself with the few godly Jews who acknowledged the need of repentance for the remission of sins, whether for themselves or the nation at large. Our Lord, of course, had no sins to confess, but as a godly Jew would identify Himself with these as being on the right ground. Then as He prayed, there came this direct voice from heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."

We know that the Lord was the "only begotten Son" and none other can enter that place, but He has brought us into the position of sons before the Father. As we are in dependence and prayer before God, we enter more into the fullness of the place we have through His grace.

"He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." Luke 5:16. This was after the Lord had healed the leper. This is an example of prayer in connection with service. The service the Lord had for the poor leper, and in testimony to the people, was perfect. But He did not leave it there; He went to God in prayer about it. This is a voice to us. After any little service we are able to do for Him, feeble and weak as it is, do we go aside to ask His blessing upon it? All the blessing on it must come from Him.

"He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6:12. This was before He chose His disciples. He well knew all of them would often fail to enter into His thoughts and that of one of them (Judas Iscariot) He would later say, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Who can tell what it cost the holy One, the Lord Jesus, to be in association with that man during His public ministry here, well knowing what would be the end of his path.

He was in prayer with His Father all night before choosing those with whom He would be associated. The lesson for us in this is prayer in connection with our associates. The Christian is not left here to be alone. Acts speaks of "their own company" and how happy we can be to find those with whom we can walk here as with the Lord and before Him. We need to be in communion with the Father as to those with whom we are associated.

"And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering." Luke 9:29. This well-known incident of our Lord's transfiguration is recorded in three of the gospels, but it is only in Luke that we are told it was "as He prayed." We know, of course, that the Lord is seen here in His own glory, but the day is coming when we "shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Even now, if we want to be more like Him here, the way to achieve that is to be in prayer and dependence upon God day by day. The more we are in secret communion with the Father, the more we shall be like Christ and have power to represent Him here.

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:2.

"One of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1. This also was "as He was praying in a certain place." It may have been that seeing the Lord engaged in prayer touched their consciences and awakened a desire in them also to pray, hence their request. And so the Lord gave them a prayer perfectly suited to their condition at that time. While commonly called the Lord's Prayer, it cannot be the expression of the Lord's own heart, nor is it in accord with the full Christian position. For example, it is not in the Lord's name as brought out in John 16:23, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name."

What does it mean to ask in His name? It does not mean as some think, just adding the name of the Lord Jesus to the end of our prayers. He is absent from the world now and we are His representatives. So the Father looks to receive from us prayers that are in accordance with the mind of Jesus. It is, as it were, asking for what He would ask for. If this is true of our petitions, the Father will delight to grant them. All kinds of petitions and requests are sometimes heard that are not of this character and then the Lord's name is added as if to give them weight. This is a very solemn thing and not at all what is meant by asking in His name. (See Phil. 4:6, 7.)

Note, while our Lord taught His disciples to pray and urged them to it, He did not ask them to pray for Him, nor does He pray with them.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Luke 18:1. You might ask how it is possible for us to be always in prayer. It is, of course, impossible for us to be always in the outward attitude of prayer. It has been likened to the way our bodies are sustained by receiving fresh air from the outside which oxygenates our lungs and is necessary to our very life. So as to our spiritual life, we should be in the atmosphere of constant dependence on God, our thoughts turning to Him habitually throughout the day. Then, if trial or difficulty comes our way, we can do some "deep breathing" by just lifting our thoughts and hearts to Him. Our hearts will then be sustained; the despondency passes away, and our strength is renewed. The Lord was always thus. He prayed always and never fainted.

"He... kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:41, 42. What the Lord had before Him was the cross into which none other than Himself could ever enter. From this we may see how very important it is for us to learn to say from our hearts, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." Unless we come to this surrender of our will to His, we have not fully learned our lesson, and there will not be the entire peace of mind that He would have us enjoy.

We have traced the blessed Master in these connections in prayer. We have to own our failures. Indeed, the broken state outwardly of the Church of God upon earth must be traced in large measure to the sad lack of this spirit of prayer in our own souls and among His people. May we learn this lesson and try more and more to "follow His steps."

F. Lavington

The Transition Chapter

Luke Nine LUK 9

In Luke 9 we have the following:

- (1) The rejection of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah;
- (2) The thorough change in everything which characterizes the remaining part of this gospel;
- (3) The Lord showing the thorny path of those who would follow Him;
- (4) A view of the end of the way, the glory of the kingdom and the Father's house;
- (5) Leaving that glory, He gives His company to cheer, rebuke and comfort His people as needed;
- (6) Finally, He exposes us to ourselves, Himself being God's standard to aim at and to follow.

In Luke 8 Christ preaches the gospel of the kingdom. In chapter 9 He sends forth His twelve disciples with the same testimony. In chapter 10, having been rejected as "the Christ" and on the ground of this rejection, He sends after the declaration of His coming glory as Son of man (seen in the transfiguration), the seventy on a wider mission, which the judgment day would vindicate if their message were refused.

There is a remarkable break in chapter 9. The testimony of the twelve and Christ's own testimony had reached far and wide, even to king's courts. But what was the result of it? The power of healing the sick and casting out devils which the Lord gave to His disciples were samples of the powers of the world to come, the millennial kingdom, but it was all of no avail.

A Rejected Christ

In verse 18, the Lord asks His disciples what it had all come to—"Whom say the people that I am?" They answer, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again." It had all come to nothing. "But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And He straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing." Why? Because it was of no use. "The Messiah" had been rejected, and now He speaks of Himself, not as the Christ, or Messiah, but as the Son of man. This wider title characterizes the remaining chapters of this Gospel.

You will see a similar transition between the second Psalm and the eighth. In the second Psalm the Lord is spoken of as the Christ, or "Anointed," but in the eighth Psalm He is spoken of as "son of man." All things were once put in subjection to Adam and his wife but they lost this headship through sin. Now the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, will not take the inheritance of all things simply as Heir, but as Redeemer Heir. He has a personal right to it, true, but could He take it polluted with sin as it is, apart from redemption as well?

He never speaks of His sufferings as Son of man without speaking of His rising again. It is as the risen Son of man that He takes the headship of creation and all things as we see in Heb. 2.

In this passage, Luke 9, the Lord speaks of His sufferings as a martyr under man's hand, not as a victim under the hand of God for sin. His death had this double aspect—He suffered as a victim and as a martyr. As a martyr we can have the fellowship of His sufferings. He tells His disciples then of the path of those who would follow Him in His rejection, but He does not speak of the path without showing what the end of it will be.

Would you mind a rough, thorny path if you knew surely what the end would be? Here is the journey and the end of it. So Paul's desire was that he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus.

The Transfiguration

In the transfiguration which follows, we get the end of the pathway in a figure of the coming kingdom and glory of the Son of man in which those who are His have a share. Moses and Elias are types of the saints raised and changed. How? Moses died and was buried; Elias was taken up to heaven without passing through death. These are the heavenly saints. Paul tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain when He comes shall be changed, and all be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.)

Peter, James, and John at this scene are typical of the earthly saints in the kingdom who are looking upon the heavenly saints, raised and changed, in the same glory with Christ Himself. There is one glory of the celestial, and another glory of the terrestrial.

"But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep." This is typical of the spirit of slumber which rests upon the Jewish remnant in the latter day and who "when they were awake" saw His glory. We, too, have the flesh. It is ever the same; nothing can mend it. The disciples were asleep here in the presence of the glory, as we afterward find they were asleep in the presence of the agony in Gethsemane.

After Peter had made his mistake, "There came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud." What did the cloud signify? It was the symbol of Jehovah's presence. Why did the earthly ones fear then? Because nobody had ever entered into the cloud before! It had led the Israelites out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea. It became cloud and darkness to the Egyptians and light to Israel. It spoke to Moses face to face and rebuked, led, and fought for them. But no one had ever entered into that which was the unveiled presence of God. Yet Moses and Elias were perfectly at ease there. The earthly ones could not understand this new thing of entering into the cloud. Here we get the end of the journey—the Father's house (John 14:1-3; 17:24), for the voice that came out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Who could say this but the Father?

The Journey

Does it matter much that the pathway is thorny when we know it leads to the Father's house?

The Lord has shown them the journey and the end of it, but He does not have us tread that way alone. He leaves the glory on the mount and goes along the path with us, giving us His company to comfort us by the way. In verse 41 we see their unbelief while He was yet with them, at their very side. "How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?"

Christ's Devotedness

They have His company by the way but His perfect devotedness exposes their selfishness. In verse 51 we find His intense devotedness, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," the place where He was to suffer. His was the entire surrender of self, the giving up of self altogether. The law only told us to love our neighbor as ourselves, but the gospel goes far beyond. It teaches us to do what Christ did; He gave up self altogether for His enemies. We find self exposed in the various traits of selfishness which actuate us in this portion of the chapter (vv. 46-56) and the perfect devotedness of Christ makes this all the more apparent.

Selfishness

The 46th verse shows us personal selfishness: "There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest." Jesus rebukes them and perceiving the thought of their heart, He took a child and set him by Him and said, "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great." This is true greatness because most like His own.

In the next verse we have another sort of selfishness, the selfishness of a clique. They saw one laboring for the Lord, but as he did not go with them in everything, they forbade him.

Then in verse 54 we see selfishness under the cloak of apparent zeal for the Lord's honor. They wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume those who would not receive Him. How His presence exposes us!

There is a perfect contrast to all this in that beautiful chapter, the 2nd of Philippians. Every one gives up self in that chapter. First we see the Lord emptying Himself of His glory. He "made Himself of no reputation." "Humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Self was nothing to Paul; what he cared for was the state of the Philippians. "Yea, and if I be offered [poured forth] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."

Timothy was like-minded and would care for their state. Epaphroditus, instead of being troubled by his sickness, was troubled that the Philippians had heard of his sickness and would be anxious about him. He counted on their love.

Occupation with Christ

What we want is occupation of heart with Christ. If we have a bad temper and go on praying about it and mourning over it we will never overcome it. But if we are occupied with Christ, do you think our temper will rise while He is before us? It is the only way to get the victory.

We get an exposure of man's nature in the 57th verse. One whom the Lord had not called offers to follow Him. "It is an easy thing to follow Jesus—anyone can do it," he thinks But the Lord tells him that he had not counted the cost. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

Next we find one whom the Lord had called finding a difficulty in following, and making excuses for delay. It was the effectual call of grace here. But he was not up to the mark. He found, as we often do, difficulties and hindrances in the way when the call came. The Lord's reply is, "Let the dead [dead to God] bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

There is a reference to Elisha in the last verses. Do you remember that one day when he was plowing, Elijah cast his mantle over Elisha? Elisha said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." The real call had come but Elisha was not up to the height of the call just then. Elijah answered, "What have I done to thee?" And Elisha returned and after slaying the yoke of oxen, he arose and went after Elijah.

Let us consider well then these things in this 9th chapter of Luke: the rejection of Jesus as the Christ, the change in everything that characterizes the rest of the book, the Lord showing the path of those who would follow Him, the end of this path, the Lord giving His followers to cheer, rebuke, and comfort His people. It exposes us to ourselves by using Christ as our standard.

Words of Truth

In the Father's House—in Hell

There is a very solemn and striking contrast between the close of Luke 15 and 16. In the former, our Lord draws aside the curtain, and shows us the interior of the Father's house. There we see a returned prodigal at the father's table, feeding on the fruits of a father's love. In the latter, our Lord draws aside the curtain and shows us the interior of hell. There we see a soul tormented in the flames. Awful contrast! And how very near they are to each other on the inspired page! It is just the same in Rev. 20 and 21. The former closes with "the lake of fire." The latter opens with "the holy city." What a contrast! And how very near they are to each other on the inspired page! Reader, which is to be your portion?

O haste! O haste! make no delay,

At once to Jesus come;

Remember now's the accepted day,

O enter while there's room.

The Heart Follows the Treasure

Luke 12:31-53 LUKE 12:31-53

In Luke we get the positive objects of faith set before us, and with this the characteristics of a Christian. The heart always follows the treasure, wherever that may be.

We must have motive and power to overcome the world—we must have an object for our faith. For our object God has given us Christ. The Law could give neither life nor an object to govern the heart. The Object on which we look gives perfect rest to heart and conscience. We know God's perfect love as seen in His Son Jesus Christ. Not only has Christ satisfied the Father's heart, but He has met all the claims of God's righteousness.

So we start on our Christian course having a perfect heart and a perfect conscience before God. Our relationship and standing—that in which we walk and stand—are entirely based upon what Christ has done. Law puts judgment at the end of our course; Christianity puts redemption at the beginning of our course. We cannot see Christ sitting at God's right hand without saying, "He has put away our sins." Here the Christian course commences, for the Christian is a redeemed person.

Winning the Prize

Christ has given Himself; He kept nothing back. All has been given and done that could be given and done. We do not have even to think of what Christ has brought us out of, but what He has brought us into. We are only to look at the things before us that we "may win Christ." If we would win Him, Christ must have the supreme place in everything that passes before our hearts.

If we are indeed bent on winning the prize, we are glad to have all judged by the Word of God which is sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. If the one Object is before us, we judge all by it. In its light all weights are to be laid aside, gold and silver to be counted as dung and dross, and the most precious things on earth are vile and worthless. We have a perfect rule for everything in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we have not the power of Christ within—our "lights burning" (v. 35)—we cannot bear a true testimony nor witness for Him. We have here the power of truth in the heart and its open profession with the attitude suited to it. Christ is to characterize us, and we are to be waiting for Him (v. 36). It should be the stamp on the Christian's character—not only waiting, but also watching.

He Will Serve Us

Blessed promises are set before us in verse 37: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." Christ is waiting till He can come and take us; then He will gird Himself and come forth to serve His own. The place He takes here is most wonderful. When His time comes He will bring us into the fullness of joy in heaven, not only to give us the best of the table, the richest and most costly, but He Himself taking the most lowly place and serving us. No longer shall we have our loins girded for Him, but He will have His loins girded for us. As He delights to love and have us with Him, so does He delight to come forth and serve us. His heart is set upon this. Are our hearts set upon Him?

Having become Man, He learned the lesson of lowliness down here. He devoted Himself wholly to us and forever has His ears bored for us (see Ex. 21); that is, He remains a man forever. So as man He will come forth girded and ready to serve, for His heart will not be perfectly happy until He makes known the perfect result of His own love above.

This is the first part of the Christian life—the true state of the affections. Then in verses 41-43 comes the second part when we are called to serve as His stewards during His absence. His love should constrain us to it. Are our hearts so nourished in Christ that we can say that it is His love that is carrying us through this world? Are we living for Christ and yielding ourselves up for His service with ready delight? The true state of heart for the Christian is in verse 36, "men that wait for their lord," and the true state of service in verse 43, "so doing."

Angels to Serve—Men to Love

In Luke 2 we learn that it was God's mind that the coming of Christ to this world should bring "peace, good will toward men." Peace was in the Person of His Son but He was utterly rejected. It is beautiful to notice the unselfish joy of the angels in singing forth praises that men should become the objects of God's love instead of themselves. God had angels to serve Him but He wanted men to love Him. Yet, for His love towards men, He got hatred and the crucifixion of His Son.

Luke 12:51 shows us that if we really take Christ's part, the world will surely hate us, while if we love the world, we are the enemies of God. Christ took nothing but the lowest place here in this world, beginning His history in the manger and closing it on the cross. There is not a snare, a cross, trial, temptation, persecution, peril of any kind in which we may not give the world proof that we love the Christ it has cast out and that we are His. If we follow Christ in all that He puts before us in our path, there will surely be the cross. But we shall have the full out-flowing blessing of God's own heart and presence.

Consult Christ as to your walk, service, and state of heart, for it will decide everything in the secret of your soul. Only in this way can you go on with Him in communion and learn the largeness of His heart.

This supposes we are in the place of a Christian and having the duties, blessings, and privileges of a Christian. This is all founded on Christ's work and God will never disclaim Christ's work, for it perfectly glorified Him. The Lord keep us very humble before Him, ever walking in the blessed sense of His love, and our perfect acceptance before Him in Christ.

F.G. Burkitt

Bits and Pieces

One special mark of "a sound mind" is readiness to take counsel of God.

It is not by change of circumstances that we can be made happy, but by submission to the will of God.

Occupy Till I Come

Luke 19:11-27 LUK 19:11-27

Few portions of scripture contain fuller instruction as to God's present ways than this parable in Luke 19 of the nobleman in a far country. In verse 11 we learn that Jesus spoke it "because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

Right after this He entered Jerusalem and His disciples hailed Him as King saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." v. 38. They expected, as the two disciples on the way to Emmaus declared, that He would at that time "have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21) and also that the kingdom of God would be thus manifested.

We see from Luke 17:20, 21 that the kingdom had already come, but it was not yet with outward show or observation. It was even then among them, but neither then nor now, as a visible kingdom, was it recognizable by the world. The real "children of the kingdom" may recognize it in its present hidden form. Christendom may acknowledge it as a kingdom in word, but with no true sense of God's sovereignty. The rest of the world can see in it nothing but a religious profession with no character of a kingdom about it.

While the kingdom of God in the veiled form in which it now exists had already come, it had not then, nor now, appeared or been manifested. It was to check the eager anticipations of the disciples as to its immediate appearance that this parable was spoken. In it, therefore, the Lord details what is to happen before that appearing, for which they were looking, should take place.

The Nobleman

He Himself, seen here in the figure of the nobleman, was to go into a far country. In fact, He leaves the world for heaven, there to receive the kingdom and having received it, to return. Meanwhile, those who denied His rights—the Jews especially, but also the world as a whole—not only rejected Him in person while here, but "sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." v. 14. Such a message was the stoning of Stephen and the persistent refusal to hear the testimony of the apostles and of the Holy Spirit after Christ's departure.

This is and has been the attitude of the world as a whole, but particularly of the Jews toward Jesus since He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And this will be their attitude as a nation till He comes again. He will then return, having had the nations given to Him as His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Those who would not that He should reign over them will be dealt with in judgment.

Christendom

Between His departure and His return there is another class of persons called His servants besides the citizens who rejected Him. These, though left among the citizens, are clearly of a different class. They are in the city to care for their Lord's things entrusted to their charge. While the citizens reject Him as their King, these own His authority. While the citizens have no thought of His return, these occupy till He comes. These servants, then, represent Christendom—those who, in name at least, acknowledge the authority of the rejected Lord.

Is it not startling to contrast this picture of the responsibility of the Christian professor with the thought which even true believers commonly cherish as to their place in the world? What is spoken of here is no limited class, specially set apart as ministers or servants. The responsibility pointed out is the common responsibility of Christendom. Surely it is impossible to look at Christendom in the light of the responsibility here disclosed, without a sad sense of its utter failure to execute the charge with which it has been entrusted. Nevertheless, the responsibility of the professing "Christian world" is to occupy for Christ till He returns. According to this responsibility it will be judged.

By the mass of nominal Christians the charge is simply disregarded. If the pound is not thrown away, or the very name of Christian abandoned, this is all that can be said. Hard thoughts of God are entertained. His gifts are forgotten or despised. His demands are regarded as unreasonable exactions. He is looked upon as "an austere man," taking up what He had not laid down, reaping what He had not sown. And yet man, with his usual inconsistency, while judging God as exacting more than is due, has taken no pains to earn, as it were, anything for Him. He is therefore judged out of his own mouth and condemned as an unprofitable servant.

The Believer's Responsibility

Leaving the sad case of mere professors, let us ask to what extent we represent the view here presented of the believer's responsibility. How many true Christians think: "I am here for Christ, in charge of His interest in the scene where He has been rejected"? How would the world appear to one who had this thought about the place he was called upon to occupy?

The cross as the means by which sins were put away is, of course, valued by all real believers. In this sense they can, and do glory in it.

But Paul gloried in it for another reason and saw in the death of Christ another aspect. To him, that death was not only deliverance from sins, but deliverance "from this present evil world." To him that cross was not only the place where sin had been judged, but the means by which "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He saw in the death of Christ the death of all. "And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. 5:15. What complete separation from the world and what devotedness to Christ we see here.

Separation

And yet this is only what becomes one who in the light of Christ's own words, realizes the place he is responsible to occupy in this world. There must be a complete separation of heart and feeling between the servant who is truly occupying for Christ and the world which has rejected Him. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

It may be urged that the citizens in Luke 19 do not represent nominal Christians who constitute the world around us. This is true, but if nominal Christians have become just as much "of the world" as the heathen, if Christ's lordship is just as little practically admitted among them as in the rest of the world, is the call for separation any the less urgent?

Is the world any more allowable because it takes the name of Christ while practically it disowns and rejects Him?

If there is one rule of separation in Scripture more stringent than another, it is the separation from those who are called by Christ's name, but are walking in an ungodly fashion. If there is one scene over which judgment is impending with more fearful gloom than over any other, it is over this very Christendom. On account of the privileges it has enjoyed and the sad use it has made of them, Christendom is held as especially guilty in God's sight. The principle of separation, therefore, applies with even greater force to the believer in the world of Christendom around him at present than to the believer in the midst of Jews and heathen.

Living for Christ

What the Lord desires in His people is whole-heartedness for Himself. This does not imply separation from the ordinary occupations of the world. But the question is whether these occupations entangle the heart and become our objects? Or whether while pursuing these occupations, the heart is still free for Christ? Is getting on in the world what fills our thoughts? Are we, while providing things honest in the sight of all men, really living among men and before men as those who are not their own but bought with a price? Are we being constrained by the love of Christ and seeking however feebly to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again?

Few are called upon to preach Christ, but all are called upon to live Christ. To live Christ involves taking His place in relationship to the world. "They are not of the world," the Lord said, "even as I am not of the world."

It is easy to put imaginary cases and to ask where the line is to be drawn. The heart that is in communion with Christ, though it may not know how to lay down principles, will distinguish readily enough what will suit Him and what would grieve His Spirit. It is only Christians who are anxious to mix with the world that have any difficulty in the matter. The world quickly enough discerns what is consistent and what is inconsistent in a Christian. They estimate without difficulty the value of the testimony given by a worldly believer.

If the heart is really true to Christ it will unconsciously bear witness to Him and separate from the world which knows Him not. The spirit and objects of the world cannot have a place in the soul that is filled with Christ. The pursuits and riches of the world will appear worthless to him whose affections are set on things above.

True Servants

The character of the true servant will show itself in various ways. If to serve Christ is really the object, His own word and directions will be the rule of service. Who could suppose the servants of the absent lord taking counsel with the citizens that had cast him out, as to how they should care for his goods? Is it any better when believers go to the world, or resort to worldly principles, worldly wisdom, and worldly alliances in the hope of furthering the cause of Christ? The power is of God who does not need our wisdom as to the mode of carrying on His own work, but who does demand our obedience as servants.

No truth is more needed at the present moment than that of the all-sufficiency of the Word of God.

Whatever, under the name of service, is not built on this foundation, is not service such as the Lord owns. There may be, of course, earnestness and truth of heart which the Lord does own, even where much is added which He could not sanction, but in these cases His blessing is on what comes from Himself, not on what comes from the flesh and the world.

There is another thing which will mark the true servant. He will be waiting for the coming of his Lord. If the heart is really estranged from the world and set on heavenly things, what expectation will bring such blessedness as the thought of the Lord's return?

The idle servant whose heart was full of hard thoughts about his Lord, could of course entertain no bright hopes in connection with His coming again. The thought must necessarily be unwelcome to him. But what joy would the prospect bring to the heart of the faithful servant who had been living and laboring for Him during His absence!

Are we occupying for Christ during His absence? Are we seeking to act in obedience to His Word, waiting in joyful anticipation for His return?

T. Baines

God for Us

We need never be afraid to recognize our own incompetence, and we have no need to minimize or hide from ourselves the magnitude of the difficulties that beset our path; exulting faith will go in the strength of the Lord, saying, "If God be for us, who shall be against us?"

J. H. T.

Bible Challenger-11-November V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that tells us what was not acceptable to some of God's faithful because of a better alternative.

1. Where a faithful man of old was placed when he continued to pray and give thanks before his God.
2. A description of the world from which Christians are liberated according to the will of God our Father.
3. Something believers are freed from in order to introduce them to something new.
4. What words of encouragement did grace provide for those who once realized they were on the way down to the pit?
5. An apt description of a horse by those who know the futility of its great strength.
6. The name of the prophet that restored a mother's most valued possession in a time of famine.
7. The character of life, directly opposed to wickedness, which gives victory over death.
8. Someone with whom one may be preserved from going to a court of law by a diligent attitude.
9. A class of people whose cry brings relief even when no visible helper is found.
10. Wisdom's ornament of grace to all who embrace her.
11. A specific action of an angelic being towards those that fear the Lord.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-10-October Answers V.05

1. Grieved Heb. 3:10
2. Evil generation Deut. 1:35
3. Night Ex. 12:42
4. Endureth Psa. 100:5
5. Righteous Gen. 7:1
6. Adulterous Matt. 12:39; 16:4
7. Teeth Prov. 30:14
8. Incense Ex. 30:8
9. Omer Ex. 16:32
10. Nation 1 Peter 2:9
11. Signs Dan. 4:3

"But Thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever; and Thy remembrance unto all GENERATIONS." Psa. 102:12.

The Eye

If the eye instead of resting on our sins and sorrows, could rest only on Christ, it would sweeten many a bitter cup, and enlighten many a gloomy hour.

The Bible

"Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven."

Psalm. 119:89. PSA 119:89

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good is its design, and the glory of God is its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

Editorial

A request has come to us to write something on cremation. What is God's mind on this subject?

Burial was the custom among the Israelites and there was even a provision in the law for the burial of a criminal (Deut. 21:23). The importance of burial is stressed in Ecc. 6:3. "If a man beget a hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he."

In the New Testament we see that when Herod beheaded John, the disciples of John "came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Matt. 14:12. Prophetically, it was written of the Lord Jesus that He was "with the rich in His death." Isa. 53:9. This we see lovingly fulfilled by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. "Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand." John 19:40-42.

Beginning with the Christian period in the book of The Acts, we notice that the first three people who died were buried. The first two were Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:6,10). Then in Acts 8:2 it says, "devout men carried Stephen to his burial." So we see that burial is the Christian practice,

not cremation.

In sharp contrast to this we call attention to a verse in Amos 2:1, "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." This supreme expression of hatred of one against another brought forth God's punishment.

Also we see that God Himself in His final judgment of the beast commits him to the burning flame (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 19:20).

Every believer belongs to God, for the Word says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

The believers' hope is the Lord's coming for us while we are yet alive. All believers who have died will be raised and we all shall be changed as it says in Philippians 3:20,21 (JND), "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."

We learn, then, that these bodies God has given us to live in are precious to God-belong to Him-and we should treat them carefully and respectfully while we live, and also in death.

Infidels have frequently tried to hide from God and the coming judgment by commanding their bodies to be cremated and the dust scattered upon the ocean. All this is futile. Our Savior as Son of man is presented as Judge in Rev. 1. In verse 18 He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades, the place of departed spirits] and of death [the place where the body is]." He will use those keys first at the resurrection of the just and then later at the resurrection of the unjust (Acts 24:15).

We are not under law, but grace. God has graciously revealed to us His mind in both the Old and New Testament. Burial, not cremation, is the proper way to treat the dead body.

Ed.

Questions and Answers

QUES. What is the thought of Scripture as to the state of the soul of the believer after death, before the Lord comes? Do those who "sleep in Jesus" actually see Him, or do they not do so until body and soul are united?

ANS. "To die is gain" says the Apostle. (Phil. 1:21.) So an advantage is had by the believer in the death of the body. If the separate state were a mere sleep of the soul, how could such language be used? Surely it would have been preferred if he were to remain and labor for his Lord in the body, than to lie in sleep while awaiting His return.

Again in the same chapter, "to be with Christ" is the condition of the one whose body sleeps in the dust. This is "far better." The words "sleep in Jesus" do not give the force of 1 Thess. 4:14. There it is, "sleep [through the person of] Jesus."

Death itself is ours, because Jesus has annulled it for us. We have died already in His person. When, therefore, the body dies, we are only said to be put to sleep through Him. We pass out of the earthly tabernacle and the result is "present with the Lord." We might freely render this verse—"We are confident, I say, and well pleased, rather to be abroad from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." Surely such a word or thought as this is incompatible with mere sleep. To be "at home" with the Lord is indeed gain. The believer, as already dead and risen, has death as his friend now.

As to seeing Jesus when we are out of the body, we read in the record of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) that he saw "Abraham afar off," etc., and this language is used by the Lord in speaking of the separate state. Paul says, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Why then should his passage out of the body hinder his seeing Him? The Lord had to open the eyes of His disciples in order to know Jesus after He rose. Though our body could hinder our looking on a risen Jesus, would it need even a changed body in order that we should see Him now? Still the Lord has not thought fit to answer the question further. Rather, then, let us seek to have Himself and His coming before our souls, as our hope and joy.

F.G. Patterson

The Scriptures

The more we look at the Scriptures, the more they transport us to their scenes. The Bible has the wonderful power of putting us, by faith, in the place it describes: I am there as one of the company and I am conscious I am there in the scenes it describes.

It is this that gives a blessed character to the whole Word of God.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—every part given by the Holy Spirit! The Bible is a history of original sin and its fruits, and God's method of putting sin away. God has a fit Man, a fit Person (Lev. 16:21).

In the Old Testament, we are waiting for a fit Person, and if we look at the New Testament we find Him. In the Gospel of Matthew, we see Him as the Messiah, in Mark as the perfect Servant, in Luke as the Son of man and in John as the Son of God.

The Gospel of John begins before Genesis. As we read through it and the other gospels, we are attracted by the grace we see, and we get the application of this grace in the epistles. In the gospels our eyes of faith see not a carpenter's son, but God manifested in the flesh. The aim of the epistles is to get the soul on the same platform of standing and walk as that of the Lord Jesus.

In the Old Testament we see the unity of the Godhead, and in the New Testament the trinity of the Godhead. In Genesis we see the election of the people of God, in Exodus their redemption, in Leviticus their priestly service and worship, in Numbers their walk and warfare in the wilderness and in Deuteronomy a recapitulation of God's dealings with them up to the time that they are about to enter into the land.

Leviticus is a wonderful book for bringing out the detail of the work of Christ which we do not get elsewhere. Just as we enter into the signification of the sacrifices in Leviticus, so do we enter in worship into the joy of God in the several aspects of the sacrifice of His son.

Oh, the delight of God in His Christ! What a thing it is to have a heart to enter into it! What gives joy to God is the soul's entering into all Christ's work, having the heart bowed with a deepened sense of His worth-Divine Person as He was. All His graces go up to God. We want to be in Mary's place as learners.

If you wish to know Israel's experience after the Church is translated, look at the Psalms. Israel will then be under law again. The difference between Solomon's Song and Ecclesiastes is that in the one we have God Himself, and our heart is too little for Him, but in the other we have the world and all things in it. Our hearts are too large to be filled by it.

Prophecy is as a lamp in a dark place. "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," and we are interested in all that interests Christ.

John closes the Book when he says, "Come." He is perfectly satisfied when he is waiting for Jesus, and then he ceases to write!

Young Christian

Truth

Throughout the Scriptures there is that which God designates as "the truth." It is divine and above the opinions of men, however wise and pious they may be.

In the Old Testament the admonition is given, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Prov. 23:23. "The truth" must refer to God who is true, but is not called "the truth." Hence it comprises all that may be known of God, whether declared by creation or made known by revelation. Truth is not simply that which is held as dogma, but that which must be received in the soul. Paul asked the Galatians, who had hindered them that they should not obey the truth? (Gal. 5:7.)

Judgment is coming upon Christendom "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thess. 2:10. Truth is the real way of liberty; "The truth shall make you free." John 8:32. Truth cannot be separated from the Lord Jesus who is "the way, the truth, and the life." This is objective; subjectively the Spirit is the truth as having come from the glorified Christ.

The three Epistles of John constantly refer to "the truth". And a Christian woman is warned not to receive anyone into her house, nor wish him Godspeed unless he holds the doctrines taught by the apostles, in other words, "the truth."

What Is Inspiration?

The Bible is the only book that faithfully tells us what we are, even to the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This shows it to be divine, for only God searches the heart.

It truly reveals God, so that when the Word is received, it brings our souls into the consciousness of God's having to do with us. This shows its divinity, for the world by wisdom knows not God. In a variety of aspects the Son who came forth from the Father to save sinners is presented to us. As the leading truths of Scripture, His personal glory, moral perfectness, finished work, walk, words, ways, life, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, present offices, future judgments and reign give the Word also a divine character.

Its unity carries with it the stamp of divinity as nothing else could. The way in which the different parts are adapted to each other, types in the Old Testament having their antitypes in the New, a multitude of prophetic statements in the former having their accomplishment in the latter, these combine to give it a divine character which is incontestable. There are many quotations in the New Testament quoted from the Old to prove the soundness of the doctrines taught.

It is not surprising, then, that an inspired writer should commend the Word to us as if in its operations it possessed divine attributes. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

A professing Christian lately said, "There are many opinions about the Scriptures." I replied, "How can that be if they are the utterances of God to us? Surely then, we have only to listen to His voice and seek to do His will."

Young Christian

The Heinz Will

When the will of Henry J. Heinz, wealthy distributor of the famous "57 Varieties" line, was read, it was found to contain the following confession: "Looking forward to the time when my earthly career will end, I desire to set forth at the very beginning of this will, as the most important item in it, a confession of my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I also desire to bear witness to the fact that throughout my life, in which there were unusual joys and sorrows, I have been wonderfully sustained by my faith in God through Jesus Christ. This legacy was left me by my consecrated mother, a woman of strong faith, and to it I attribute any success I have attained."

Bible Lessons

Psalm 110

PSA 110

It is evident that Psa. 110 supplies the divine answer to the riddle of a suffering Messiah! In Psa. 109:4 and 5, "For My love they are My adversaries.... And they have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My love." And in Psa. 110:1 and 3 it says, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.... Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."

The first verse of Psa. 110 is quoted five times in the New Testament. The first time is in Matt. 22:41-46 when the Lord Jesus asked the Pharisees concerning the promised Messiah. The second time is in Mark 12:36, and the third is in Luke 20:41-44 when He asked the same question of the scribes and Sadducees. The fourth time in Acts 2:34 and 35 gives the answer the Jewish leaders could not, or would not give because of unbelief. Last of all, the fifth time this verse is quoted in Heb. 1:13, in declaring various glories of the Son of God.

It will be noticed that in the Psalms, the present period of grace, and the taking out of a people for heaven, chiefly from the Gentiles, is wholly left out. In verse 1 of our psalm, the despised and rejected Man of Psa. 109 is invited to sit at the right hand of Jehovah until His enemies are made His footstool. They are not being made His footstool now, certainly, for the gospel of the grace of God is proclaimed to all, both Jew and Gentile. The Church of God is composed of all who believe in the Lord Jesus from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to His soon-coming descent from heaven to claim them (1 Thess. 4:16,17). This was a secret not disclosed in Old Testament days, but is expressly told in Eph. 3:1-13.

The position of Psa. 110 is that the Lord Jesus, as Israel's Messiah, has appeared again on earth according to promise. He has defeated and destroyed the mighty host assembled by the Western powers in the land of Israel. And He has set up His authority as Israel's King of Zion (Jerusalem). His people who formerly demanded and secured His crucifixion, crying "Away with Him, crucify Him," will now be willing to receive Him in the beauties of holiness (or holy splendor), and as born again in that day.

The fourth verse, speaking of the order of Melchizedek, invites a reference to Hebrews, chapters 5-8, where the subject is taken up and explained. Believers need, and have been given, a High Priest in the blessed Lord Jesus. He could not be a priest according to the law of Moses, because He was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah. Melchizedek furnished an illustration which the Holy Spirit has made use of, a priest not tracing his descent from a family of priests, nor passing on his priesthood to others after him.

"He shall drink of the brook in the way" in verse 7, refers to His lowly, dependent life while passing through this world on the way from the manger to the cross.

J. H. Smith

The English Bible

I beg my readers who may not know Greek not to suppose that I have any thought of unsettling their minds as to the plain English words in Scripture. My object is just the contrary.

In the English Bible there are, no doubt, defects as in every human work. I have found passages which I think might be more exactly translated, and have taken the pains to translate for myself the whole of the New Testament, except a few chapters. But I am sure of this, that the more intimately a person is familiar with what the learned call the *usus loquendi* (that is, the customary forms of speech), the more they will see how thoroughly well acquainted the translators were with the language they were dealing with. I can confidently affirm this to be the case in the New Testament.

And as far as I can pretend to judge of the Old Testament, I can bear the same testimony. So on the whole, while admitting some human defects, the readers who know neither Hebrew nor Greek may be assured they have the sense of the original. Taken as a whole, it is the most perfect translation of any book I have ever read. I am told the Dutch translation is very good. I cannot compare them, but of those which I can, the English Bible is by far the best.

Forty-six or forty-eight of the most learned and capable men were long engaged in it—divided into classes of six, who did the part they were most competent for. Then it was passed to the others and revised by all, and compared with translations in other languages.

My object, then, is not to lead you away from your English Bible, but back to it with confidence. When persons object to a doctrine, that the original word has not the force ascribed to it in English, I am obliged to inquire what is its force in the original. But my object in this is that the humble English readers may be assured they have God's mind in what they read.

J.N. Darby

A Real Revelation

Whenever there is a real revelation of God to anyone, the conscience is always reached and the heart affected. There is never any light from God without love.

We never know anything about God with the mind, except that we cannot know Him. All true knowledge humbles, because it brings something of God to me that I did not know before. It finds in me something contrary to it; truth is perfectly divine and heavenly in its character, yet suited to me. It brings what is heavenly, and shows me I am not that and humbles me.

In the case of the thief on the cross, the light shines in and we see the effect: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly." Truth is of no use until it is subjective, or until it affects me, otherwise it is only a matter of memory.

Church truth may be held by one who does not know what it is to be in the Spirit; then it is only a matter of memory. The Holy Spirit does not merely say there is a Church, but that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. It is not a mere dogma. The tendency with us is to make theology, and not to be affected by what Scripture says. It is not merely a statement, but God connects it livingly with the heart and affections.

Another important thing is that the actual condition of a soul be such that we are able to receive truth. At Corinth the Apostle fed them with milk; they were not able to take strong meat. So also in Hebrews. We need to bear this in mind. If we talk to a person about truth that he is not in a state to receive, we may puff him up.

If a Christian walks unfaithfully, he may lose even what he knows. All living truth becomes a part of ourselves like food. It is said, "if any man thirst," and then it speaks of coming out of his belly, that is, out the very inmost part of the man himself. I do not believe anyone has got the truth unless it has engaged his affections to Christ and moved his conscience.

Bible Data

Human life has been shortened by about a half, several times. The longest any man lived after the flood was Heber who lived 464 years, a little more than half of Methuselah's age, 969 years, the longest before or since the flood. The longest time man lived after the dispersion at Babel was Reu who lived 239 years, a little more than half of Heber's age. In the wilderness, life was again shortened to about half of the age of Abram (Psa. 90:10). The blessed Lord was cut off in the "midst" or half of His days, as a man (Psa. 102:24).

Scripture furnishes no account of the birth or death of any of Cain's posterity, but simply records their doings (Gen. 4).

Seth, third son of Adam, in whom the line of grace was continued, was contemporary with all the antediluvian fathers except Noah.

Methuselah was contemporary with Adam for more than 200 years, and with Noah for about 600 years.

Enoch, who walked with God, was contemporary with Adam for about 300 years, and with Noah for some time, and thus the truth and revelation of God then revealed, was handed down for 1656 years.

The Written Word of God

God has spoken. As a fact, this is easily stated. As a truth, it is one of immense importance, and we learn from it that He did not want to abide in the solitude of His Being without creatures to whom He might communicate His thoughts. All intelligent creatures, as well as all created things, owe their existence to His word. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.... He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psa. 33:6, 9.

What a graphic description of the power of that word, "He spake, and it was done." Who can resist His will? All that we see around us was called into existence and order by His word. As we survey the heavens above and the earth beneath, we learn something of what the thoughts of Jehovah were, which took shape and form in obedience to His mighty word.

But when did He first speak and call creation into being? Who can tell us but Himself, and to Him we are indebted for all that we know or can know about it. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1. This simple statement of the Almighty One was made thousands of years ago for the instruction of His earthly people, called out from the nations to own and to maintain the truth of the unity of God (Deut. 6:4).

The Spoken Word

"He spake, and it was done." We look around and see some of the results of that speaking in the heavenly bodies, created before the earth, and the atmosphere which surrounds us, which was made for man. The Lord God intended to bring man on the scene when the time should arrive in accordance with His purpose for the display of His glory, greatness, goodness, and love.

This earth was reduced to chaos, for He formed it not empty, as Isaiah wrote (45:18). That is, He did not form it in the condition over which the Spirit of God hovered in Gen. 1:2. God spoke again and brought it into order, ready for His counsels to begin their accomplishment by the bringing in of man upon the scene. When God spoke at the beginning, no angel had been created. When He spoke to bring this earth out of its chaotic state, the angelic hosts, eye-witnesses of what He did, shouted for joy (Job 38:7). The power of His word was displayed as created things assumed their form, and created beings appeared in all the activity of life.

At last the head of this creation, formed out of the dust of the ground, with the breath of life breathed into him by God and so becoming a living soul, was seen in the garden of Eden with his helpmeet by his side. Thus created things, animate and inanimate, were brought into existence by God's word. The earth was prepared for man, with man himself and his partner on the scene. The invisible things of God were clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20).

His Word of Power

By His word of power God had so far revealed Himself. A Being at once absolute in power and excellent in working, He did not wish to remain alone forever. He surrounded Himself with creatures animate and inanimate with orders and ranks of intelligence who could take delight in what He had done. They found their proper object of worship in Him, the Creator and the Holy One. His command was to be their freedom and their delight to obey.

But rebellion wrought its awful work among the angelic hosts, and disobedience displayed itself in man who was made in the image and likeness of God. Before man was created, the devil had fallen (Ezek. 28:13-19) and before the flood took place, apostasy had developed itself among the angels of God (Gen. 6:2; Jude 6). Divine power to deal with evil was of necessity called forth, and men and angels experienced it. The apostate angels were cast into chains of darkness (2 Peter 2:4). The ungodly amongst men were cut off by the flood, and imprisoned in the other world (1 Peter 3:19) to await their righteous doom.

The Son—The Word of God

Was this, then, all that was to be known of God? Was He only a Being almighty, beneficent, gracious, merciful, and yet just, and dealing in unsparing judgment with those who rebelled against Him? No! He wanted to make Himself known in a second way. So in due time He sent His only-begotten Son who is the Word of God (John 1:1), by whom God is declared to us (John 1:18). When men saw Him, they saw the Father. By knowing the Son they could know the Father (John 14:7-9). He is the Word of God, for by Him God has been declared to us.

The Written Word

Another way in which God has spoken to us is by the written word, placing on record not only what He has done and declaring to us what He is as revealed by the Son, the Word, but acquainting us also with His desires. It reveals to us as well what He will do for the instruction of all who will hear and obey Him. God's works tell us something of what He is, but they cannot make known to us His purposes in the future. In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's heart was opened up to us. In His words the Father's thoughts were expressed.

None of us, however, have seen God or heard Him. For the abiding instruction of souls, therefore, God is pleased to communicate His thoughts in words which men may understand. He communicates in such a way that they may trust implicitly that which has been written.

The Scriptures are inspired, God-breathed. By revelation God's mind is communicated to them to whom the revelation is made. By inspiration the person selected by God is enabled to express the truth in words chosen of the Holy Spirit. In this way God provides for His truth to be transmitted without error or misconception on the part of the one chosen to communicate it. The words in which it is expressed are the words selected by God. David in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament have taught us this.

Communicating the Word

David tells us, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." 2 Sam. 23:2. His tongue, he states in Psa. 45, was the pen of a ready writer. What the Psalmist affirmed, Paul endorsed and explained more fully in 1 Cor. 2:10-13. The truth, the Apostle tells us, was revealed to the writers by the Holy Spirit. They understood it by the same Spirit given to them, and were guided to communicate it in words chosen of the Holy Spirit, communicating, as we should probably better translate the Apostle's statement, "spiritual things by spiritual means." That being done, it was for the hearer or the reader to receive the truth.

The Word Received

The Apostle then distinguishes between revelation, inspiration, and the inspired Word being received by the hearer. God's servants of old (1 Peter 1:11,12), had not always full understanding of that which they set forth, but Paul tells us that the person in Christian times was the intelligent communicator of that which he had received, and authoritatively set forth.

How marvelously all this witnesses to God's real desire for His intelligent creature man to become acquainted with the divine communications. God has taken great pains that His mind should be correctly made known, but His mind cannot be apprehended by mere human intellect. "The natural man receiveth [understandeth] not the things of the Spirit of God... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14.

Bible Witness and Review

The Bible

My Book! my Book! my grand old Book! by inspiration
given!

There every page from age to age, reveals the path to
heaven;

My Lamp of Light! in nature's night, thy unbecclouded ray
Has turned the gloom of death's cold tomb to everlasting
day.

My Chart! my Chart! my changeless Chart! by thee I guide
my bark,

A simple child on ocean wild, o'er mountain billows dark;
By thee I steer my safe career, with canvas all unfurled,
And onward sail before the gale, to yonder blissful world.

My Staff! my Staff! my trusty Staff! I'll grasp thee in my
hand,

As faint and weak on Pisgah's peak, I view the promised
land;

Not sadly told, as one of old, to see—but to explore,

My hold I'll keep through Jordan's deep till safe on
Canaan's shore.

My Sword! my Sword! my two-edged Sword! by thy
unerring might,

I deal my foe the deadly blow, in faith's unequal fight;
Thy tempered blade, that lent me aid in every conflict
past,

Shall make me more than conqueror, through Him who
loved, at last.

My Book! my Chart! my Staff! my Sword! heaven speed
thee on thy way

From pole to pole, as ages roll, the harbinger of day,
Till Christ "the Light," shall banish night from this
terrestrial ball,

And earth shall see her Jubilee, and God be all in all.

(Author unknown)

Without Blemish

A letter containing some recent family pictures left us with this feeling: surely the photographer did a good job with the touching up to cover some of the imperfections. This is a reminder to me of God's need for a lamb without blemish or imperfections. In Ex. 12, and then again in Lev. 1:3 and 10, it tells us the burnt offering was required to be "without blemish."

The peace offering of Lev. 3:1 and 6 was also required to be "without blemish." Then the sin offering in Lev. 4 is also required to be "without blemish." Also the same is required in Lev. 5 and again in chapter 6. What repetition! Is it vain repetition? Why so emphatic?

If we are to bring an acceptable sacrifice, our Substitute must be "without blemish," no blemish, none at all—not merely no major defect, but no minor one either, not one inside or outside!

Men are still searching for a perfect diamond, one with no blemish. It seems that when one appears to be found all you need is a little more magnification and a brighter light and then some shadow or flaw appears.

I might select a lamb, and think it quite acceptable to my untrained eye. A farmer with some experience in raising sheep might have a more practiced eye and see some blemish that I do not see. Or, suppose the animal has passed these inspections and one calls a doctor of veterinary medicine for an opinion. The search for defects becomes more intensive, more critical. If all still appears well, and we think the matter to be vital, with implications for eternity, we might call in an internationally known veterinarian who has specialized in breeding lambs for over forty years. Can we still pass muster after the most modern techniques for x-ray and nuclear scans? Remember, we must have no blemish. The tolerance level is zero.

Scripture provides for no "tolerance level." It is an absolute demand for perfection, zero defect, "without blemish" inside or out.

Sin has caused my life to be forfeited; I must have a substitute. Where is it to be found? A holy and righteous God before whose eyes "all things are naked and opened" (Heb. 4:13), looks not merely on the outward appearance, but on the heart as we learn from 1 Sam. 16:7.

The search through Adam's race comes up empty-handed, but God has provided Himself a lamb (Genesis 22). God has devised a scheme by which His banished ones need not be expelled. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." 1 John 4:14. Here is the one perfect Man, the first and only man that fills the bill, the first and only one that meets the demand for zero defects, no blemish.

Paul the student, the man of knowledge, says of Him that He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). Peter saw Him to be that long-sought-for Lamb without blemish, and being a man of action he says that He "did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22). Then the Apostle John who leaned on Jesus' bosom says that "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

There we have it! Perfect inside and out—three witnesses. "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." Ecc. 4:12.

If that is not enough, this should be the clincher—we have the Father's own voice expressing His approval of the Lamb of His own providing. The words are really grand, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There is no hint of reservation here, just full, complete and absolute approval.

And do we want more proof of perfection? Though He bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24), He has been received up into glory where sin can never come. Blest proof of perfection!

Here is God's Lamb—no defect, no blemish—none other will do.

J. Ryan

Instruction

To instruct even the unconverted child in the Scriptures is of great value. It is like laying a fire well, so that a spark alone is needed to kindle it into a flame. It is a good and wholesome thing for Christians to be most particular in the training of their children in a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

Bible Challenger-00-December V.05

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that defines the quality that the man with downcast eyes and well-smitten breast was looking for to meet his need.

1. Something a man amidst great calamities said he wanted to do in a certain shadow.
2. Something the righteous are preserved from even at the time they perish.
3. Something certain enemies of Israel put on their heads to gain favor with their captors.
4. That which those who are self-troublers are called.
5. The Psalmist's personal resolve as to what should characterize his walk before the Lord.
6. The second of two words mentioned that describe the Lord Jesus in His high-priestly office for us.
7. Something that is found in all saints in every dispensation, but is not called to the Lord's remembrance.
8. The man who lingered at the time of imminent danger.

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-11-November Answers V.05

1. Den of lions Dan. 6:16
2. Evil Gal. 1:4
3. Law Rom. 7:6
4. I have found a ransom Job 33:24
5. Vain thing Psa. 33:17
6. Elijah 1 Kings 17:23
7. Righteousness Prov. 10:2
8. Adversary Luke 12:58
9. Needy Psa. 72:12
10. Crown of glory Prov. 4:9
11. Encampeth round about Psa. 34:7

"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting DELIVERANCE; that they might obtain a better resurrection." Heb. 11:35.

Study Christ

What I would press upon you is to study Christ, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement, or that so sanctifies: nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love, that gives courage.

The Lord give us while resting in His precious blood to go and contemplate Him, feed upon Him and live by Him.... See Him, the lowly, blessed, patient One at God's right hand now, the One that God has given to keep our hearts right in the world of folly and pride.

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