

CHRISTIAN TREASURY VOLUME 7

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Christian Treasury Volume 7, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

223 Chapters

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Christian Treasury Volume 7

Wall of Fire

The second chapter of Zechariah has been a comfort to many Christians all through their lives. Here is a remnant who got back to Jerusalem, and the temple is about to be built. The Lord encouraged them to build it.

I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.... To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. (vv. 1-4.)

Notice the next verse: "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." The Lord would be a wall of fire to keep evil out, and glory in the midst of her in which to rejoice. The point is, faith is sustained in the day of ruin by looking onward to the day of glory. When things are dark, God gives that ray of light to cheer.

We should get our eyes on the coming glory and press on (see Phil. 3). Not one thing will ever fail on God's part. The only responsibility of the saint of God is to see that his own walk is according to God's mind. If the ruin comes in, the heart is sustained by looking onward to the day of glory.

Editorial

We change—He changes not

Events of this past year of 1991 have startled nearly everyone. Even the CIA and the KGB were greatly surprised by the downfall of Communism's control in Russia and other lands. The two years before saw the removal of the Berlin Wall and the release of Romania from a dictator's stranglehold.

These fast-moving changes in government create a kind of euphoria, but also uncertainty and restlessness. One very bright effect has been the opening up to the gospel of the grace of God vast regions which had been tightly closed for a long time. Even in Saudi Arabia thousands of Bibles and New Testaments arrived because of the coalition forces' presence.

Now as we begin a new year, map-makers have an immense problem. Where are the boundaries? What is this particular country called? As soon as one map is published, it is out of date. Men's books are often that way too. With all the progress in research and technology, educational books soon become obsolete, or at least they need revising.

God's Book never changes and is always up-to-date. In fact, it runs ahead and accurately foretells the future. Are you interested? Do you want to know what is coming? I will tell you: the Lord is coming. Although we do not know the day nor hour, yet we are sure that the time is near.

Events proceed from God. We belong to the One who is above all circumstances on earth and He works all things according to the counsel of His own will.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan His work in vain;

God is His own interpreter,

And He will make it plain.

Meanwhile, may the hope of seeing Him, who gave Himself for us, cheer our hearts as we anticipate the nuptial day when Christ will claim His bride—the true Church—and will present her "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5:27. C. Buchanan

Husband and Wife

Ephesians 5:22-23 EPH 5:22-23

"Workers Together"

God has established the relationship of husband and wife for the good of His creatures. Let us look at this subject in the Word for instruction and admonition.

The more we enter into the relationship between Christ and His Church, the more we shall understand this husband-and-wife relationship. In Eph. 5, the conduct of the husband towards his wife is regulated by the relationship in which Christ stands to the Church, and the Church to Christ. There is mischief and danger where only certain portions of the Scriptures are read, because we need the whole truth and all is given for our blessing.

Turn to Gen. 2:18-22, where we are brought back to the very commencement. The Lord God is considering the well-being of the creature He formed. All creatures were brought before Adam, but there was not one found that could be a help meet for him, or that was suitable for him (v. 20). There was not one that could enter into his thoughts and be company for him.

So God proposed and carried into execution that which He proposed, wonderfully coming forward to meet the need of His creature! Adam needed one who could enter into his thoughts, share his mind, and be a companion for him. Certainly a "help meet" is not one who is to do all the drudgery. No, I take it that she is a counterpart.

What we have had so far is the institution of marriage. Let us turn to Gen. 3:17, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife." We find here that the greatest gift God bestowed upon His creature became the occasion of his sorrow. Satan seduced Eve. But instead of listening to God, Adam hearkened to the voice of his wife, which he ought not to have done. See also Gen. 16:2: "Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai." Instead of resting upon God for the accomplishment of the promises, he listens to his wife.

In Gen. 21:8-12, we get the other side of it. Sarah had caused the trouble, but now she has the mind of the Lord in this matter. God says to Abraham, "Hearken unto her voice." She had intelligence as to the mind of God this time.

We find another example in Isaac and Rebekah. They did not exactly hit it off too well, as we say; favoritism came in and Rebekah teaches her son to deceive his father.

Now look at Rachel who, unknown to her husband Jacob, stole the gods from her father Laban. Jacob said to his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean." What was the occasion of the purging of this household? Jacob had to do with God. "Arise, go up to Bethel." Gen. 35:1-4. Bethel is the house of God; what would do for us, would not do for God. Earrings, gods, or anything else will fall into its proper place when we have to do with God.

Next turn to Josh. 15:13-19 for a beautiful picture. It is the freshness of a marriage day; the bridegroom had shown himself worthy of the bride. Achsah's father, Caleb, knew that she wanted a warrior for a husband. She moved him to ask for a field (v. 18). She moved him in the right direction. We cannot have too much of God's land. What a beautiful thing for a bride to move her husband on her wedding day. Some might think it was a piece of worldly wisdom in her. No, I believe it was a matter of faith. What was this land? In Deut. 11:8-12 it says it was a land that God had promised: a land that "drinketh water of the rain of heaven," the land for which the Lord God cares, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it. See what accordance of heart there was in this young woman with her husband? She moved him!

Helpers Together

In Acts 18:2-11 we have a couple whose occupation was to make tents, and because Paul was of the same craft, he abode with them. As he came home from preaching and teaching, they could talk together and pray together about many things.

How blessed! Thank God there is many a scene like it in these days; would that we had more of them. They little thought they were his helpers. Aquila perhaps thought more of providing for his bodily needs, and no doubt the couple prayed for him (Rom. 16:3,4).

In verses 25 and 26 of Acts 18, it is very interesting that Aquila and Priscilla see how little Apollos had learned, but instead of criticizing him, they ask him to their home and help him. They are in agreement in it too. The wife does not say, "Do not ask him to our home." What benefit the churches received by the help of these two. And there is still more: "Greet the church that is in their house." How sweet and blessed!

The Word of God and Prayer

In 1 Peter 3:1-7 we get two things brought together: the Word of God and prayer. The wives are addressed first, and it is so plain that I need not remark on it. In 1 Tim. 2, men were to pray everywhere (vv. 8-13). There is the order in the Church of God. The characteristic of men was prayer (1 Peter 3:7), and the characteristic of women was their dress. It is all plain enough. The apostle of the Gentiles speaks of it, and now the apostle of the circumcision.

Why do people adorn themselves? For others to look at? Is that your ideal? What are they in the eyes of God? God looks for adornment, which is of great price in the eyes of God. But let it be the adornment of the hidden man of the heart, expressed in a meek and quiet spirit. The covering of the head (1 Cor. 11) is "because of the angels," for they behold God's order in the Church.

In 1 Peter 3:7 we get a word for husbands: "Giving honor unto the wife. (Notice the words "giving honor," not "crushing.") Why? Because she is the weaker vessel, that is, as to nature. But there is more than that, "as being heirs together of the grace of life." What is the result? "That your prayers be not hindered." Where there is that giving honor, that care, and solicitude, there is nothing but harmony, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

The husband should care for the well-being of the wife in every detail, and care for her soul too. Where there is this care, you can go together on your knees—there is no chafing of spirit, but "heirs together." There is much more blessing when this relationship is controlled by the Word of God.

I might add another thing according to the wonderfully blessed importance of 1 Peter 3 as to wives. Even when a husband does not obey the Word of God, he may be won by her walk. Then comes the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit.

What a difference there is between a godly woman and one who is going on with the world! In fine weather you don't see it perhaps, but let the storms and trials come, and they are not "afraid with any amazement." Why? The godly woman does not fear, because she knows a power which is above it all. Then in verse 7, they both pray for their children.

What a blessing to see husband and wife together in the place of dependence and strength. There may be plenty of difficulties. Surely there are, but how are you to meet them and how are you to handle them unless you are seeking His grace.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Col. 3:18. It is a fitting thing for a wife, even for an unconverted wife, to be in subjection to her husband. In Eph. 5:24 it says, "as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Then there is another side: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."

Children

Now just a word with regard to the children. They look at the parents and they see their father loving his wife as Christ loved the Church, and their mother subject to her husband as the Church to Christ. For children to grow up with this before them is a lovely thing.

There is one word in both Ephesians and Colossians for the children, and that is obedience. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

And now "fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4. The greatest friend of a child is his father, both in Christianity or in nature. It is a lovely and blessed thing that there should be confidence between the child and his father. A child is quick to discern if anything discordant comes in. It interferes with this confidence and prevents the father from being the receptacle for the child's cares and sorrows.

So we have the love of the husband, the subjection of the wife, and the obedience of the children. May the Lord lead us more and more into a true sense of what our responsibility is as to these things, for His name's sake.

The Family

A witness to the one true and living God

We are living in a day similar to the time of the book of Exodus. Satan viciously attacked God's people then, and very subtly he attacks God's people today.

Pharaoh, a type of Satan, charged all his people concerning the children of Israel: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." Ex. 1:22. Satan wants to take our children away, especially the boys—the men. If the boys were wiped out, the girls would grow up and marry the Egyptians. Thus Satan would destroy Israel, and today Satan would destroy us as a witness to the one true and living God.

For us, the Lord's prayer was not that we be taken out of the world, but that we be kept in the world and from the evil (John 17:15).

Both Heb. 11 and Acts 7 tell us of the faith of Moses' parents. As long as they could, they hid the child Moses from the world. Our children can be hidden from the world in their years before school. Then, when in school, a real exercise must take place, as there must have been on the part of Moses' parents. They committed him to a protected part of the river, in the flags. So may we do with our children.

Moses' parents were of one accord in doing all this. They were of the same tribe. The Scriptures say, "Children, obey your parents." (Notice that "parents" is plural.) That is, both parents would be in agreement as to what a child should be told to do.

Brothers and sisters in the family can have a big influence. Miriam does in Moses' family. How wonderful now to be raised in a Christian home. We can bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). We need each other.

When Moses was grown (Ex. 2:11), he went out and looked on his brethren. He saw what the problem was, as we sometimes do, but he lacked wisdom. He has to flee, and God takes over and puts him in His school. There Moses learns that he is not to be a ruler and a judge, but a ruler and a deliverer.

In Ex. 2:6, 7 we see that God works through circumstances. "The babe wept." This attracted the attention and the heart of the princess. No doubt Moses' parents were praying. We can always do this for our children. When we are overwhelmed by our circumstances, we must look to the God of those circumstances. "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path." Psa. 142:3.

When Moses fled, "he sat down by a well" (v. 15). Next we see a change in his attitude; he drew water. He watered the flock. He takes the humble place and becomes a servant and a real help watering the flocks. Then Moses was content (v. 21).

In verses 24 and 25 we see that "God heard" and "God remembered" and "God had respect unto them." Then in Deut. 33:1 it speaks of Moses as "the man of God."

Resource

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them."

The condemnation of the people is so strong in Jeremiah 15 that the Lord declares the state of things now in Jerusalem and Judah was such that nothing could alter His fixed determination to judge the land. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth."

What then was the righteous man to do? What could the righteous man seek? We find the answer given by Jeremiah himself: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts." Jer. 15:16. This was his resource, and that of all the faithful in a day of apostasy.

The words of the Lord always become more precious to the true heart in a day of ruin when judgment is about to fall. So the Apostle Paul when warning the elders of Ephesus pointed out this resource. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." Acts 20:32. Seducers, wolves, and perverse men, all these he anticipates will be spoilers among the flock, but his counsel commends them to God and the word of His grace. So in Timothy, where Paul speaks of the last days and of perilous times coming, he says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," conveying particularly this value for the Old Testament scriptures. "All Scripture" includes the New Testament as well as the Old.

Words of Truth

Peter points to the same feature of God's Word. He was about to depart and had this intimation from the Lord that he was soon to come to the end of his time on earth. In view of his absence as an apostle, he reminded them to keep in remembrance the words of truth they had heard (2 Peter 1). The Word of God is always to be the distinguishing mark, and the anchor of hope for the believer in God.

I remember that the famous Bishop Horsley some years ago made some good remarks about this very thing. He had a strong sense of the ruin of Christendom that was at hand. He ventured to think that when the things God wrought among His people came completely into the hands of men without God's fear, God would awaken in the hearts of His people such a sense of the value of His Word that it would bring them to a degree of intelligence unknown in the previous state of the Church.

This conviction is a remarkable statement of what, I believe, has always been true in the dealings of God. It was so in the days of our Lord. Destruction was hanging over Jerusalem then, and all the Annas and Simeons and those who looked for redemption and the destruction of Jerusalem were those persons whom Malachi prepares us for in the last words of his book. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another," and the Lord holds them in special remembrance. I have no doubt that in like manner the Lord does and will do for those who value His Word until judgment falls upon Christendom.

Select the Precious From the Vile

Back in Jer. 15:19, this love of God's words is followed up with: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before Me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." The great concern of believers in an evil day is not to be meddling with the vile, but to be seeking to do good to the precious.

The gospel seeks the vile because it is God's way of making the vile to be precious. But the people of God are not to occupy themselves with what is bad, except to reject it. They are to seek what is good, to proclaim it. This is precisely what is pressed upon Jeremiah: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." That is, you will be enabled to utter God's truth and God's grace. You will be the vessel of His mind, which the mouth is. "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them." That is, do not meddle with them, but if you love His mind, His words, His truth, you will be made a blessing to them. The great point is the selection of the precious from the vile.

"And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee." The unfailing protection of God is with His testimony as long as there is one, and He Himself is with His witnesses.

W. Kelly

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What does "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14) mean? Jehovah's Witnesses use it to try to prove that Christ was a created being. Is there a better translation of this?

ANSWER: The above translation of Rev. 3:14 as quoted from the King James translation is good, and true to the original text. It is really a statement of transcendent beauty when seen in its proper connection and meaning.

It is found in the Lord's address to the church in Laodicea—that church which depicts the last stage of Christendom—which had given up the Church's heavenly calling and had assumed a great place on earth. By their own estimation they were "rich, and increased with goods," and had "need of nothing," even though Christ was standing outside. They were the very antithesis of Him whom they were to represent down here. Therefore the Lord presents Himself as the "Amen, the faithful and true witness." He was everything that the Church should have been, but was not.

"All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." 2 Cor. 1:20. Every promise was affirmed in Him, and will be confirmed in Him. Everything is made good in Christ.

In contrast with an unfaithful and untrue Christian profession as the light-bearer in this dark world, He only is "the faithful and true witness." Then comes the statement that He is "the beginning of the creation of God." Adam was the beginning of the first creation of men on earth, but, alas, all failed in him, and the first man came to his end at the cross, and has been set aside.

"The second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47), and when He came forth in resurrection He was "the beginning of the creation of God." As the risen Man He is the Head of the Church which is His body, and He is the Head of a new race. Therefore it is beautiful to see that when man had failed in everything committed to him in responsibility, all is made good in the second Man, as "the beginning of the creation of God."

We do not hesitate to call any teaching that uses this verse to indicate that the Lord Jesus was a created being, a "doctrine of demons." It is wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction. He, blessed be His name, is the Lord from heaven, the creator and sustainer of all things, but He became a man, and in His death all of the first creation, of which Adam was the head, came to an end. He came forth in resurrection as the firstborn from the dead (the place of preeminence), and is "the beginning of the creation of God."

We would add a word of caution here against having anything to do with the "damnable heresies" of the Jehovah's Witnesses, either in receiving their literature, or in listening to the propagators of blasphemies against the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God has addressed an epistle to a sister, in which He enjoins her not to allow such teachers to enter her house: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine," (the doctrine of the Father and the Son) "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11.

P. Wilson

The Absolutes of God

J. Kilcup

A teacher made a remark once that often comes to mind these days. After having heard of his need of the Savior, he remarked: "You cannot be sure of the things of which you speak, as there are no absolutes. Everything is relative." He went on to tell of the "gray areas" of life, in which it is impossible to know with accuracy what is true.

It makes my heart sing to think of the absolutes of God. We are not left in the world to wander about in "gray areas," indecision, ifs or maybes, or in our own experiences and opinions. As those who have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, have we taken time today to thank God for the faith to know and be persuaded of His verities? Have we paused to thank Him for the Scriptures which present the Savior simply and clearly as the only One able to meet our need? Have we thanked Him for a Book which gives clear answers and principles for every question, problem or trial with which we shall ever be confronted?

It is a grand thing to rest upon the absolutes of God. It is this which lifts the believer's spirit, and gives settled peace in a turbulent world. This confidence in God's Word is the very thing Satan has attempted to undermine from the beginning, when he posed the subtle question to Eve, "Yea, hath God said?" This implies that God has not really spoken to mankind; we are free to live independently of Him. The political, economic and moral conditions in the world today reflect the tragic results of man's refusal of God's absolutes.

The Word of God

Nowhere else are the great questions of life unlocked but in the Holy Scriptures. The look of faith will find our relationship with a loving God, our purpose for being on planet earth, and our eternal destiny.

When God's absolutes arrest us, we are led to the very Person and presence of our Lord Himself. Sadly true for many of us is the fact that too often our lives give evidence that this is not our experience. We readily receive the promises and assurances of God's Word, but give less attention to His commands. Yet for blessing, the latter is linked to the former.

The New Testament's one proof of love is obedience. Our Lord's words come to mind, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." John 14:23. This is a consistent absolute throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament we are taught that God prefers loving obedience to the many sacrifices we might bring or make (1 Sam. 15:22).

Following Afar off

God has not saved us merely for our pleasure, but that we might become conformed, not to this world, but to His Son (Rom. 8:29). Yet, many of us are scarcely distinguishable from the world that rejects Him. Is there a lack of apprehension of what it cost our Lord Jesus to rescue us by His atoning work on the cross? Have our habits, attitudes and life-style become so enmeshed with the spirit of the world that the freshness of first love is no more than a dull memory? Have we forgotten the great absolute of Scripture: "Ye are not your own.... Ye are bought with a price"? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Have we been for so long accustomed to following Jesus afar off, and to living among those who follow Him afar off, that we are unaware of our poverty of spirit?

To enjoy and be consistent with the absolutes of the Word of God, we must give more than a casual assent to New Testament Christianity. It must possess our hearts and affect our entire manner of life as well. Separation, obedience, humility, simplicity, modesty, self-control, and cross-bearing must be made a living part of our everyday conduct, and come fully under the control and authority of our risen Lord. There is no other course open to those who claim His name, and desire to testify of Him, and experience blessing in their lives.

Children of God

According to the New Testament, the true Church is composed of regenerated, forgiven sinners who differ from all other human beings in that we have received a superior kind of life imparted to us at the time of receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are children of God in a sense not true of other created beings. Our origin is divine, and our citizenship is in heaven. We worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. We have espoused the cause of a rejected and crucified Man who has pledged that He will return soon to take us home to the Father's house (John 14:1-3).

In the meantime, we carry His cross, suffer whatever indignities men may heap upon us for His sake, act as His ambassadors, and do good to all men in His name. And, praise God, our Lord provides the power and means for all.

Another Verity: Persecution

Another of God's verities is that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12. The Scriptures promise no immunity from persecution as long as the Church is on the earth. This is what we must expect. Those who may not be called upon to face the firing squad or the concentration camp, will nevertheless be confronted with the world's hatred. The weapon of ridicule—the sneer, the snide remark—claims its conquests for the power of evil as well as physical attacks.

In a day like ours, persecution may make the mind its target rather than the body. How imperative then for us to clothe ourselves in the whole armor of God.

How blessed it is that we can plant our feet upon the Rock in the midst of a sinking, drifting world, and grasp wholeheartedly the absolutes of the Word of God. And who can estimate the results if we would throw ourselves down before Him with an open Bible, and cry, "Here am I." "Be it unto me according to Thy word."

The Present Day

We find much instruction in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Malachi for the present day, which is somewhat analogous to the time referred to in those books. The ten tribes had been carried away by Shalman-ezer, and were lost. Judah had been carried into Babylon, and spent 70 years in captivity. A remnant from Judah returned in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the temple and the walls of the city were rebuilt. This return, and the building of the temple and walls of the city were all pure grace from the Lord.

But we see on the part of the people so favored, a constant tendency to decline. They did not go on with the work as they should. They yielded to the influence of the enemy and the work ceased. Haggai charges them with living in ceiled houses, while God's house lay waste, and they had to be stirred up afresh to go on with the work.

Then in Malachi, a little over 100 years later, we see most dreadful declension—a mass of profession without reality, in the midst of which were to be found a feeble few who "feared the Lord and spake often one to another."

This little remnant alone gets the approval of the Lord, with the assurance that they should be His when He makes up His jewels. About 400 years later we still find this feeble remnant in such as Zachariah and Elizabeth, Mary, old Simeon and Anna, and the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. But oh, how few and how feeble they were. And it is somewhat the same now, as we draw near the end—a great mass of profession with little reality.

There are those the Lord owns, and of whom He can say that thou "hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." There are those, too, who have kept their garments clean, and who shall walk with Him in white.

These are the few, not the many. In such a day, what we are called to is to hold fast. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11.

The struggle will be short, for He is near, but it is real, and we need courage to stand, even if it be alone. There was a time when no man stood with Paul. But the Lord stood with him, and the testimony was given and he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. How blessed to be able to count on Him, though all others forsake!

A. H. Rule

Bible Challenger-01-January V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words identifying those to whom the injunction of being both swift and slow is applicable. [The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.]

1. A personal habit considered when the countdown for selecting a lamb was made. [1]
2. A kind of show in which the futility of obtaining riches is demonstrated. [1]
3. A golden request made by one who declined a throne for himself or his son. [1]
4. Something to be given at the time of a census-taking to prevent dire consequences. [1]
5. The frequency rate of presenting presents to hear the wisdom of a certain wise man. 3]
6. That which should be in evidence when a reason of hope is being recited. [1]
7. A mathematical concept relating words and plagues to dissuade those who might tamper. [1]
8. A person near at hand to whom truth should surely be spoken. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-00-December Answers to V.06

1. Casteth down Prov. 21:22
2. Obedience Philemon 21
3. Not be ashamed 1 John 2:28
4. Foot out of joint Prov. 25:19
5. In returning and rest Isa. 30:15
6. Doors of thy mouth Mic. 7:5
7. Ends Psa. 65:5
8. No man forbidding him Acts 28:31
9. Condemn us 1 John 3:21
10. Executed judgments Ezek. 28:26

"And having this CONFIDENCE, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." Phil. 1:25.

Out of His Treasure

God does not tell us to look at the new nature for fruit. The fruit is of the Spirit.

We want to learn distinctly and clearly that flesh never can be with God. It crucified Christ; it will not have God, and He won't have it.

The markets of this world are controlled and driven by fear and greed.

The law requires good from a sinner, and as a consequence does not find it. It, therefore, works wrath, and condemns, and curses the sinner.

Satan is an accuser of the brethren in heaven (Job 1; Rev. 12; Zech. 3). He is the accuser of God on earth (Gen. 3), and a persecutor of the saints (Job 2; Rev. 13).

You cannot do anything for Christ apart from Christ.

Reward

"Your labor is not in vain."

Reward is for our labor. As to our place, we all get the same glory as Christ: "When [He]... shall appear," we—that is, all Christians—shall appear "with Him in glory." And Paul cannot have anything better than that. But 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, for 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. The reward has nothing to do with motive, and it is never the motive for action in Scripture; it is the encouragement in the service.

Editorial

The hope of the Jew and the Gentile

Last year in the Desert Storm war, it was amazing to see that Israel was not permitted to fight. There was a "land shadowing with wings... beyond the rivers of Ethiopia" which entirely took up Israel's cause (Isa. 18:1). The understanding of this prophecy should be very simple. Ethiopia is Cush and his descendants who settled along the two rivers of the Euphrates and the Nile (Gen. 10). The land, then, of which the prophecy speaks is beyond these two rivers, and we can easily determine, in going beyond these rivers, some land on the other side of the world must be addressed in this prophecy.

The protection (shadowing with wings means a protection) and massive support of America and the coalition forces has so far kept the little nation of Israel from destruction by her many enemies.

During most of this 20th century, powerful nations of the west have taken up, more or less, the cause of the Jew. Each of these nations has tasted a little of what will later be fully known in the time of "Jacob's trouble" in the last days. Zech. 12 describes it: "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces."

In view of the fact that God has revealed the coming judgments of the tribulation period that fall especially upon Jerusalem and Judea, but also upon nations around, what, we ask, should the Christian do? We know that our portion is distinctly heavenly. We are just waiting to hear that call, "Come up hither." This takes place before the prophecies concerning Israel can be fulfilled. God's Word is given to us, and understanding by His Spirit. So we can be undisturbed by the troubles coming upon this judged world. Even now we see things taking shape according to the prophetic word.

Knowing this, as a Christian, could I build my aspirations here in this world? Would I want to help Jews to return to Palestine, knowing that that land will be the very center where God's wrath will be poured out?

"The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." Isa. 28:21. God does not delight in judgment. It is His strange act, but although He waits long, when He judges He does it properly. He "shall... go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." Zech. 14:3.

At that time one of the notable enemies of God's people will be the fierce king described in Dan. 8. His location is north from Jerusalem, and likely is Syria or Turkey. He is subtle, and his craftiness for a while is successful. At length he stands up against the Prince of princes, and then will be destroyed.

When the Son of man arises and destroys all the Gentile powers gathered against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:9), He "will bring the third part [of the remnant of Israel] through the fire." Then further on He says, "They shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zech. 13:9.

Earthly blessing for 1000 years comes with the King, the Lord of hosts, the Lord of all the earth. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zech. 14:16.

This blessedness is coming, but before it comes the Israelis are in for disappointment and vexation and disaster. They labor much in Palestine now, but it is not of the Lord. Mostly they are modernists, and God is not in all their thoughts. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Psa. 127:1.

As we see men striving to build that which God will tear down, we surely cannot join in such enterprises. The gospel of the grace of God is the only hope for Jew or Gentile. Now salvation gathers a heavenly people. Jesus is our deliverer from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:10).

C. Buchanan

Rise up, my love,
my fair one,
and come away.

Song of Solomon 2:10

Introduction to the Bible

The Bible is a history of the world—a remarkably interesting and instructive book, a library in itself that everyone should possess.

It opens with this book called Genesis, written by Moses about four thousand years ago. Indeed, the whole book was written before 100 A.D. Here is the only authentic history of the creation of the world. Notice this: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." After this comes the story of the fall of our first father, and the deluge that followed.

Are you fond of biography? Well, here are the lives of the great men of old: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—of whom you have heard without doubt; it is all here.

After this we have the origin and history of the children of Israel—the Jews, you know, of which race our Lord and the virgin Mary were born. Here is the history of the wars of the Israelites and their kings, of Saul who died because he dabbled in spiritism, and notably of that great hero, David who killed Goliath. It is all here in this book.

Are you fond of poetry? If so, here is a collection of the most ancient and beautiful poetry in the world: 150 Psalms, most of which were written by great King David. Then you also have the wonderful proverbs of Solomon, the wisest of kings. Have you never read them?

After these are the books of the great prophets of God who, warning the world, foretold the birth of Christ hundreds of years before He came. Also it told that He should be born of a virgin, and become the Savior of all who receive Him. A deeply interesting and historical book is this book of Daniel. Have you ever heard of him? The great image of gold, the burning fiery furnace, the den of lions, and the fatal banquet are all stories found in this book. Now comes the second part of this volume, all that precedes it having been written before the birth of Christ. You will find here the most perfect account of the life of our Lord. You will find the teachings, parables, and miracles of our Lord related here, and the final sad story of His death to save us from our sins. Here are complete instructions what to do to inherit eternal life.

The next book relates how the Church originated. If you desire to know what they believed and practiced in the old days, read this book. Here is a letter of the great Apostle Paul to the church of Rome of those early days, teaching them pure and apostolic doctrine—what to believe and to do, and what to avoid. Here follow all the rest of the apostolic writings, absolutely complete, including two letters by the Apostle Peter. The last great book speaks mainly of things that are yet to come, and the end of the world. It includes a blessing from God, who inspired this book, for all who read it.

F. Glass

THE WATCHER

J. G. Bellett

Daniel 4DAN 4

The present is a moment of great significance in the world's history. We often speak of other days as having been strongly characterized and of high importance in the progress of the way of man, and in the unfolding of the purposes of God. Were we but in the due position, so as to look at them aright, the present would be seen by us as equal to any of them in importance and in meaning.

Man is preparing that great exhibition of himself, whereby the whole world is to be ensnared and deceived to its final utter ruin. Such a condition of things has already had many a miniature resemblance, and nothing has escaped the snare but "the mind of Christ." That is, the man of God is led by the Spirit through the specious and commanding delusion.

This Great Babylon

There was in other days a tree whose leaves were fair and whose fruit was much, the height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth. The beasts of the field had shadow under it, the birds of the air dwelt in the boughs of it, and all flesh fed on it. It was the admiration and the boast of all; their desire was towards it. The heart of the man who planted it claimed it as his glory and joy—"Is not this great Babylon that I have built," said the king Nebuchadnezzar.

This was the fair, luxuriant tree. All flesh was content, and man's heart feasted on it; the ends of the earth gazed at it, and thus it got its sanction from all that was in man or of man.

In a little space, however, heaven visited it; it was altogether another thing in the opinion of heaven. The Watcher and the Holy One came down, as the Lord Himself had done in the still earlier days of Babel and Sodom. This visitor from heaven inspected this tree of beauteous, wondrous growth. But with Him it was no object of admiration or worship. He was not moved to desire its beauty. In His thoughts it was not a tree good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or desirable for any end as it was in the thoughts of all flesh. He looked on it as on a thing ripe for righteous judgment, and He said of it, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit."

This was solemn, in a moment of common, universal exaltation, when the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and all flesh were glorying in the thing which heaven was thus dooming to destruction. But Daniel was the only one among men in that day who had the mind of heaven, the mind of the Watcher and the Holy One respecting this tree. The saint on the earth has the mind of heaven in him. This is our place.

Esteemed Among Men

Moral danger and temptation beset our hearts. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." And the saint, in these days, is in great danger of having more of the mind of man in him than that of God. Look at even such a one as Samuel. When Eliab stood before him he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." 1 Sam. 16:6. But he looked where the Lord did not look. He eyed the countenance of the man, and the height of his stature, while the Lord eyed the heart. And we are also in danger, in these days of both religious and secular attractions, of mistaking Eliab for the Lord's anointed (2 Cor. 10:7).

Paul was held in some contempt at Corinth because of his bodily presence, which was weak. He was no Eliab; he was wanting in outward appearance. Even the disciples at Corinth were beguiled away from Paul.

All this is a warning to us in this solemn and significant day when man's exaltation of himself is growing swiftly. Things are judged by the mind of man, and their bearing on the advancement of the world.

Religious Admiration

While the disciples held in religious admiration the buildings of the temple, we have a like occasion of the rebuke which the mind of man met from the mind of God. "As He went out of the temple, one of His disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Mark 13:1, 2.

This has the same moral character in it. It is the erring judgment of man, spending its delight and wonder on what the righteous judgment of God has already and solemnly renounced. The Lord was as the Watcher and the Holy One of the prophet, delivering the sentence of heaven upon the boast and pride of the heart of man, found, too, in the place of religion. Does this not have a voice in the ear of this present generation?

The case, however, which above all should fix on: mind at this time is that in Luke 19 the multitude was following the Lord on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem, and we are there told of them that "they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" v. 11. This tells us of the expectation of man's heart. The people judged that the present scene, the world as in man's hand, could get its sanction from God. They thought the kingdom would be set up at once. But this can never be. Christ cannot adopt man's world. Through repentance and faith man must take up with Christ's world, and not think that Christ can take up with his. The kingdom cannot come till judgment shall have cleared the scene of man's iniquities and pollutions. But this is not what man calculates at all. He judges that the kingdom may immediately appear—or be set up—without any purifying or change. Man assumes that all that is wanting is to advance a few steps farther, as from Jericho to Jerusalem, a little more progress in the growing scene and all will be the kingdom fit for God's adoption.

Man's World

This is the mind of this present generation—like those who, in this chapter in Luke, "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Things are so advanced, so refined, so cultivated by a multitude of fresh energies—moral, religious, and scientific—that under the success and progress of such energies, the world will be fit for Christ in a very little while. But no, it is man's world still, and this will never do for Christ. You may sweep and garnish the house, but it is the house of the old owner still. And for all the pains spent upon it, it is only the more fit for the old owner's designs, and in no way one single bit more suited to God's great and glorious purposes.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, but He found there a field of thorns and briars. There were money changers and sellers of doves in the temple of God. The house of prayer was a den of thieves. The rulers, chief priests, and scribes were seeking to destroy the Just One. The religion of the place was chief in the offense. Jesus wept over it. Instead of all being ready for the kingdom appearing immediately, all was ready for judgment, for the stones crying out immediately. And thus the city, as Jesus said of it, was soon to be entrenched and encompassed and laid even with the ground, instead of being the habitation of glory and the witness of the kingdom of God.

This Generation

Again the question: Is this not a voice for the ears of this generation? "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15. Jesus, as a Holy One and a Watcher again on this occasion (as in Matt. 24:1, 2) inspected the fair tree of man's worship and joy. And in spirit He said, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit." My soul is deeply assured He is so doing at this moment, touching all the progress, advancement, boasted toils and successes of this present hour. He that sits in the heavens has another thought about it all than men vainly imagine. He is not about to sanction, but to judge the world in this its day, a day near at hand, of loftiest advancement and exaltation.

Lodgings of Paul

"Prepare me also a lodging." Philem. 1:22. The lodgings of Paul in the book of the Acts furnish illustrations of various households that are in moral accord with Paul's doctrine, and which provide instruction for the preservation and blessing of our households. We may look at Paul, not only as a devoted servant of God, but as typical of his ministry which embraces the whole counsel of God.

The House of Aquila and Priscilla

Paul arrived in Corinth and lodged with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3). Corinth was a city full of corruption and vice. The saints there had absorbed many of the Corinthians' ways as we notice in Paul's first epistle to that assembly. There were, however, bright spots such as the household of Stephanas. They had devoted themselves to the service of the Lord and His people (1 Cor. 16:15). It is encouraging to see not only individuals, but households continuing on for the Lord amid evil in the world and confusion in the local assembly. Aquila and Priscilla had moved from Rome to Corinth. Later, they moved to Ephesus. Their moves illustrate the proper order for a soul to progress.

1. The epistle to the Romans sets forth the foundational truths of the gospel and the believer's position in this world.
2. The first epistle to the Corinthians gives us instruction as to the assembly, the obvious next step for a soul once he has received the gospel.
3. Then he should gain an understanding and enjoyment of the higher truths set forth in Ephesians. We do not advance in our souls apart from exercise of heart and carefulness in our walk.

Lodging for Paul

We observe the pilgrim character with Aquila and Priscilla in that they were tent-makers. It is difficult to live simply when we are surrounded by luxury, but it is in keeping with Paul's ministry. We have all been in situations and places where we have felt uncomfortable. Perhaps we have even been in a luxurious house where we have felt tension and strife. Despite the display of wealth, there were unhappy hearts. It is our privilege and responsibility to turn from pleasing self, and to give ourselves over with our households to the Lord's service. In this way we will provide a lodging for Paul, a place in moral harmony with his teaching.

Scripture is plain in telling us that riches do not produce happiness. Solomon is a powerful example of one who had every earthly advantage, but much vexation of soul. (Compare also Prov. 15:16, 17; 16:8, 19; 17:1.) May we choose the part that God calls "better". Are we living moderately with our bills paid, or are we living beyond our means on payment plans and credit? "The borrower is servant to the lender." Prov. 22:7. Our first obligations are to our creditors. It is not for us to be "giving" money to the Lord if, in actuality, it belongs to someone else.

If we are walking as pilgrims and strangers we will be free to help others with that with which the Lord has prospered us. May our hearts be enlarged to the needs of others and be exercised that our giving is a sacrifice to us, not to those to whom we have obligations. It may be we are not able to assist financially in cases of definite need because we have unnecessarily purchased things we really could not afford.

May God grant us not only to have our households in moral agreement with Paul's ministry, but to walk in the truth of the assembly with our affections fixed and eyes set on the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. Brockmeier

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

T. B. Baines

The saints will return with Jesus when He comes forth to destroy His enemies. After judgment has been executed, and Satan cast into the bottomless pit, the reign of Christ, and of certain others, begins. The Apostle John says: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Rev. 20:4-6.

What does this passage teach us? First, it shows a resurrection which takes place before the thousand years of Christ's reign. Second, it enables us to learn who are the persons then raised. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." Who, then, are "they"? They are "blessed and holy," so they must be saints.

But what saints? The persons last named (Rev. 19:14) are the armies of heaven who came forth with Jesus to make war. They are the partners of His triumph, and as victors we should expect to see them sharing His dominion. They are the only persons mentioned in the context to whom the description could refer. These armies of heaven are the saints who have been taken before to be with Jesus.

The Scriptures have shown us that the saints living when the Lord comes will be changed into His likeness and caught up into His presence, after which they will come forth with Him to judge the world. These scriptures show us that the dead saints also, who are raised when the living are translated, will come with Christ and rule in His company.

Believers—Living Changed or Dead Raised

The apostles were to "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Yet Peter, whose question drew forth this announcement, was warned that he himself should suffer death. Believers are made joint-heirs with Christ; saints are told that they shall judge the world, and sufferers with Christ are promised that they shall reign with Him, irrespective of their being alive or in the grave at His return.

The promise to the saints at Thyatira—"He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"—could not be fulfilled to them unless the dead shared this hope with the living. Indeed, the passage so often referred to seems written to prove the absolute identity between the lot of believers, whether living or dead, when Christ comes for His saints. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." 1 Thess. 4:14. Bring where, and for what? Bring forth as the sharers of His glory, for which purpose He will first raise them from their sleep, and take them with the living believers to be with Him in heaven.

Our Lord names two kinds of resurrection, though He says nothing of their being separate in time. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment)." John 5:28, 29.

Does not the resurrection of life correspond exactly with the resurrection in which they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years? And is not the resurrection of judgment the same as that in which the dead are "judged out of those things which were written in the books"? If so, and surely it would be impossible to call it in question, they are not only distinct in character, but in time. The one is the resurrection of the dead in Christ when He comes for His saints; the other is the resurrection of the rest of the dead which takes place at the end of the world.

Paul, in his defense before Felix, declares "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15. Why speak of the two classes? If he had been disputing with one who admitted the resurrection of the just, but denied that of the unjust, it could easily have been explained, but this was not the case. The division of the two classes, therefore, cannot be readily accounted for, except that the Apostle was regarding their resurrection, not as parts of one event, but as two separate transactions.

Still less could we understand our Lord's declaration to the Pharisee that he should "be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14), if the just had not a distinct resurrection from the unjust. The expression "resurrection of the just" scarcely could have been used if the two rose together. But its force is at once recognized if we bow to the truth of "the first resurrection" so plainly taught in the book of Revelation.

Resurrection from the Dead and of the Dead

Though it seems unnecessary to accumulate evidence upon a point so clear, we would call in aid an expression of Scripture often heedlessly uttered. That a "resurrection from the dead" differs from a "resurrection of the dead" is (owing to our constant confusion of the phrases) little understood. Everybody would see the difference between speaking of "the departure of a company" and the "departure from a company." The first implies the departure of the whole assembly; the second speaks of one or more persons out of the assembly. This is just the difference between a "resurrection of the dead," and a "resurrection from the dead." "The dead" is the whole company of dead persons. A "resurrection of the dead" simply means that dead persons are raised. But a "resurrection from the dead" means that one or more persons are raised from among this company of "the dead". So the phrase is invariably used in Scripture. Most frequently it is applied to the resurrection of Jesus. It is used also, however, of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1,23), the suspected resurrection of John the Baptist (Mark 6:16), the resurrection of the poor beggar, for whom the rich man asked (Luke 16:24), and the resurrection of Isaac, which Abraham believed that God was able to accomplish (Heb. 11:19). All these are resurrections of a single person from among the mass of the dead. In nearly all cases where it is used, an exclusive resurrection is evidently intended.

One of these passages is Christ's answer to the Sadducees when they sought to perplex Him about the resurrection. He replies (the answer in Mark is similar): "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke 20:35, 36. Here the expression used is the resurrection from the dead. Does the passage imply a general, or an exclusive resurrection? It cannot be a general resurrection, for all those who have part in it are like the angels, are the children of God, and are counted worthy to obtain it and die no more. It must be an exclusive resurrection then.

Notice how it corresponds morally with the "first resurrection", about which it is said that those who have part in it are blessed and holy. They are beyond the power of the second death, and are priests of God and of Christ.

Resurrection from Among the Dead

We read that the Sadducees were grieved that the apostles "preached through [in] Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:2. No doubt the resurrection of Jesus was the great subject of the apostles' testimony. But the expression implies something more than the resurrection of Jesus Himself. The apostles preached through (or in) Jesus the resurrection from among the dead.

A few weeks before, the Sadducees had asked Jesus a question meant to turn the resurrection into ridicule, and had been silenced by the answer we looked at in a previous paragraph. This answer revealed not only the fact of a resurrection, but also an exclusive resurrection of those who should be counted worthy to obtain it.

This is the doctrine which the apostles were now proclaiming, with the further truth that this resurrection was through, or in, that same Jesus whom these Sadducees had rejected. They might have been grieved at their preaching "the resurrection of the dead," but could hardly have laid hands on them, inasmuch as the Pharisees, a far more numerous sect than themselves, held the same faith. It was the exclusive resurrection, announced by Jesus, and now proclaimed through Him, that aroused their fury.

In like manner Paul speaks of Jesus as "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18), that is, as the first of those who were taken from among the dead. If the resurrection of all the other dead were to be simultaneous, He would not be the first. But He was the only one born from among the dead, the rest having no part in a resurrection from the dead, but merely in a resurrection of the dead.

This expression is not an isolated one. In speaking before Festus and Agrippa, the Apostle declares the testimony of the prophets to be that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead (Acts 26:23). Of course, the propriety of the phrase is easily seen respecting Jesus Himself. But here Jesus is declared to be only the earliest of a number to whom the same description is applicable. It is, moreover, as the first-begotten of the dead, or rather, as the first-begotten from among the dead (Rev. 1:5), that Jesus Christ is presented in the opening verses of the Revelation.

Resurrection of the Dead

It may be said—If this is the meaning of the phrase "resurrection from the dead," why is it not used with reference to the dead spoken about in the long argument on the resurrection contained in 1 Cor. 15? The reason is very plain. A "resurrection from among the dead" is also a "resurrection of the dead", so that the latter expression may be employed with as much propriety of the first resurrection as of the second.

How, then, should we expect to have the two phrases used? Surely we should expect that when the object in view was to bring out the exclusive character of the resurrection, the first expression—"resurrection from among the dead"—would be employed. But when the object was to bring out, not the exclusive character of the resurrection, but merely the fact, the latter expression—"resurrection of the dead"—would be more natural. Now the whole argument in the chapter referred to is to show that believers will rise again. This some of the Corinthians were denying.

The Apostle replies by stating God's plan, partly executed already, about the first resurrection. His teaching has no reference whatever to the resurrection of unbelievers. The question of exclusive or general resurrection with respect to believers is not, therefore, touched upon. Christ is the firstfruits, then, "they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23), and at the same time even those believers who have not slept will be changed, and death will be swallowed up in victory (vv. 51-54).

Raising of Jesus and believers Looked at in this light, the accuracy of the language is very striking. The only dead named or contemplated in the chapter are Jesus Himself and believers in Him. The raising of Jesus, then, being before the others, is described as a "resurrection from [among] the dead" (vv. 12, 20). The raising of the believers, who comprise the whole of the remaining dead, is not described as a "resurrection from [among] the dead", but simply as a "resurrection of the dead" (vv. 21, 42). In this last case the use of the expression, "resurrection of the dead", was quite sufficient to bring out the truth which the Holy Spirit is teaching.

On the other hand, if bad and good are raised together for judgment, how is it that not a word is said about either the wicked dead or the judgment? The omission is surely most powerfully suggestive.

Though the chapter does not name the resurrection of the lost, it clearly shows when it will take place.

Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Cor. 15:23-26.

After Christ's own resurrection, then the order is: first, the resurrection of them that are Christ's at His coming; second, His reign, closing with the destruction of the last enemy, death; third, the end, when He shall have put all enemies under His feet, and delivered up the kingdom to God. But when the last enemy, Death, is destroyed, the rest of the dead are raised and judged also.

Judgment

On the appearance of the great white throne, the dead, small and great, stand before God. They are judged every man according to their works, and death and hades are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-14). This is manifestly the destruction of death, for immediately after are beheld "a new heaven and a new earth," in which "there shall be no more death." Rev. 21:1, 4.

Comparing this, then, with the chapter in Corinthians, we see that the order in the two is just the same. First, the resurrection of the saved. Then, the reign of Christ, ending with the destruction of death, and the resurrection and judgment of the lost. Finally, the perfect state, when there shall be no more death. In a word, the chapter teaches, in harmony with the rest of Scripture, that the resurrection of the just and that of the unjust are two different events, the former preceding Christ's reign, and the latter being one of its most solemn, closing acts.

Springing from Unbelief

All our failure, whether sinner or saint,

springs from unbelief of the goodness

that is in the heart of

God toward us.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will you please explain Gen. 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man"?

ANSWER: After the flood, the government of the earth was put in the hands of men. Noah was the first governor; the executive power was put into his hands, and ever since in every country there have been powers that be who are ordained of God. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13, 14.)

The Christian is not a citizen of this world. He should not make the laws nor interfere with them, but be subject to them as ordained of God, except where they would come between his conscience and God, being contrary to the Word of God, he then would have to obey God rather than men. (Acts 4:19; 5:29)

In Gen. 9:5, 6 it is required that a beast or a man that kills a man shall be killed by man. Capital punishment was thus instituted by God and has not been repealed. It is for Jew, Gentile and Christian alike to be subject to that law.

Bible Challenger-02-February V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the phrase that identifies the time frame when God, the maker of all, gives songs. [The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.]

1. In the words of a famous wall-builder, where had God planted the desire to begin a great undertaking? [3]
2. What someone, who kept the law of the Lord, remembered about Him in his quiet times. [1]
3. What might well take hold of a rich man as turbulent water, if he be not previously stolen away by a tempest? [1]
4. What a certain king of Israel thought his enemies did as a battle stratagem, when in fact, they had fled in haste. [2]
5. What is it that will eventually melt with fervent heat to the accompaniment of a great noise. [1]
6. What is the unlikely time in which God is able to cause groping among the froward. [1]
7. In what perspective (of the Lord) can we rightly reckon a thousand years as but yesterday? [3]
8. What job description was once given to those who lodged within Jerusalem where the work around the city was under continual attack? [1]
9. The place of normal family safety, which proved to be inadequate for all the firstborn occupants. [1]
10. To what is the coming of the day of the Lord likened? [4]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-01-January Answers V.07

1. Eating Ex. 12:4
2. Vain Psa. 39:6
3. Earrings Judg. 8:24
4. Ransom Ex. 30:12
5. Year by year 1 Kings 10:25
6. Meekness 1 Peter 3:15
7. Add Rev. 22:18
8. Neighbor Eph. 4:25

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let EVERY MAN be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."
James 1:19.

The Christian's Legacy

Patrick Henry, a great statesman of Virginia, before he died made a will bequeathing all his property to his relatives, and at the close he wrote this true sentiment: "There is one thing more I wish I could leave you all, the religion of Jesus Christ—with this, though you had nothing else, you could be happy; without this, though you had all things else, you could not be happy."

One of the Bible's Greatest Contrasts

ABSALOM

(Father of Peace)|JESUS

God has given Him a name which is above every name. (Phil. 2:9)|

Man's choice

Third oldest

Beauty (known for his beauty)

Disobedient

Rebellious

Displeased his father

Murderer

Brought sorrow to his father

Easily provoked

No repentance

Open sin in the sight of all Israel

Made war

Sought a good reputation

Hung in a tree

Died for his own sins

Cast him into a pit

Had NO sons (2 Sam. 18:18)

|God's choice—God has highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:9)

Firstborn-heir to the throne (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:13)

No beauty that we should desire Him (Isa. 53:2)

Obedient (Heb. 5:8)

Submissive

Pleased His Father

Giver of life

Made His Father rejoice (Matt. 17:5)

Not easily provoked

Did no sin, knew no sin, in Him was no sin

Made peace (Prince of peace)

Made Himself of NO reputation

Hung on the cross

Died for the sins of the world

Laid Him in a sepulcher

Many sons (Heb. 2:10)

Put away sin in the sight of all Israel

P. Rogers

“Feed the Flock”

"Shun profane and vain babblings... but foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." 2 Tim. 2:16, 23. We need to guard against anything that would tread down the pastures, or foul the waters, by unspiritual and unprofitable discussions, thus depriving the sheep of the flock of the rich and healthful nourishment provided (see Ezek. 34:18,19).

Editorial

Let not your heart be troubled

In the Gulf war of one year ago, Israel took hits from 39 Scud missiles launched from Iraq. Now the picture is changed dramatically in that Syria, with a common border with Israel, has acquired many Scud C missiles. This newer version is more accurate and 3 times as destructive as the older model. Many, many other statistics point to the preparation for war in this region, even while great nations are frantically attempting to make peace-talks generate peace.

It reminds us of the words in Jer. 6:14, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jeremiah prophesies this in his first chapter, "Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah." vv.14, 15.

There surely has been a partial fulfillment of this prophecy, but in prophecy, I believe, God always looks on to the end—the final and complete fulfillment. All prophecy has in view the setting up of Christ as the Man of God's purpose and counsel.

The glory of God is the object and end of all God's dealings with men. The proper subject of prophecy is the earth, and God's government in it, therefore prophecy has to do with Israel rather than with the Church.

Nevertheless, the Church is still here on the earth; we are affected by events and we are interested in them, especially since we now see so many nations concerned about the impossible situation of the Palestinians and the filling up of the tiny land of Israel. It is estimated that by 1995 Israel will have 6 million inhabitants.

Jeremiah writes in chapter 6, verses 22 and 23, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy."

Zechariah is very definite in his prophecy of the time when the Lord Himself takes up the fight. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the

people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." Zech. 14:1-3.

At this present time the Lord is observing all these developments and, we may say, "biding His time" before He intervenes. "For so the Lord said unto me, I will take My rest, and I will consider in My dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." Isa. 18:4.

We, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, know that all present things are under His keen and watchful eye. He is in full control, so we need not be disturbed or alarmed at whatever happens on the earth. Indeed, we know that our Savior Jesus is our deliverer "from the wrath to come." 1 Thess. 1:10.

Israel in the wilderness praised Abraham and persecuted Moses. In the days of the kings, they praised Moses and persecuted the prophets. In the days of Christ, they praised the prophets and persecuted the Savior. In the days of the popes, they praised the Savior and persecuted His devoted followers. Multitudes now applaud the courage and fortitude of the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, but condemn as stubbornness and foolishness anything like faithfulness to the truth today.

C. Buchanan

“Be Thou Faithful

Revelation 2:10REV 2:10

Israel in the wilderness praised Abraham and persecuted Moses. In the days of the kings, they praised Moses and persecuted the prophets. In the days of Christ, they praised the prophets and persecuted the Savior. In the days of the popes, they praised the Savior and persecuted His devoted followers. Multitudes now applaud the courage and fortitude of the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, but condemn as stubbornness and foolishness anything like faithfulness to the truth today.

The Counsel of Peace

Zechariah 6:13 ZEC 6:13

This chapter, written after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and when they were seeking to rebuild the temple, was intended to encourage them in that work. It speaks therefore of Joshua, Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah (those who had come from Babylon) by name.

But "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." Although some event previously to take place may occupy the chief part of it, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is looked forward to as the ultimate point, the true consummation. So here, after an allusion to the history of God's providence in the four great monarchies, and to the judgment of Babylon, the prophet comforts the hearts of those who were returned thence with a direct prophecy of Christ.

Christ is the great object of the love of God, and the Spirit of God in Scripture always looks on to Him. No matter what the substance of the prophecy, no matter what the circumstances of those addressed, He looks forward, seeing all things as they concern Christ, and His future glory. The Jews, for instance, had many deliverers raised up for them of God in times of need (Neh. 9:27)—"saviors, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies." But the moment the Holy Spirit begins to speak of these many "saviors", He always looks out further: they were all but types of THE Savior.

When Adam fell, and judgment came in, Christ is promised, the woman's Seed, as the bruiser of the head of the serpent. After the trial of Abraham's faith in Isaac, the promise is made unto his Seed, which seed is Christ. Again, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," we are taught, referring to Christ. And so here: "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." It is "the man whose name is The Branch" who shall do all this. Zerubbabel is merely a type. Nothing is spoken casually, but all with a view to the ultimate purpose of the glory of God in Christ. Whether it affect the destinies of man, of Israel, or of the Church, all center in Jesus; God's thoughts about Jesus are marked on all.

Blessings Then and Now It must have been a great comfort to the saints of old to have future glories thus opened to them, for whenever the Holy Spirit had awakened spiritual desires in any heart, those desires could not be satisfied with anything then seen of temporal deliverance or blessing. They had much to thank the Lord for—to sing His praise for what He had done, but there was always either the actual presence of evil, or the fear of danger and evil still.

In the days of Josiah, when there was so great a returning to the ways of the Lord, and such a Passover kept that the like of it had not been since the days of Samuel the prophet, yet even then Jeremiah was uttering denunciations against the evil of the people. And the Spirit of God, in denouncing their sin, always referred to the new covenant, holding out the Lord Jesus as the One in whom alone the fullness of blessing was to center. And so with the Church now. We have indeed greater blessings and clearer revelations, but still there is evil, for we are yet in the body. In

times of the greatest revivals, there has always been that mixed with them which tended to evil. We have surely much cause to thank God and rejoice, but nothing really to satisfy. We must still be looking onward to the future blessings in Christ. Never, till He appears, will the full desires of our hearts be given us; never, until we "awake, with Thy likeness," shall we really be satisfied. Nothing less will suffice, because the Spirit of Christ is in us. Constant dissatisfaction and constant thanksgiving are ours meanwhile, for if we know Jesus risen, nothing short of the full power of His resurrection can make us content. Our hopes run on to God's ultimate purpose of complete blessing.

Unity of Hope

Here we have unity of hope with the Jews. They, indeed, are looking for earthly glory—their city and temple being rebuilt, etc.—that part of the future blessing in Christ of which Psa. 72 speaks. And we also look forward to see "the whole earth be filled with His glory," while Christ's own proper portion in the heavenly glory is our peculiar hope. Both earthly and heavenly glories meet in Jesus, and will be manifested when He comes. He is the Head of both. "The counsel of peace" is between Jehovah and the Messiah.

Where is Jesus now? As "the man whose name is The Branch," the "priest upon His throne"—an earthly throne—He does not yet rule; peace is not yet established upon the earth, for Satan is yet exercising his power. But there is a throne upon which He does sit. He has sat down upon the "Father's throne"—at "the right hand of the Majesty on high," and this "when He had by Himself purged our sins." There He is as the High Priest of His people. And thus is given to us a plain revelation of "the counsel of peace." Peace is our portion even now. We are set in the exercise of faith, by which we know and have this peace in our souls, while waiting for its establishment on the earth, and the time of the manifested glory.

There is a "counsel of peace" which belongs to us, an assured peace, peace indeed in the midst of present trouble, but still God's peace. If it were not God's peace, it would be good for nothing. I may, it is true, have my spirit much disturbed, and know trial of heart, but still I have a title to perfect peace amidst all—not only peace with God, but peace concerning every circumstance, because God is "for us" in it all.

Had not man been in rebellion against God, there would have been no need for "the counsel of peace."

Adam in paradise needed it not. But man has rebelled, and though its modifications may be various, rebellion against God is still the characteristic of the unconverted heart. Such was his rebellion, that peace between man and God seemed impossible. But now, wondrous grace! we see that there is not only peace, but a "counsel of peace"—thoughts of God concerning peace, thoughts which Jesus alone could meet. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

Peace with God

Supposing God had made peace with Adam, the peace could not have lasted; the enmity in the heart of man, or that produced by the power of circumstances thwarting his will, would very soon have broken it again. Look at Israel. They were placed in outward peace with God, owned as His people, favored in every way, yet, what was the result? Continual murmuring on their part, constant rebellion. As to moral peace with God, they had scarcely undertaken to keep His law when they set up a golden calf to worship, and thus failed directly. And it would always be the same; it must be so, for the very will of man is altogether wrong; the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Now "counsel of peace" is between God and Jesus, instead of man, and hence security. It is not merely peace, but "counsel of peace." The word "counsel" implies deliberate purpose. What solidity must there be in that peace which God had a "counsel" about, and all the engagements of which the mind of Jesus fully entered into and accomplished!

I have said that peace is our proper portion as the children of God-peace both as to sin and as to circumstances. Now it is true that the latter we do not yet have outwardly, but God is taking up all that concerns us, and has taken upon Himself to make "all things work together" for our good. The knowledge of this gives peace (if we will use our privilege) in all circumstances, be they even those of trial, perplexity, and sorrow. Was it not so with Jesus? Who can be so tried as He? "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds," yet He had always peace. And so might we: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

It is most important to see that "counsel of peace" is entirely between God and Jesus. The moment we begin to rest our peace on anything in ourselves, we lose it. And this is why so many saints have not settled peace. Nothing can be lasting that is not built on God alone.

How can you have settled peace? Only by having it in God's own way: not resting it on anything, even the Spirit's work, within yourselves, but on what Christ has done entirely without you. Then you will know peace: conscious unworthiness, but yet peace. In Christ alone God finds that in which He can rest, and so it is with His saints. The more you see the extent and nature of the evil that is within, as well as that without and around, the more you will find that what Jesus is and what Jesus did, is the only ground at all on which you can rest.

God Was Perfectly Satisfied in Jesus

God could no more rest in anything here, than Noah's dove could find a rest for her feet amidst the wrath and destruction that deluged the world. But Jesus comes in and here—on this earth where honor to God was lacking—He glorified God. When God's eye rested upon Jesus, He was perfectly satisfied. Till that moment God had not seen anything in this earth of which He could say, as of itself, in this "I am well pleased." He had gone on, it is true, dealing with man in love and grace, but He could find nothing wherein to rest. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," etc., was what God saw when He looked down from heaven. But when Jesus was searched throughout, nothing was found but perfect love and perfect devotedness to God. Even when He was forsaken of God, He still justifies Him—"Thou art holy." Had it ended there, had it been only Christ's own perfectness, all the result would have been to show out the more clearly our sinfulness and ruin by the contrast. But according to "counsel of peace," He gave Himself. Peace Was ever His; it was for us that He "made peace through the blood of His cross," and thus is He, unto God, "a sweet savor" of rest for us.

Our peace is established in what He did, and "counsel of peace" is between God and Jesus. Jesus has accomplished that which God purposed towards us. For this it was needful that He should bear our sins, and this He did as the sin offering. He was made "sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

In the sacrifices, when the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the victim, there was in that act the complete identification of himself with the victim. Now there are two great characters in the sacrifice of Christ. The one is that of the burnt offering; the other is that of the sin offering. We lay our hands on Him as the burnt offering, thus identifying ourselves with Him. "Accepted in the beloved," all His perfectness, all His "sweet savor" unto God is ours. But then as to the sin offering, it is just the reverse with the hand laid upon the victim; it became identified with my sins, charged with my guilt.

Well, beloved, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus had this double character. He has completely accomplished the purpose of God, all that which was in "counsel of peace." This "counsel of peace" was not between me and God, though I have, as the fruit of it, the enjoyment of the peace. I had not to do with it in any sense. It was between them both. All is done, and Jesus, both the accomplisher and the accomplishment, in proof that all is finished, has sat down on the throne of God.

Priest upon the Throne

It may perhaps be asked, Why, if the work is perfectly accomplished, is He yet a Priest upon the throne? He is not there at all as a Priest to work out righteousness, for that He has done and done completely. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." His sitting down is the proof that nothing remains to be done regarding atonement for His friends, and now He only waits "till His enemies be made His footstool."

In order, then, that we may have the enjoyment of these things, He is acting in another way as Priest. Having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we consequently see many things in ourselves contrary to Him—many things that would hinder fellowship with God. Now here it is that the present ministry of Christ comes in. We need His priesthood in order to maintain our communion with God. We need Him in our daily sins, as it is said, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We need the presence of perfect righteousness on our behalf before God who has ever before His eyes, and that for us, the accomplisher of "counsel of peace," "Jesus Christ the righteous."

Here, then, is "counsel of peace" which was purposed between God and Jesus. Here, and here only, have we peace. If ever our souls have any idea of finding rest in anything else, we have got out of God's way of accomplishing peace, off the ground of this "counsel of peace." He has not called us into "the counsel," which really is entirely independent of ourselves—between them both—accomplished, sure, and everlasting. Nothing can ever touch it. God has publicly owned His acceptance of Christ's work, by seating Him at His own right hand. The Holy Spirit is sent to witness to us that Jesus is now on "the throne of God," having "by one offering... perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Peace of God

We may have a great deal of trial (we know we shall), trial from circumstances around, trial from within, exercise of conscience, and the like, but still we have the perfect certainty of God's favor. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" With Paul we may reckon, because of His having given Jesus for us, along with Jesus upon everything. This is the true way to reckon upon His kindness—"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." Observe, he says, "the peace of God."

Again, the word is "be careful for nothing"; if one single thing were excepted, God would not be God. Well, if exercised, and troubled in spirit, tempted to be "careful", let us go to God about it. Our wishes may possibly be foolish wishes; still, let us go and present them to God; if they are so, we shall very soon be ashamed of them.

We have need of this "counsel of peace," because all that we are in ourselves is enmity against God. I cannot go out of this "counsel" to look at my own heart for a moment: it is "between them both." Is the Christian to make Christ's cross less complete? On that alone his peace can rest. The moment we come to establish its perfectness, the moment we seek to add a single thing, we are adding to, or rather taking away something from, the perfectness of "counsel of peace."

Who or what shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, these things shall, as means for mortifying the flesh, only minister to Christ's glory. Shall death? It will only bring us into His presence. Shall life? It is that by which we enjoy His favor. Nothing shall separate! He is "on the throne" as the eternal witness of peace accomplished, and thence He ministers it to us.

The Lord give us grace to look at Him alone!

J. N. Darby

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Please explain why it was necessary that the spear should be thrust into the side of Christ, seeing He was already dead. Was His death not full payment to God for sin? Why is it said, "It is the blood [not the death] that maketh an atonement for the soul"?

ANSWER: The spear thrust into the side (the heart) of Christ showed to all that His death was real, and moreover drew out those tokens of atonement and purification (blood and water) on which we rest, and by which we are cleansed. The death of Christ was a full atonement for sin, but blood out of the body, apart from it, is a proof of death (in the body, it is the life of it), and hence the blood is everywhere used for the atoning value of the death of Christ; not that blood is different from death, but because it is a proof of it. The blood making atonement is a more beautiful thought than the death, because it means the perfect life given up in death. The blood which was the life, now

poured forth in death, is that which is so precious in God's sight. You will observe that when the death is spoken of, it is more often in connection with resurrection, presenting the truth of deliverance from sin (Rom. 3).

Jeremiah and the Times

I feel very much the character of this present time through which we are passing. The great powers that are destined to fill out the action of Christendom's closing days are exerting themselves, each in its respective sphere, with great earnestness and skill. These powers are the civil and the ecclesiastical.

I do not doubt that for a season the ecclesiastical will prevail. The woman is to ride, for a while, and that is the symbol which signifies the supremacy of that which takes the place of the Church. And this present moment is marked by her efforts to mount the saddle. She is so adroitly directing those efforts that I doubt not success will soon attend them, and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The civil power, however, is not idle. The wondrous advance that is being made every day in the development of the world is the proof of great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting and showing what it can do, and pledging what more it means to do.

At this moment each of these powers is abroad in the scene of action, and men's minds are divided between them. They are in some sense rivals and in opposition. There is the commercial energy and the religious energy—the one pursuing its technology and exhibitions and such like, the other its bishoprics, churches, ordinances, etc. The attention of the children of men is divided between them, but the saints who know the cross of Christ as the relief of their conscience, and the ground of their separation from the world, are equally apart from both.

No doubt the civil power will have to yield the supremacy for a time, and the woman will ride again, though her state and greatness will be but short, for the civil power will take offense and remove her. Between these powers there is at times confederacy, and then at times there is enmity.

I have been conscious lately how much the language and spirit of Jeremiah suits our times. He lived in the daily observation of evil and iniquity abominating and advancing in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name, and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a den of thieves. He knew, likewise, that the judgment of God was awaiting it all, but he looked for sure and happy days in the distance which lay beyond the present corruption and the coming judgment.

He mourned over it; but he also testified against it. And like his Master (John 7:7), he was hated for his testimony. He was, however, full of faith and hope as touching the future, and therefore he laid out his money in the purchase of Hanameel's field (Jer. 32). All this was beautiful—the present sorrow, the certainty of approaching judgment, and the hope of closing, crowning glory. This is a pattern for us. I notice another thing of character or of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the perseverance of faith by occasional circumstances, or good appearances. This is seen in chapter 37. The Chaldean army had broken up their camp at the walls of Jerusalem, because of the arrival of the Egyptian allies. But Jeremiah left the city, for he held to the decision of faith that Jerusalem was doomed by God, in spite of the good appearance of a moment like that.

This is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God, not only through darkness, but through darkness that seemed to be light. And with all this he was a suffering witness.

All seems quiet around us at present, and even more than that, things are advancing and prospering as far as the social life goes. But the moral condition of the scene in the eye of faith is more serious than ever. The apostate powers of man are ripening into their most profuse exhibition. There is somewhat of rivalry between them just for the present. The secular and the religious are apart as yet. Each has its respective devotees and worshippers. But confederacy is to succeed rivalry before long. The world must, even for its own ends, adopt religion for a season, and then for that season the woman will ride the beast again. This is so that man's system may grow solid as well as extended, and propose itself as the thing that has earned for itself a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling—church separation, separation because of heavenly citizenship, and oneness with an already risen and ascended Christ. Abraham's was a very complete separation. It was twofold. He was separated from the natural associations of Mesopotamia, his country, his kindred, his father's house, and then, too, from the moral associations of Canaan, or its iniquities and idols.

May the Lord, in the thought of these solemn truths, be more real and near to us! May the prospect of His presence be more familiarly before us. And may the hope of His glory be found lying more surely and certainly in the very midst of the affections and stirring of our hearts! Words of Truth

Bible Challenger-03-March V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word which describes a certain collective relationship with God to which believers are joined together. (The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.)

1. The final act of a renegade counselor when his counsel was not followed. [2]
2. A human-like response in the face of the earth by which the judgment of God was speedily carried out. [3]
3. The place where four leprous men said mischief would come if they refrained from revealing their secret. [2]
4. That which a famous virtuous woman had no need to fear because of an abundance of scarlet clothing. [1]
5. The geographic area from which a man of great substance was acclaimed the greatest. [1]
6. The courageous act of a woman of ill-repute, thereby meriting a lifesaving reward. [3]
7. Something we all might have whereby good might be afforded to all. [1]
8. A devastating command to ten brothers to determine their faithfulness. [5]
9. One of a party of three men sent on a special mission by a band leader. [2]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-02-February Answers V.07

1. In my heart Neh. 2:12
2. Name Psa. 119:55
3. Terrors Job 27:20
4. Hide themselves 2 Kings 7:12
5. Elements 2 Peter 3:10
6. Noonday Job 5:14
7. In Thy sight Psa. 90:4
8. Guard Neh. 4:22
9. House Ex. 12:30
10. Thief in the night 1 Thess. 5:2

"But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs IN THE NIGHT" Job 35:10.

Quietness of Spirit

One great evidence of my abiding in Christ is quietness of spirit. I have my portion above, and I go on. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances while dwelling with God.

Eden versus Heaven

Behold I and the children God hath given Me.

In Eden we find man standing in innocence, but the act of sin, listening to Satan, brought in moral death. Moral death was in Satan before the creation of man, but it came then into Eden together with the natural death of the body. Just think what a scene it was in that once-fair and beautiful creation! Man was standing there identified with Satan; no harmony in that scene for God; no chord in creation answering to the Creator's heart. But oh! the wonderfulness of the ways of God! If sin reigned unto death, He could turn even that to His own praise, and bring out a greater glory than the glory of creation. He could look forward to that last Adam, and to the time when His tabernacle shall be with man, the earth shall be purged and made new and all shall serve Him.

See what a flood of glory comes in then. If Satan got man in Eden, God shall have redeemed man in glory. God's thought was to give an inheritance to those who had lost one by Adam's transgression, not by putting man again into Eden, but by bringing him into a paradise of glory, habitation of God. The Son is sitting there with Him as One who has yet to bring many sons to glory. But we cannot look at it apart from atonement. These sons must all be brought to glory from among a sinner-race; they are unclean and vile, therefore, if there were not the cleansing blood, they would never see God. "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me." None can come except the Father draw them.

How good it would be if our hearts were more occupied with the thought of God's looking all through time, that we His enemies should be brought in one by one and finally be housed away up there, to tell forth His manifold wisdom in ages to come!

"I go to prepare a
place for you...
that where I am,
there ye may be also".

John 14:2, 3

A Searching Question

"They are not of the world, even as

I am not of the world."

Where is Christ now? He has gone up to heaven and is seated there, out of the world; by "the world" I do not mean only the earth, but also the system set up by Satan all around us now. How much did Christ honor that? The only thing He found in it was a people that were to be born of God and brought out of it, linked to Himself. Are you, too, out of the world with Him? Have you a range of life outside things down here in the world but not of it, even as He was not?

What I really have is just the life of that one Person in whom is all God's delight.

It is a blessed thing to feel, as those to whom Christ has given the light of eternal life, that not only are all our springs in Him, but that the path of each one, however humble, may be marked by the spark of eternal life shining out the whole way.

If anyone asked me whether the believers I know are practically living the same life as Christ lived on the earth, what could I say? Has your walk and mine today been the walk of risen and ascended ones in Christ? Are we able to say that our life is practically the display of the life of Christ all the way?

John's Epistles

The house of the elect lady (2 John) was the sanctuary of the truth, and had to keep outside all that was not of it: all those that did not bring the doctrine of Christ with them. The house of Gaius (3 John), on the contrary, was the guest chamber of the truth, and had to open itself to the witnesses of it. She was to be the guardian of this mystery—he, the fellow-helper of it.

The atmosphere within God's house should be so full of the fragrance of the name of Christ that all who are of a contrary part should be forced out (1 John 2:19). The door at the entrance should be so closed that the same should know that they would be kept out (2 John 10), but the welcome should be so clear and fervent that all who savor and witness of that name should feel themselves at home in it. (3 John 8.)

Shall we not all join in such services as these? Surely all this is Kohathite service—this is business with the ark itself. Oxen and wagons could not aid in it. (See Num. 7.) The material of the service is too delicate for such help. The shoulders of the Levites must do the service, and even their hands must reverently, and only reverently, handle the sacred deposit committed to them.

Note: "The doctrine of Christ" is the confession of the truth as to His blessed Person—the Christ of God as revealed in Scripture. "This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." 1 John 5:20, 21.

Editorial

A new heart... a new spirit

Money, or its equivalent, from the very earliest time has been very important to man. It is interesting that it is mentioned more frequently in the book of Genesis than in any other book in the Bible.

As the prophetic plan unfolds in Scripture, we notice that at the end of man's history it is merchandise that becomes most important to man. This comes before us both in Ezekiel and in the Revelation. Money and merchandise are measures of wealth, but as men say, "You can't eat money" A significant part of merchandise is food or commodities of agricultural production.

Currently, the world is striving to increase finances and merchandise of every sort to meet the needs of the masses of humanity now living on this planet. Food supplies are bountiful, but many things interfere with equitable distribution.

One of the recent attempts to help the world situation is called Global Custody. Primarily, this is designed to serve the monetary needs world-wide. It has two related product areas: (1) Commodity-type clearing, and (2) value-added services. Doubtless, something similar to these proposals is needed in this world as it now operates.

Another thing that hinders distribution and makes life difficult for many is the breakdown of national governments and the shifting of national boundaries, especially in Eastern Europe.

Terrorism and kidnapping affect many people and efforts to stop such wicked and destructive actions have not been entirely successful.

To Israel, as well as for us all, God wrote in Deuteronomy 24:7, "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you."

Truly the problems of this present world are massive and numerous. Global economic needs are enormous when we think not just of Eastern Europe and Asia but of the masses in all of the third world nations. To solve the financial needs surely will be easy compared to the control and the behavior that will be necessary to accomplish anything like a steady political climate in which food, clothing and shelter can be enjoyed by all, or even a large part of the human race.

Man has to begin and work with the outside, whereas God always begins on the inside. Until the heart is changed, there is no hope. Ezekiel writes about merchandise in chapters 26-28, and prophesies of its collapse or shipwreck. This doubtless is in the tribulation period following the rapture of the Church. Then he takes up Israel in chapters 36 and 37. They are gathered from among all countries, and then he writes, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezek. 36:26. This will be true of Israel in the kingdom and it is what Jesus referred to in speaking to Nicodemus in John 3:5. But now through repentance (a change of heart) and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are born again.

Then, from the inside, God's work by the Spirit is manifest. Today the kingdom of God is a moral thing and you cannot see it, but you can see the results which are righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). Meanwhile, the "powers that be" which are ordained of God will continue to have great and numerous difficulties beyond their solution. We should pray for them, for they are ministers of God for our good (Rom. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2).

C. Buchanan

A new heart also will I
give you, and a new spirit
will I put within you.

Ezekiel 36:26

The Kingdom of Heaven: What Is It?

To what does the term "kingdom of heaven" apply? It applies to the condition of things during the absence of the King.

Is this a condition of unmixed good? Far from it. An enemy has been at work. He has introduced leaven into the meal. He has sowed tares among the wheat.

Are the tares good? No, they are false professors.

Is leaven good? No, it is evil doctrine, evil principles and evil influence. The meal is good, the wheat is good, the pearl is good, the treasure is good and some of the fish are good. But there are bad and good in the kingdom—in the professing church—in Christendom. Christianity is like beautiful snow as it descends from the clouds. Christendom is the odious and unsightly slush produced by the mixture of earth's pollutions with the pure material.

We must not confound the Church or assembly of God with the kingdom of heaven, or the body of Christ with Christendom. The most disastrous results flow from this confusion. It leads to the denial of all godly discipline in the assembly. We are told that the tares and the wheat are to grow together. True, but where? In the field.

But is the field the Church? No, the Lord distinctly tells us, "The field is the world."

Are we to root up the tares? No, angels will do that at the appointed time to come.

Are we to tolerate known tares in the assembly? God forbid! "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. 5.)

C. H. Mackintosh

The kingdom of God

is... righteousness, and

peace, and joy

in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17 JND

Worthy Is the Lamb

D. R. Macy

John the Baptist looked on the Lord Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"■ By faith he viewed this One as God's sacrifice for sin, the One to whom all the sacrifices of the Old Testament looked forward. By faith he saw Him taking sin out of this world by His own suffering and death. The next day, still enraptured by His person, he exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God!"²

When we come to the book of Revelation, this work is an accomplished fact. We, pictured in the twenty-four elders, are around the throne worshiping and praising this blessed One. We sing His worthiness because of His work in creation: "Thou art worthy, G Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."³ We also sing His worthiness because of His work of redemption: "Thou art worthy... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."⁴

The whole host of angels celebrates His worthiness as well. They exclaim with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."⁵ They do not sing—that is for us who have been redeemed by His precious blood; nor do they give the reason for the Lamb's worthiness—that also is the portion of the redeemed, who have spiritual intelligence. But all heaven unites to ascribe all honor to the Lamb of God.

We joy to see Thee, Lord, arise

Triumphant through the opening skies;

And hear all heaven united own

Thee worthy to ascend the throne. 6

Let's meditate in more detail on this sevenfold expression of the worthiness of the Lamb in Revelation 5:12 and contrast it with His mighty sacrifice on the cross.

Power

"This is your hour, and the power of darkness."⁷ Satan is the prince of this world⁸ and he is the god of this world.⁹ He is, for a time, in control both politically and religiously in this world. But never were the forces of evil, all the power of darkness, more arrayed in unison than when Satan energized and motivated man to crucify the Son of God. It even appeared to be a success from man's viewpoint, for all that was in his wicked heart he was able to carry out.

What about God's thoughts? What response has He put in our hearts towards the One whose sacrifice in that hour has cleansed our souls forever from every stain of sin? We now proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power." He said to His disciples just prior to His ascension, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."¹⁰ The Father has "given Him authority to execute judgment also."¹¹ "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet."¹²

On earth the song begins;

In heaven more sweet and loud—

"To Him that cleansed our sins

By His atoning blood;

To Him," we sing in joyful strain,

"Be honor, power, and praise, Amen." ¹³

Riches

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."¹⁴ Who could measure the riches of that glory that He enjoyed in that unclouded bliss of perfect communion with God His Father? For all of that past eternity, there was absolutely nothing to spoil the enjoyment of the fellowship that the Father and the Son shared together. Yet their thoughts included rebellious man and the plan to rescue him from eternal punishment. At the will of the Father, the Son would leave that scene of glory and bliss, and He would stoop to become a man, yet without sin, in order that He might give Himself as the sacrifice for sin. What poverty! What depths to which He lowered Himself!

Now that that plan has been carried out to God's eternal glory and satisfaction, now that we have been eternally blessed through the obedience of the Son, we delight to join together and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... riches." He is seated on the throne in heaven, waiting till the fruit of the travail of His soul, those who have been enriched through His poverty,¹⁵ all surround Him there to sing His everlasting praise.

Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,
Thence is all Thy people's hope;
Thou wast poor, that we might be
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee. 16

Wisdom "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness."¹⁷ After three years of Jesus' ministering to the needs of many, the consensus from man's natural heart was, "We will not have this man to reign over us."¹⁸ He put all his energy into plans to kill this One, and chose the most ignominious means of getting rid of Him who claimed to be sent from heaven, the Son of God. Man, backed by Satan, apparently succeeded. They taunted Him with, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him."¹⁹ They thought nothing more of Him than of any other man, and so when He died on that cross, they considered that they had accomplished their objective with His death, and that they had utterly gotten rid of Him.

The word from heaven, in which our hearts will unite, is, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... wisdom." That which only appears as foolishness to the natural heart is, in the wisdom of God, the sole basis for our blessing. God covered the world in darkness during three hours that day, and our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the work; He paid the price; He bore the punishment for our sins, so that God can now be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."²⁰ We receive fullness of blessing through Him, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."²¹ Surely, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."²² With the Apostle Paul we respond, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."²³

The cross! the cross, oh, that's our gain,

Because on that the Lamb was slain:

'Twas there the Lord was crucified,

'Twas there for us the Savior died. 24

Strength

"He was crucified through weakness."²⁵ Apparently Jesus was weak and all the world strong, for He offered no resistance when they came to take Him or when they crucified Him. Weakness characterized the outward spectacle of the cross and the Man who hung on it. But, as the type of the "ram caught in a thicket by his horns,"²⁶ we know that it was the very strength of His love for you and me, as well as for the ones who were crucifying Him, that held Him to the cross.

Now, as we anticipate that chorus of praise to the Lamb of God, we rejoice that the song also includes, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... strength." The Victor over Satan, the One who conquered death, the One who purged our sins through the sacrifice of Himself—He shall be exalted and shown before all the world to be the One in the position of strength. As He said to the Apostle Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."²⁷ What a Savior!

Worthy of homage and of praise;

Worthy by all to be adored:

Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!

Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord. 28

Honor

"Jesus... endured the cross, despising the shame."²⁹ He endured "such contradiction of sinners against Himself."³⁰ He submitted to the most shameful form of death known to man—crucifixion. Then, in those three dark hours on the cross, He bore our sins, the ultimate dishonor to God, in His own body on the tree. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."³¹ Only God, who laid our sins on our blessed Savior, knows the horror, the shame, the dishonor of that time of infinite suffering. "Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor."³²

When we realize that it was for us that He counted this shame as nothing in order that He might redeem us to be His, what is the response of our hearts? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... honor." This is the One whom the King delights to honor.³³

"All men should honor the Son,"³⁴ and so every knee shall bow and every tongue confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord."³⁵ In a coming day the announcement will be, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."³⁶ We who form that bride have the unspeakable privilege now, even prior to that day, and in this world that heaped every shame and dishonor on this blessed One, to honor Him with the worship of our hearts and with the testimony of our lives.

Worthy, O Son of man, art Thou

Of every crown that decks Thy brow;

Worthy art Thou to be adored,

And owned as universal Lord;

O, hasten that long-promised day,

When all shall own Thy rightful sway! 37

Glory

"Christ Jesus... made Himself of no reputation."³⁸ What an immense contrast between that unspeakable bliss that the Lord Jesus enjoyed in the glory of the Father's house in the past eternity and the lowest depths to which He went in taking a body for the suffering of death! He became a man that He might reveal the Father's heart to us. He was not here to make a name for Himself (as we speak), nor did He desire to draw the crowds after Himself as we might through a fleshly desire for prominence and prestige. The moral excellence of His person could not be hid, and those whose hearts God had touched were drawn to Him. But He was here as the "meek and lowly"³⁹ One. "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."⁴⁰ He emptied Himself of all His outward glory; He then humbled Himself and was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."⁴¹

To Him who stooped so low, our souls overflow with praise and worship, as we ascribe to Him the highest honors: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... glory." He glorified the Father in that work which He finished on the cross;⁴² He was then raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father.⁴³ God has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."⁴⁴ "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."⁴⁵ "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor."⁴⁶

Of the vast universe of bliss,

The center Thou, and Sun;

The eternal theme of praise is this,

To heaven's beloved One:

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow. 47

Blessing

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."⁴⁸ Man, whether Jew or Gentile, always seeks to win favor with God through his own efforts and energy, and this is the principle of law. So every one of us is doomed to the curse of the law, death and eternal punishment from God, because righteousness and justification are not on the principle of law.⁴⁹ Our Lord Jesus Christ came and, on our behalf, bore all the curse that a broken law could place on man, in order to redeem us out from under that curse.

To Him who has set us free, we now exclaim with grateful thanks, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...blessing." We have received "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,"⁵⁰ and as we thank Him for them we should also remember to bless Him for the glory and wonder of His Person and for the magnitude of His work that has made all our blessing possible. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.... Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."⁵¹ "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.... O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."⁵²

Jesus is worthy to receive

Honor and power divine:

And blessings more than we can give

Be, Lord, forever Thine. ⁵³

The man who had been blind in John 9 didn't know much about the Lord Jesus, but he was so attracted to the One who had healed him that, as soon as he acknowledged his belief in Jesus as the Son of God, he worshiped Him. May our hearts, too, be more attracted to this blessed One and spontaneously overflow with worship and praise. Soon we shall join that throng of the redeemed and together, without hindrance or distraction, we shall honor and bless the Lamb of God, for He alone is worthy to be adored.

Lord Jesus! we worship and bow at Thy feet, And give Thee the glory, the honor that's meet; While through Thee, O Savior, our praises ascend And join in the chorus that never shall end.⁵⁴

References: (1) John 1:29; (2) John 1:36; (3) Rev. 4:11; (4) Rev. 5:9 (5) Rev. 5:12; (6) Little Flock Hymnbook (L. F.) #216; (7) Luke 22:53; (8) John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; (9) 2 Cor. 4:4; (10) Matt. 28:18; (11) John 5:27; (12) 1 Cor. 15:25; (13) L. F. #80; (14) 2 Cor. 8:9; (15) 2 Cor. 8:9 JND; (16) L. F. #198; (17) 1 Cor. 1:18; (18) Luke 19:14 (19) Matt. 27:42; (20) Rom. 3:26; (21) 1 Cor. 1:30; (22) 1 Cor. 1:25; (23) Gal. 6:14; (24) L. F. #85 Appendix; (25) 2 Cor. 13:4; (26) Gen. 22:13; (27) 2 Cor. 12:9; (28) L. F. #195; (29) Heb. 12:2; (30) Heb. 12:3; (31) 2 Cor. 5:21; (32) Psalms 69:19; (33) Esther 6:6; (34) John 5:23; (35) Phil. 2:11; (36) Rev. 19:7; (37) L. F. #219; (38) Phil. 2:5, 7; (39) Matt. 11:29; (40) Isa. 53:2; (41) Phil. 2:8; (42) John 17:4; (43) Rom. 6:4; (44) Phil. 2:9-11; (45)

Heb. 1:3; (46) Heb. 2:9; (47) L. F. #150; (48) Gal. 3:13; (49) Gal. 2:21; 3:11,21; (50) Eph. 1:3 JND;
(51) Psa. 103:1,4; (52)Psa. 34:1, 3; (53) L. F. #102; (54) L. F. #20.

Unto Him be glory in

the church by Christ Jesus

throughout all ages,

world without end.

Amen.

Eph. 3:21

The Lord's Return in Regards to Israel

2 Samuel 15-21

(Samuel was one of the prophets in Israel who announced the days of the Messiah in Israel (Acts 3:24). The prophet presented his narrative in an allegorical form readily understood. His account begins with Israel's rejection of their king. It ends in the last 3½ years of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7).

The King Rejected

In 2 Sam. 15:10-12, 16, 17 2SA 15:10-12 2SA 15:16-17

David was driven out of Israel by his son Absalom. Absalom is a type of Israel which rejected Christ, sought His death, accomplished it at Calvary, and sent their Messiah back to heaven—to Mahanaim, (meaning "the company of two camps"), to the camp of God and His angels (Gen. 32:2; 2 Sam. 17:24). The bride of Christ is homeward bound to be with Him there, and the saints of the renewed earth will know of it (Sol. 6:13).

The Conspirators of 2 Samuel 15:31; Matt. 27:1, 22SA 15:31MAT 27:1-2

Ahithophel, which means "brother of folly", a conspirator with Absalom (Israel) had been a companion and counselor of the king (1 Chron. 27:33).

The counsel of Ahithophel was as if a man had inquired of the Word of God, so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and Absalom. But there was divided loyalty. Ahithophel went and hanged himself, as did Judas who betrayed the Lord (2 Sam. 17:23; Psa. 109:6-8; Acts 1:16-20).

The True and the False in 2 Sam. 15:32-17:29 2SA 15:32-37 2SA 16:2SA 17

The rejection of their king tried the hearts of the faithful in Jerusalem. Hushai (meaning "my hastening"), so much like Peter, hastened to go with the king, but was persuaded to return to Jerusalem and serve his master there (Acts 3:17-21).

Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, came to David with gifts and a false report about his master. He obtained a portion of the land by falsehood and exposed himself as an antichrist in character (Dan. 11:39; Matt. 24:10-12). David was deceived, but Christ will not be deceived. There will be a new division of the land according to Eze. 47:13-48:35.

Zadok and Abiathar were like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea in their faithfulness to the rejected king of Israel.

Absalom Is Slain in 2 Samuel 18, 19 2SA 18 2SA 19

The death of Absalom is the spiritual death of Israel. The prophet passes over the Church period and continues with Israel as the subject. It was so with the disciples also in Matt. 24:1-3. The Romans came and took away their place and nation 40 years after Jesus went away from the temple (John 11:48).

The Appearing in 2 Samuel 19, 20 2SA 19 2SA 20

David came down from Mahanaim with his host of followers. (See Jude 14, 15.) He received all who came to him at face value. Shimei is an example of this, but when he disobeyed Solomon he forfeited his life (1 Kings 2:41-46). Joab also was executed by Solomon.

At Jerusalem there happened to be there a man of Belial. His name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. Belial means "worthlessness"; Sheba means "he who is coming", and Bichri means "be thou first." Sheba was the Antichrist in type (2 Thess. 2:9), a son of him who would be first. (See Isa. 14:12-14.)

The king's army pursued Sheba (Antichrist) to Beth-Maachah and besieged the stronghold. There was a wise woman in the city who counseled the people to execute Sheba and cast his head from the ramparts of the city

The End of Jacob's Trouble in 2 Samuel 21:1-14 2SA 21:1-14

The Gibeonites were caretakers of the ark of the Lord for 20 years, and Saul slew them! This accounts for the death of his descendents-"His blood be on us, and on our children," and we have had a holocaust in our time.

There had been three years of famine, year after year, because Saul had killed the Gibeonites. They required that seven men of the sons of Saul be given up to them to be hanged as a recompense. There were given unto the Gibeonites two sons of Rizpah and the five sons of Merab. They were hanged on 17th Abib at the feast of firstfruits. Barley was reaped at this time and typifies the lowly man Christ Jesus, but in resurrection so that others could follow later. "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

"Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her [not for someone else] upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

The ark of the Lord was in the house of Abinadab on a hill at Kirjath-Jearim (a city of the Gibeonites) for 20 years. Scripture states that the seven men were hanged on the hill before Jehovah (2 Sam. 21:9).

Saul was the immediate cause of blood-shedding in Israel (2 Sam. 21:1). He is a figure of instability. Merab was to have been David's wife, with the hope that the Philistines would kill him as the king's son-in-law. Saul gave Michal to be David's wife for the same deadly purpose. "For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James 1:7.

From the beginning of barley harvest to the early rain of Bul is $\frac{1}{2}$ year. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of Jacob's trouble ended, and the Lord gave Israel four (completeness in that which is ordained of God) victories over the Philistines who had taken the ark of the Lord from Israel.

Then follows, in 2 Sam. 22, the millennial song of Israel's salvation, restoration, blessing and peace.

W. Bothwell

Faith

We may get into the path of faith, but we shall find then that nothing but faith can walk in it.

Faith looks back at the cross and is at peace. It looks forward and pants for glory.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: How am I to endeavor to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"? What does it mean?

ANSWER: The Holy Spirit came down from heaven personally on the day of Pentecost, and dwells in each member of Christ individually (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13, 14, etc.). The saints thus indwelt upon earth form God's habitation through the Spirit. He dwells corporately in the whole Church. (Eph. 2:22.) He unites each member to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), each member to the other members (1 Cor. 12:13), and all the members to the Head. This is the Church of God—the body of Christ.

This unity has remained untouched by all the failures of the Church. It is a unity which cannot be destroyed, because it is the Holy Spirit Himself. He is the unity of the body of Christ.

The Church of God was responsible to have maintained this unity of the Spirit, in practical, outward and visible oneness. In this she has failed; the unity has not. It remains because the Spirit of God remains. It remains even when the oneness of action is very nearly gone. The unity of a human body remains when a limb is paralyzed, but where is its oneness? The paralyzed limb has not ceased to be a part of the body, but it has lost the healthy mobility of the body.

Still, no matter what the ruin may be—no matter how terrible is the confused and unhealthy state in which things are—Scripture never allows that it is impractical for the saints to walk in the fellowship of God's Spirit and maintenance of the truth. It is always practical. The Spirit of God presupposes evil and perilous days; still God instructs us to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He instructs nothing impractical.

We never can restore anything to its former state, but we can walk in obedience to the Word of God, and in the company of the Spirit of God who enables us to hold the Head. He will never sacrifice Christ and His honor and glory for His members. Hence we are exhorted to endeavor to keep the "unity of the Spirit" (not the "unity of the body," which would prevent us from separating from any member of the body of Christ, no matter what his practice). The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, and, walking in fellowship with Him, we are kept specially identified with Christ.

In this endeavor, I must begin with myself. My first duty is to separate myself to Christ, from everything that is contrary to Him: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2 Tim. 2:19. This evil may be moral, practical, doctrinal; no matter what it is I must get away from it. When I have done so, I find myself practically in company with the Holy Spirit.

If I find others who have done the same, I am to follow righteousness, faith, love and peace with them (2 Tim. 2:22). If I can find none where I am, I must stand alone with the Holy Spirit for my Lord.

There are, however, the Lord be praised, many who have done likewise, and are on the line of action of the Spirit of God in the Church. They have the blessed promise as a resource, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. They are practically one, as led by the same Spirit, with every member of Christ in the world who has done likewise. I do not now refer to their absolute union with the whole body of Christ, but of the practice.

The basis on which they are gathered—the Spirit of God in the body of Christ—is wide enough in its principle to embrace the whole Church of God. It is narrow enough to exclude from its midst everything that is not of the Spirit of God. To admit such would put them practically out of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

This endeavor does not confine itself to those who are thus together—one with the other. It has its aspect towards every member of Christ upon earth. The walk of those thus gathered, in entire separation to Christ and practical fellowship of the Spirit and maintenance of the truth, is the truest love they can show toward their brethren who are not practically with them. Walking in truth and unity, they will desire that their brethren may be won into the truth and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They may be but a feeble remnant, but the true remnants were always distinguished by personal devotedness to the Lord, who always specially watched over them in the most tender solicitude and associated Himself specially with them!

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The first letter of each of the following responses will form a comparative statement distinguishing between certain kinds of trust and confidence. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.

1. That in which a poor man may walk, thereby elevating him over a fool. [1]
2. A double possession, not to be desired, when having them causes offenses which would lead to an unhappy future. [5]
3. The nation whose kingdom was rent from its first king and given to a neighbor of his. [1]
4. Something the will of God may cause a child of God to do because of well doing. [1]
5. A specific day which, by God's reckoning, is deemed inferior to the day of one's death. [1]
6. Something quite vehement, prepared by God, that caused a wayward servant to faint. [2]
7. A specific number of days that is deemed inferior to a single day in the courts of God. [1]
8. That which little, when accompanied with the fear of the Lord, exceeds even in great amounts because of its accompanying trouble. [1]
9. Something royal a gentile queen was deprived of after refusing to do the king's bidding. [1]
10. Something specific that wisdom excelleth, as well as all things that might be compared to it. [1]

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

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1. Hanged himself 2 Sam. 17:23
2. Opened her mouth Deut. 11:6
3. Upon us 2 Kings 7:9
4. Snow Prov. 31:21
5. East Job 1:3
6. Hid the messengers Josh. 6:25
7. Opportunity Gal. 6:10
8. Leave one of your brethren Gen. 42:33
9. Devout soldier Acts 10:7

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD of God." Eph. 2:19.

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 can be against us?"

J. H. T.

The Mischief of Satan: God Overrules it for Greater Good

The greater part of the New Testament (the epistles) owes its origin to the mischief Satan did in the Church. The mischief was only permitted that the folly of these things might be made manifest, and that the full glory of the truth might be brought out. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." The things here written of are what some pretenders held; they were persons of the highest pretensions that would seduce them. Not the gospels of course, but the great body of the epistles, of which those to the Thessalonians, Corinthians and Galatians are examples, were occasioned by the mischief the adversary brought in.

The attack of the enemy brought out in the epistle to the Corinthians the truth of the resurrection, in Thessalonians the coming of the Lord, in Galatians justification by faith. This was hardly the case in Philippians, because Paul was comforted by the love of those at Philippi. It is the same in regard to the mischief he has done from the beginning. The fall itself is the occasion of God's introducing greater blessing than before.

Whatever Satan seeks to do, as he has done from the beginning, must ultimately tend to the divine glory, and the comfort and blessing of our souls, who seek to serve God. Of course man gets humbled in it, but God overrules it for greater good.

The Remedy

In 2 John 6, the Apostle John exhorts the elect lady and those with her by saying: "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

John had seen the Lord in His wondrous life, had seen Him die on the cross, was a witness of His resurrection, beheld Him taken up into heaven, and was present on the day of Pentecost. That day of Pentecost was when the Holy Spirit came down from an ascended Christ to baptize believers into one body and thus form the Church. He also had lived long enough to see evil come into the circle of the professing Church.

But what is the remedy? Is it to begin afresh with a new and purer sect or an improved constitution? Listen to his reply by the Holy Spirit: "This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." So the Spirit of God makes it plain that He does not allow man's innovation to trespass upon the sacred principles of God's Word for the guidance of His people, no matter what their exercises may be, or whatever the date of their history.

Now apply this principle today and you must find yourself in one of two positions—either on God's ground of gathering the disciples at the beginning, or on some ground that man, in his fancied wisdom or mistaken zeal has set up since the beginning.

Editorial

Continue and Hold Fast

No one admires a quitter, especially when the end to be gained is very good. A quitter is a defeatist. Most people do admire a person who perseveres—one who persists in his course in spite of counter-influences and opposition or discouragement.

Paul wrote this to the Galatians: "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Gal. 4:18. In his personal letters to Timothy he exhorted him, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself [that is, his personal testimony], and them that hear thee [a right influence on others]." 1 Tim. 4:16.

Then in the next letter Paul says, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." 2 Tim. 3:13, 14.

The state of things around the believer in this world today is a fulfillment of this forecast, and the exhortation for us is definitely to continue—to persist in the course begun when we believed the gospel of our salvation. Our resource is the same as was Timothy's in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Surely this means to persist all the way through to the end, not to give up.

There is a prophecy of the coming of a falling away (apostasy) foretold in 2 Thess. 2:3. This open denial of Jesus as Lord has not yet come and will not come until after the rapture referred to in the first verse of the same chapter. But even now there is the giving up of the authority and efficacy of the Word of God, and of faith in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Thoughts of men have taken the place of the Word of God, and the will of man no longer allows the authority of the Word nor of Christ.

This abandonment of the supreme authority of God's Word, and the first condition of the Church and of principles upon which it was founded, is surely a moral departure or falling away from truth once known.

In Jude's epistle he tells of "certain men crept in unawares," who were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

If the great falling away has not yet come, we can say that the spirit of falling away has long ago taken hold upon the minds of men. We must be very careful to persevere in the sound doctrine of God's

Word and maintain its full authority in both profession and practice. There is terrific opposition against this path of faith and faithfulness, both from men and Satan. But "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Prov. 29:25.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

The willful sin of Heb. 10:26 is surely another indication of the open apostasy that is to come. As we increasingly see this spirit of departure from truth once known, what are we to do? Notice in this portion of God's Word that it is those who "have received the knowledge of the truth" who then sin willfully. Our security in going on for God is found in the preceding verse. "Not forsaking [not quitting, or not giving up] the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

To me it seems that in the last decade there has been an increase in giving up of truth once known.

What is your thought as to this?

C. Buchanan

"But continue thou in the

things which thou hast

learned and hast been

assured of, knowing of whom

thou hast learned them."

2 Tim. 3:14

Sabbath

by G. C. Willis

"And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." Gen. 2:2.

"Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.... And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Deut. 5:12, 15.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Ex. 20:8, 11.

The Sabbath is the first feast of Jehovah given to us in Lev. 23. Because it comes first, it calls us to consider it in a special way, and we may understand that it is very important.

"Sabbath" means rest, and we should understand clearly that in the Bible, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, having a share in God's rest is what marks God's people. This is their special privilege. As God says, "Verily My Sabbaths [rest] ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you." The form of the rest may change, as we shall see, but a share in God's rest is always the sign between God and His people.

God established this rest in the beginning at creation. God rested, and He called man to share in His rest. It is true that sin came in and spoiled God's rest, so that the Lord Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Later in Deut. 5:12-15 we see that the Sabbath was given as a memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt. It was again included in the law at Mount Sinai, not as a moral command, but as a sign of God's rest at the beginning.

In Ezek. 20:12 we find that the Sabbath was given as a sign: "Also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Thus we see that the Sabbath was a sign of God's covenant. It is very important for us to understand this. The Sabbath given to Israel was the sign of God's covenant with Israel.

Better Promises

In Heb. 8 we see this old covenant has passed away and "place" has been sought for the second, which is "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." It is most important for us to understand clearly that the covenant between God and the Jewish people is entirely set aside for us, and that the sign of this covenant (resting on the seventh day) does not belong to us. If we clearly understand this important teaching of the Scripture, it will deliver us from the snare of the teaching of Seventh Day Adventists, and all others who seek to put the Lord's people under the law.

But there is more. Our rest is not in this world. The Sabbath was the sign of rest in this world, and the Lord Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. The Spirit of God has been careful to show in the four Gospels how often He worked on the Sabbath. The Lord made no mention of the Sabbath in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), where He gave such a precious summary of the fundamental principles suited to the kingdom. The Lord Jesus passed the Sabbath in the grave, a sign of the position of the old covenant now.

The Lord's Day

Many people try to show that the Sabbath day is now the Lord's Day. But the Sabbath day was the seventh day, a rest at the end of the week, after the labor is finished. The Lord's Day is called in Scripture the first day of the week, and for us it is the day above all days. It is the resurrection day, and it shows that we find our rest in resurrection. We find our rest at the beginning of our spiritual life, instead of finding it at the end of our labors. "Come unto Me... and I will give you rest," Christ said. Our rest is in the new creation.

Some Christians think that the Lord's Day is like other days because they understand that our rest is not down in this world. But they do not understand that the Scripture clearly makes a difference between this day and the following six days of the week. The Lord Himself has chosen even the name of this day. He calls it "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10. Some people tell us this means "the day of the Lord" of which we read much in both the Old and New Testaments. But the Greek says quite another thing, and is quite a different word. This word is only used twice in the New Testament: "The Lord's supper" and "the Lord's day."

We should understand clearly the nature of the Sabbath; it was God's appointed sign of seeking rest as the result of labor under the law. The more we understand this, and understand that the Lord Jesus, who is "Lord... of the Sabbath," has disannulled the first covenant, the more clearly will we understand that any person who now seeks to maintain the authority of the Jewish Sabbath is in danger of denying the authority, the dignity, and the rights of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Grace

Let us take care, on the other hand, because we are not under law but under grace, not to forget the thought of man's rest and also of God's rest. As we pointed out before, rest is the special mark of God's own people. When we come to Christ, He gives us rest, and when we take His yoke upon us, we find rest to our souls. To the servant of the Lord who is wearied in the service of his Master (not wearied of His service), we read of another rest: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while," and there alone in the presence of His Master, far from the rush and toil, He finds rest and refreshment, and comes forth freshly girded for His work.

As to those saints who have left us and are "with Christ", they rest from their labors; they are at home with their Lord in Paradise. (See 2 Cor. 5:8 and Luke 23:43.)

The Millennium

The Millennium will be a further stage of this rest that God gives, when Christ will reign for a thousand years and Satan will be bound. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy: "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing." Isa. 14:7. The noise of war is gone. The cry of the oppressed will cease, and "the Sun of Righteousness" will bring peace and plenty to this weary earth. It will keep its Sabbath. But even this is not the final rest. The final rest is from spiritual labors in the midst of this evil, not only from sin.

During the Millennium sin will remain in this world. Satan, though bound, will be loosed again. Eternal rest, this unending Sabbath of God, we shall enjoy with the Lord Himself in a coming day, though now we have the privilege of working for Him who has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

"Come unto Me..

and I will give you rest."

Matt. 11:28

Our Warfare

God is not yet judging the nations, nor yet introducing righteous government into the earth under the hand of "His anointed". No, but rather, in sovereign grace and goodness, He is saving sinners out of them before the judgments fall. Therefore let us who are saints with a heavenly calling completely above and outside this earth not concern ourselves with mundane affairs, but rather with "the kingdom of God, and... those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 28:31. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth." Isa. 45:9.

Lot participated in the affairs of guilty Sodom; he sat as a judge in its gate. What happened to him? When the four kings fought with five, Lot and his household and all his goods became a part of the spoils of war. True enough, his uncle Abram, a separated man, rescued him, but Lot never exhibited the pilgrim character that was suited to a saint of God in those days. The world had victorious power over his soul; he re-settled in Sodom and vexed his righteous soul there until the very day of its terrible doom. Dear saint of God, beware!

Our warfare continues unremittingly. There is no discharge. The devil and his well-organized hosts have not capitulated. The only warfare that God has ever owned as the warfare of Christians ("holy brethren" with a "heavenly calling") not only has not ceased, but is increasing in intensity as the devil's time grows shorter.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Eph. 6:10-13.

We quote from a letter recently received from a servant of the Lord. "The devil is busy turning blinded hearts and minds farther and yet farther away. Satan is still the deceiver and knows his business well. It seems that there are increasing numbers of demons at work everywhere." The "great house" (2 Tim. 2:20) of Christendom is becoming full of them; will it not degenerate into "Babylon the great... the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2)?

Awake! beloved brethren in Christ, awake! "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. O think of what He has wrought for His own glory and for us, and of what we are privileged to be in this world for Him! We are spared from divine judgment like the sons of Korah, purchased with the blood of His own Son, and are made a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We have a royal priesthood to show forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and are carried upon His heart in continual remembrance in high priestly intercession (as the twelve stones were carried in the breastplate of the high priest in Israel).

We are taken into favor in the Beloved, like Mephibosheth taken into the bosom of David's royal circle for Jonathan's sake—called to walk in a path of rejection in this world, and to the obtaining of our Lord Jesus Christ's glory. It is just like those who had shared David's years of rejection in the wilderness: they later shared in all the glory of his kingdom. We are co-heirs of all that the Father has given to His Son (even as Rebekah shared in all that Abraham had given to Isaac), for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." John 3:35.

Thus we are brought into the most intimate relationships of love, the circle of the eternal love of the Father and the Son—loved as the Son is loved—even now partakers of that divine nature which is love. Left here for only a little while, we should represent Him before all men, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." Phil. 2:15, 16.

We are justified by the blood of Christ, sanctified (set apart to God) through the truth and the all-availing intercession of Him who has set Himself apart for us, and glory with Christ above is our eternal portion soon to be entered upon. Earth and heaven, the universe, under His feet (and ours), eternal and ineffable love is our destined portion! What manner of men ought we "to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 Peter 3:11.

J. H. Smith

An Open Door

"He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." Christ is not looking for strength in the saints; He enters into His own personal and peculiar service, and holds the "key" Himself, and this is our confidence.

If raging billows rise in countries around us, and the preaching of the gospel seems to be forbidden, it is in His hand. I might desire that the gospel be preached in a certain land, and the hindrances may seem to be too many and too great, but my comfort is to know that Christ has the "key", and all the divine power of God at His disposal. As it is in John 10, "To him the porter openeth," so that, when Jesus presented Himself, as in the Gospels, none could shut out His testimony. All the powers of earth—the Pharisees, the lawyers, the chief priests, the governors, the Pilates and Herods (those foxes)—could not hinder one poor sheep from hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd in the days of His flesh. And so it is now, for Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

This is our confidence in preaching the gospel, for with all the liberty with which we are blessed in this highly-favored country, I could not count upon a single year more, but for this simple promise—"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." I could go fearlessly into any country, whatever might be the outward circumstances, if I saw that the Lord had set before me an open door.

Of course, we must wait the Lord's time to have the door opened, as we see in the case of Paul. He was forbidden to speak in Asia at one time, and then we find him there for three years afterward, the Lord owning his labors there, so that all Asia—of which Ephesus, where He was gathering a church, was the capital—heard the Word of God. We shall have to be content to lean in faith on the arm of Him who holds the key, and in our patience we shall possess our souls, for there will always be circumstances to exercise our faith. God will allow these circumstances to arise, to prove to us that we cannot do without Him, for then it is we find that we have no strength, and that God answers our weakness according to His own strength, because He cannot fail to answer the faith He has given.

"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." This word has often given me great confidence—"no man can shut it." This is such a blessed comfort, that if Christ has opened a door, no man, devil or wicked spirit can shut it. Although we have no strength, even to push the door open, it is opened for us. The whole Church is weak, as weak as can be, and that in a bad sense, for what faith have we? We hear of a little faith. God shows us His power, as we have heard of in various places, but where is the strength and energy of faith to be heard of among us? But God is faithful, and will be until the day of grace has ended. In this is our confidence.

J. N. Darby

Eating the Sin Offering in a Holy Place

Leviticus 6:24-30LEV 6:24-30

In Lev. 4, there were two ways in which a sin offering was offered.

1. In the case of the sin offering for a priest or the whole congregation, the blood of the animal was carried into the holy place and sprinkled before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. Of the blood, some was sprinkled seven times before the Lord, some was put on the horns of the altar of incense, and the rest was poured out at the bottom of the brazen altar. The bodies of these animals were carried outside the camp and burned after certain parts were taken off and burned on the brazen altar.

2. In the case of a ruler or one of the common people, the blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and all the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar. In the law of the offering in the above-mentioned scripture, another detail is mentioned that was important. It was to be killed in the place where the burnt offering was killed and then the priest who offered it was to eat it in a holy place—in the court. Later it is mentioned that all the males among the priests had to eat of it.

In the first case (with the priest or the whole congregation) the matter was more serious in that the fellowship with God's people as a whole was interrupted. In the priest it was because he was the people's link with God.

It is particularly the second case that we wish to meditate on just now. In this case the offering had to be eaten by the priest in a holy place—the court of the tabernacle. In Lev. 10:17 Moses tells the sons of Aaron, "Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?" The priest was not the one guilty of the sin before God, but by eating of the offering he made the whole matter his own and thus bore the iniquity of the congregation to make atonement for them before the Lord. It was only through this priestly activity that atonement could be made.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken

spirit: a broken and a contrite heart,

O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Psalms 51:17

When there is failure in another, it is easy to see what we think is the sin or difficulty, and wash our hands of the matter, thinking in that way that we are not guilty. But if we profess relationship with God, our responsibility goes further. To eat something makes it our very own—it becomes part of us. When we, in spirit, would eat the sin offering in the holy place, it would be fully identifying with the sin, and in the holy presence of God realizing what it cost our Lord Jesus to make atonement

for that sin. It is not isolating ourselves, but identifying in this way with the guilty.

Daniel, in spirit, even though not a priest, did this in identifying with his guilty people. There was no self-justification there, only justifying God and confession of the guilt of "my sin and the sin of my people Israel." It was accompanied with real affliction of soul as indicated by fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Surely this must accompany such priestly activity: not feigned sorrow, but real sorrow produced by measuring in the holy presence of God what this has meant to our Savior on Calvary. Fasting is the attitude of denying ourselves. Sackcloth was the sign of inward mourning. Ashes speak of judgment that has been consummated.

Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ carried with Him the same spirit. As the Son of God He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Yet, when opening His public ministry, He came to John the Baptist to be baptized with the baptism of repentance. John, recognizing in Jesus the holy, spotless Lamb of God, forbade Him. But Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." In this way He identified with those guilty people who had repented. What beauty of moral perfection in our Lord Jesus we contemplate here. How much do we correspond in spirit to this?

Then, when He was on that awful cross making atonement, He so fully took our sins that He called them His own (Psa. 69:5). Only thus could atonement be made.

We need to clarify that any priestly activity in which we may be occupied is not for atonement. That work has been done once for all by our Lord Jesus on the cross. But in spirit we need to know what it means to identify with one that is guilty, and eat the sin offering in full recognition of the holiness of God. If there were more of such priestly activity alone before God, would there not be less of the confusion, shame, and division that has come among His redeemed who are responsible for His testimony here below? R. Thonney

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My
throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is
the house that ye build unto Me? and where is
the place of My rest?... To this man will I
look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite
spirit, and trembleth at My word."

Isa. 66:1, 2.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that
inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I
dwell in the high and holy place, with him also
that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive
the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart

of the contrite ones.”

Isa. 57:15.

Christian Love

"A new commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another; as I have
loved you, that ye also love one
another." John 13:34.

What a lofty standard of love is set before us in the above words! We are to love one another as Christ loved us. Now how did Christ love us? Well, He loved us notwithstanding all our infirmities, all our failures, and all our sins. He did not love us because we had none of these things, but despite them all. His was a love that rose above every barrier, and proved itself superior to every hindrance. Many waters, even the dark waters of death, could not quench the love of Jesus. He loved us and gave Himself for us.

Now, this is to be our model. We are to love one another as Christ loved us.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.... My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth....

And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.... Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.... Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

1 John 3:16, 18, 23; 4:7-12.

This is Christian love. It is the outflow of the divine nature in the believer. It may express itself in various ways. It may sometimes have to rebuke, reprove, and smite. Our great Exemplar had occasionally to do so in reference to those whom He loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love. It is a mistake to suppose that love is blind, or cannot be faithful. Such love would not be worth having. Indeed it should be called imprudence and not love. True love sees my faults and can reprove them. It can occupy itself with my faults in order to deliver me from them. It will take occasion, even from my very errors and infirmities, to display itself in its own elevated and holy activities.

"Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.... And now abideth faith, hope, charity,

these three; but the greatest of these is charity." 1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13.

There are two kinds of spurious love which we may just glance at in contrast with the lovely moral picture presented in the above quotations. These are sectarian love, and clique love. We have to watch against these. We are in great danger of loving persons merely because they hold the same opinions as we do, or because their habits, tastes and predilections are agreeable to us. The former is love of sect; the latter, love of clique; neither is Christian love. We may traffic largely in both the one and the other, and not yield obedience to the "new commandment"—not love others as Christ loved us. It is not Christian love to love our own opinions, or our own image. It is Christian love to love the image of Christ wherever we see it.

May we have grace to apply our hearts to the study, the cultivation, and the exhibition of genuine Christian love! May we drink more deeply into the spirit of Christ, and then we shall love people, not because they agree with us or suit us, but because they are agreeable to Christ and reflect His blessed image. Oh, for a vast increase of Christian love!

Questions and Answer

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

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

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

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

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

The Church had been hidden in the mind and purpose of God until Christ, having been rejected by Israel, had accomplished redemption and entered into His glory.

Faith

Faith is believing God's testimony.

By faith we are saved. (Luke 7:50.)

By faith we live. (Gal. 2:20.)

By faith we walk. (2 Cor. 5:7.)

By faith we stand. (2 Cor. 1:24.)

By faith we endure. (Heb. 11:27.)

By faith we subdue. (Heb. 11:33.)

By faith we fight. (1 Tim. 6:12.)

By faith we overcome. (1 John 5:4.)

Faith is a grasping of Almighty power;
The hand of man laid on the arm of God;
The grand and blessed hour
In which the things impossible to me
Become the possible, O Lord, through Thee.

The 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 here 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 it 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.

In the three Epistles of John, "the truth" is constantly referred to, and a Christian woman is warned not to receive anyone into her house, nor wish him God-speed unless he holds the doctrines taught by the apostles—in other words, "the truth".

Bible Challenger-05-May V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word describing the spiritual possessions of all Christians which now can only be enjoyed by faith in heavenly places. [The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.]

1. A near relative who through subtlety took away a valuable heritage from another. [1]
2. Something from the south given to a daughter who later received things upper and nether. [1]
3. That which drinketh oft, thereby richly rewarding the dressers thereof. [1]
4. A repository into which those who deposit according to the divine formula are promised heavenly dividends. [1]
5. A heart activity in some widows to former acts of kindness by one who now was overcome by his own grief. [3]
6. God's mathematical promise to an old man comparing his future progeny to stars and sand. [5]
7. Something, though negative, is really quite positive when added to that which maketh rich. [2]
8. A mountain close to Mt. Ebal having particular significance to the Israelites when they were brought into the land of promise. [1]
9. A promise of something to come down seasonally when the Israelites are brought into their millennial land. [3]

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

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1. Integrity Prov. 1:9:1
2. Two hands or two feet Matt. 1:8:8
3. Israel 1 Sam. 15:28
4. Suffer 1 Peter 3:17
5. Birth Eccl. 7:1
6. East wind Jonah 4:8
7. Thousand Psa. 84:10
8. Treasure Prov. 15:16
9. Estate Esther 1:19
10. Rubies Prov. 8:11

"IT IS BETTER to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Psa. 118:8.

Godly Counsel

A young Christian man had been nominated for a public office. Before accepting the nomination he wrote to a respected brother in the Lord for counsel.

The reply was soon forthcoming: "A dead man does not vote, nor does he receive votes."

Believers are pronounced dead:

To self (Gal. 5:24);

To sin (Rom. 6:2, 11);

To the law (Rom. 7:4);

To the world (Gal. 6:14);

To religion (Col. 2:20-23).

Sin in the Flesh

"Who shall deliver me from the
body of this death? I thank God
through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 7:24, 25

Someone asked, What is the flesh? What is there more in man than body, soul and spirit? As 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"), a something which "lusteth [or struggles] 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. 8:7. 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".

Perplexity

"Consider the work of God:

for who can make that straight,

which He hath made crooked?"

Eccles 7:13

Often God seems to place His children in positions of profound difficulty, leading them into a wedge from which there is no escape, contriving a situation which no human judgment would have permitted, had it been consulted previously. The Lord Himself conducts them there. You may be thus involved this very hour.

It does seem perplexing and very serious to the last degree, but it is perfectly right. The issue will more than justify Him who has brought you into the situation. It is a platform for the display of His mighty power and grace.

He will not only deliver you, but in doing so He will give you a lesson that you will never forget, and which you will remember later with thanksgiving and praise. You will never be able to thank God enough for having done just as He has.

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Psa. 50:15.

Editorial

In God We Trust

The four words, In God we trust, are found on the coins and printed monies of the United States of America. This profession of faith in God has been, and is, a powerful witness in this world to the one true God, and surely God Himself is pleased to have such a testimony. Especially is this so when we consider that much of the world uses American money. So these four words, In God we trust, are publicly read wherever there is even a limited acquaintance with English.

Now let us, each one for himself, think about what it means to trust in God. We who belong to God by faith in Christ Jesus should consider just how much we do trust God. Do we trust Him for everything? Certainly for salvation we do trust Him, but do we in the lesser things of life?

Psa. 40:4 says, "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust." It is instructive for us to see the progress in Psa. 56. First it says in verse 3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Then in verse 11 we read, "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

As to money, there is a warning for us in 1 Tim. 6:17. We quote: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God." In Mark 10:24 Jesus said unto them, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" Are we those that trust in uncertain riches, or do we "trust in the living God, who

is the Savior [Preserver] of all men, specially of those that believe"? 1 Tim. 4:10.

It is one thing to trust in God, and it is quite another thing to trust God. No matter what the circumstances around us, we should always trust God. Paul is a wonderful example for us in this. When God revealed to him the coming shipwreck, he could say, "I believe God." All that God says is true. Faith in Him is never disappointed.

The other side of this is, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. 3:12. God accuses Israel and says to them in Jer. 2:27, "They have turned their back unto Me, and not their face." Surely that was unbelief and departing from the living God. Would any of us who are God's people today do such a thing?

C. Buchanan

A Great Recompense for a Great Faith

by J. Escuain S.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

This article is based on Dan. 3, which the reader is strongly encouraged to consider prayerfully before reading what follows.

In this portion of the Word of God we see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, three of the saints in the Old Testament who were very privileged, for they were the objects of a marvelous and divine mediation to save them from a terrible death and they were able to enjoy some unspeakably precious moments in sweet company with the Lord. This was a marvelous privilege which undoubtedly would mark the rest of their lives!

It is very important to see the route by which they reached this sublime occasion. Let us examine their circumstances. These young men must have suffered much in seeing their country being conquered, and in being exiled to a heathen country far from Israel. This meant they were far from the land they had inherited from God, and, what was more, far from the temple—the place where God dwelt among them—and taken to a strange country where God was not feared. One could think that these last circumstances would not matter much to many of the Israelites since that exile was precisely a punishment from God on Israel because of their unbelief and idolatry. But these three men were different; they were part of a faithful remnant. This can be seen in their attitude when they united themselves to Daniel in his purpose of not being defiled with the food of the king of Babylon. They renounced the only thing that could seem attractive to exiled men such as they were in the palace of a hostile king. They were blessed and, as all could see, their health benefited from it.

Their faith and faithfulness, however, are revealed in a much stronger way later on. Throughout the whole country an edict is proclaimed by which everyone must adore the abominable statue that had been raised by the king, under the penalty of death for those who should disobey. In the midst of all the people, we see these three men alone remaining faithful to God, and not bending their knee before the idol.

Please consider for a few moments what it means to remain firm when everyone else yields, alone in the midst of a hostile nation, and threatened with the penalty of death. What would you do in such circumstances?

Their faith yet undergoes a harder trial. After having stood firm for the Lord before the people, they are taken before the king where they are again threatened and their faith in God questioned. Their answer is not delayed; it is as firm as before. Confronted by the horrid death with which they are threatened, they still confide fully in God with no fear of leaving their lives in His hands. How many of us, before a threatening enemy, would go on trusting our Father completely?

Not only do they glorify God by showing this confidence, but furthermore, they are ready to die if such were the will of God. They will not prostrate themselves before the idol; they will not give honor to a work of men instead of to God, and they will not disobey Him. What a great joy that sacrifice of His children must have been for God! (Psa. 116:15.) Undoubtedly, it was "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

The three young men who have defied the heathen king, are delivered to their executioners. They tie them and cast them into a furnace, overheated with the wrath and hatred of those of this world toward the children of God (John 15:18-21). Even the men who push them in are killed by the heat of the flames. Humanly speaking, there is no escape for the three believers, but God works, and the unbelieving king, frightened, is a witness of it. He sees the men free, who before were tied. They are walking in the flames, suffering no harm, and with another Person in whom the king recognizes Deity. Their God not only delivers them, but also blesses them with His presence. What a great joy for those men to enjoy the company of the Lord, those moments of incomparable sweetness among the flames of wrath of this hostile world!

Are we ready to enjoy the presence of the Lord amidst the adverse circumstances that surround us, or will the flames fill our sight and make us flee? More than that, would we offer our life to God for His glory, or would we dishonor Him for the fear of losing it?

When they are rescued from the furnace, the king of Babylon, that great king and powerful conqueror, is defeated and glorifies God. The great faith and great confidence of the three young men has not only glorified God in showing toward Him fear and obedience, but also in defeating His adversaries who can only praise Him and acknowledge Him.

What a great victory for which they were ready to pay a great price! They were not like many of us who, confronted with a threat to our possessions or to our safety, shrink instead of looking to God, or like the others around us, bowing down before some abominable statue of this world. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

"This is the victory that overcometh
the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4

Our Lord Jesus Christ

"His name shall be called Wonderful,
Counselor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6

H. E. Hayhoe

THE PERSON of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is beyond the comprehension of the human mind. He Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matt. 11:27. The Son has revealed the Father, but NO MAN knows the Son. His Person is a divine mystery.

He was David's son as born in Bethlehem, but He was at the same time David's Lord in the glory of His Person (Matt. 22:41-46).

Though equal with God, He took the place of a servant—wondrous grace (Phil. 2:6, 7). He took a life capable of death, though not subject to death (Heb. 2:9). No man took His life from Him (John 10:18). He had the power to give life (John 10:28). In His blessed manhood He was at the same time "over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Rom. 9:5. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead BODILY." Col. 2:9.

He is addressed by the Father as God: "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:8.

The Godhead

EVERY ACTIVITY of the Godhead is always in Trinity. The first time the name of God is mentioned in the Bible, the Hebrew word used is God in the plural. In the Hebrew language there is singular, dual, and plural.

The Hebrew word for God in the plural is Elohim. This is the word used in Gen. 1:1.

The Hebrew word for God in the dual is Elohim. It is never used in the Scripture.

The Hebrew word for God in the singular is Eloah. The first time this is used is in Deut. 32:15-17 where He is contrasted with idols.

The order in Scripture is always: God the Father in purpose, the Son, the One who carries out the purposes of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the power by which they are fulfilled. This truth runs all through the Word of God.

Creation

It was the purpose of God the Father that creation would be the sphere for the display of all His counsels (Eph. 1:9, 10).

The Son is the One by whom all is created and upheld (John 1:1-4; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1-3).

The Holy Spirit is the power in creation (Job 26:13; Psa. 104:30).

Redemption

God the Father in His love purposed the blessing of man (John 3:16). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" 2 Cor. 5:19.

Christ in the obedience of love accomplished the work of redemption (Heb. 10:7-10).

He (Christ) "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Heb. 9:14.

Resurrection

God the Father raised Christ from the dead (Acts 3:15).

Christ, the Son, raised Himself from the dead (John 10:18).

The Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11; 1 Peter 3:18).

God, the Son as Man

He could be hungry, thirsty and weary, that He might be a sympathetic High Priest.

As God He could still the winds and the waves. He could raise the dead; He could open His disciples' understanding. He could and did communicate power. He knew the thoughts of those about Him, and could and did foretell the manner of His death.

He is the ETERNAL I AM (John 8:58).

To deny the full Godhead glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is to turn one's back on the ONLY Savior.

Those who do so will die in their sins (John 8:24). The Scripture says, "None... can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. 49:7), but the Lord Jesus was perfect God AND perfect man as He walked here on earth. It is His Person (God the Son) that gives value to the work of atonement He accomplished when lifted up on the cross (John 3:14). Thus we see that in order to have the knowledge of salvation as in John 3:16, one must believe in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

"No man knoweth the Son,

but the Father;

neither knoweth any man

the Father,

save the Son, and he to

whomsoever the Son

will reveal Him."

Matt. 11:27

Sitting

I never met anyone who made service prominent who knew what it was to sit at the feet of Jesus. But, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service. And it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be most competent to serve, and most in His confidence, which, after all, is the clue to all efficient service.

Perfection

He who is perfected forever as to his conscience, cleansed from all his guilt, and saved from wrath to come by the blood of Jesus, should cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Surely, for him whose sins are put away by the sacrifice of Jesus, it is only his reasonable service that he should present his body a living sacrifice, in order that in him might be seen the reflection of the glory of Christ on high, produced by the Spirit of God which dwells in him.

King of a Country, Father of a Family

The same person may be king of a country and father of a family, and this is the difference between God's actings towards us and the Jews. Towards the Church it is the character of Father; towards the Jews it is the character of Jehovah the King. His faithfulness, unchangeableness, His almighty power, His government of the whole earth—all this is revealed in His relationship towards Israel. It is in this way that the history of this people lets us into the character of Jehovah.

Psa. 126, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion... then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them."

Ezek. 39:28, "Then shall they know that I am the Lord [Jehovah] their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there." This is the way in which Jehovah reveals Himself.

The Father reveals Himself to our souls by the gospel, by the spirit of adoption, but Jehovah makes Himself known by His judgments—by the exercise of His power on the earth. I have said that the Father reveals Himself by the gospel, because the gospel is a system of pure grace—a system which teaches us to act towards others on the principle of pure grace, as we have been acted on by the Father. It is not "eye for eye, tooth for tooth"; it is not what justice requires—the law of retaliation or equity, but a principle according to which I ought to be perfect, as my Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48.) But it will not be mere grace that is suffering evil and doing good, in the government of Jehovah. Jehovah, without doubt, will bless the nations, but the character of His kingdom is that "judgment shall return unto righteousness." Psa. 94:15.

At the first coming of Jesus Christ, judgment was with Pilate, and righteousness with Jesus, but when Jesus shall return, judgment shall be united to righteousness. Now the people of Christ, the children of God, ought to follow the example of the Savior (that is, they should not expect or wish that judgment should be in the rigor of righteousness, but they should be gentle and humble in the midst of all the wrongs which they suffer on the part of man). United to Christ, they are compensated for all their wrongs in the strength of His intimate love, which comforts them by the consolations of the presence of His Spirit, and more than this, by the hopes of the heavenly glory. On the other hand, Jehovah will console His people by the direct acting of His righteousness in their favor (see Psa. 65:5), and by reestablishing them in earthly glory. The Jews, then, are the people by whom and in whom God sustains His name of Jehovah, and His character of judgment and righteousness. The Church is the people in whom, as in His family, the Father reveals His character of goodness and love.

J. N. Darby

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

God, the Holy Spirit, is here upon earth, not merely in each believer as an individual, but corporately, in the Church of God. The individual believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God—anointed, sealed (Rom. 8:9, etc.; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; Eph. 1:13, 14, etc.), baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body, with all other believers. The baptism of the Holy Spirit does not leave him an isolated person. Its action connects him with all other believers, as a body, and with Christ the Head of His body (1 Cor. 12:12, 13). The promise of the Lord as to the Comforter was that He should not only be with them, but in them. The Lord was with them—the Holy Spirit, in His absence, would be both with them and in them, consequently the Holy Spirit at Pentecost not only "filled all the house," but He "sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," etc. Acts 2:2-4 JND. He not only filled each one, in Acts 4:31, at the gathering for prayer, but manifested His presence collectively in their midst, by shaking the place where they were assembled.

F. G. Patterson

Power with God

It has been asked, How did Jacob prevail over God? (Gen. 32:24-28) It was by earnest weeping and supplication. God in mercy suffered Himself to be prevailed over, thus showing His acceptance of Jacob's strong crying and tears. When the wrestling had reduced Jacob to the sense of powerlessness in himself, he clung to the angel in his weakness, and God suffered him thus to prevail over Him.

This scene is referred to in Hos. 12:4, "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him." Jacob's history is that of a saint who did not walk with God, yet as a saint, he valued the promises of God and sought to enjoy them by human means which were not upright. We need faith for the means as well as for the end which God has in view. Jacob halted morally for twenty-one years, then the moment came when God brought His controversy to an issue with him. His dividing of the flocks and his present for Esau showed that he had no real faith in God's care, though he prayed earnestly enough at the same time. He was a froward man, and we read, "With the froward Thou wilt wrestle." (Psa. 18:26, margin.)

God met Jacob alone and wrestled with him to bring him to the sense of weakness and nothingness, but does not prevail. At last He touched the hollow of his thigh, and it was dislocated. Reduced to the extremity of weakness and powerlessness, yet he clung to the angel, conscious of who was there, and with weeping and earnest entreaty he sought a blessing from Him whose strength is "made perfect in weakness," and he prevailed. He was blessed, and for the name "Jacob" (that is, supplanter) he received that of "Israel" (that is, prince with God) who had power with God and prevailed. God answered with His blessing, having reduced His servant to the consciousness of entire weakness and inability to do without Him. But Jacob bore the marks of the controversy and halted upon his thigh for life.

How often we see this! When God's controversy with the souls of His people is slighted, at last they are brought to a moment when all is gone but God. Then the blessing flows freely but the mark of the discipline which was needed to reduce the soul to that point is seen for the rest of the life. Yet the day dawns and the sun rises on one who has had a deep and blessed lesson from a faithful God.

How all this puts us in mind of our perfect Lord and Savior! His weeping and supplications—"strong crying and tears"—mark the perfection of One who felt in its verity the place He had undertaken in love, yet He must go through and drink the cup, and be forsaken of God. Here was perfection perfected. If it must be so, He will have the cup from no hand but His Father's. He goes on to the cross, and "All My bones are out of joint" was His cry at that solemn moment, when God was averting His face from the Son when He was made sin for us. He bears the marks of His sufferings in glory, and forever! F. G. Patterson

Divine Love

Love was the conformity to the nature of God, the living expression of what He was, the manifestation of having been made partakers of His nature: it was the acting and feeling according to His likeness. This love is developed in reference to others, but others are not the motive, although they are the object. It has its source within; its strength is independent of the objects with which it is occupied. Thus it can act where circumstances might produce irritation or jealousy in the human heart. It acts according to its own nature in the circumstances, and by judging them according to that nature, they do not act upon the man who is full of love, except so far as they supply occasion for its activity and direct its form. Love is its own motive. In us participation in the divine nature is its only source. Communion with God Himself alone sustains it through all the difficulties it has to surmount in its path. This love is the opposite of selfishness and of self-seeking, and shuts it out, seeking the good of others, even (as to its principle) as God has sought us in grace. (See Eph. 4:32; 5:1, 2.) What a power to avoid evil in oneself, to forget all in order to do good!

It is worthy of note that the qualities of divine love in 1 Cor. 13 are almost entirely of a passive character.

The first eight qualities (vv. 4, 5) pointed out by the Spirit are the expression of this renunciation of self.

The three that follow (vv. 5,6), mark that joy in good which sets the heart free also from that readiness to suppose evil, which is so natural to human nature, on account of its own depth of evil, and that which it also experiences in the world. The last four (v. 7) show its positive energy, which—the source of every kind thought—by the powerful spring of its divine nature, presumes good when it does not see it, and bears with evil when it sees it, covering it by long-suffering and patience, not bringing it to light, but burying it in its own depth—a depth which is unfathomable, because love never changes. One finds nothing but love where it is real, for circumstances are but an occasion for it to act and show itself. Love is always itself, and it is love which is exercised and displayed. It is that which fills the mind: everything else is but a means of awakening the soul that dwells in love to its exercise. This is the divine character. No doubt the time of judgment will come, but our relationships with God are in grace. Love is His nature. It is now the time of its exercise. We represent Him on earth in testimony.

J. N. Darby

The strength of divine love

is independent of

the objects with which

it is occupied.

Love is its own motive.

Light Bearers

This world without Christ is darkness. It is the sphere where Satan, the prince and god of this world and the prince of the power of the air, holds sway, together with his hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:2), "the rulers of the darkness of this world." Eph. 6:12.

We who, through the power and grace of our God and Father, have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And not only so, but we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. We are not of this world, but we are in it (John 17). And though a long-suffering God is still lingering over this scene of increasing corruption, violence, and enmity against Him, He waits to be gracious. Though the light of His gospel still shines, yet darkness is daily thickening around us, darkness that may be felt.

It may be solemnly asked, What about the light in our houses amidst the growing darkness around us? Have we, like those Israelites in Goshen, light in our dwellings? And is that light shining brightly, giving "light unto all that are in the house," and is it seen by them that come into the house? It is true, we are light in the Lord, blessed be God! But what comes next? "Walk as children of light." The light has not been given us to be hidden under the bushel of commerce and worldliness, or under the bed of idleness and self-indulgence, but to give light to every inmate of the house, and to those that come in.

Thanks be to God, we know that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand," but for this poor world it is otherwise. The day (of salvation) is far spent, and the night is at hand. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world: the last hour before daybreak is the darkest and coldest. And that hour is now, but it only proves that for us the change is at hand. The star is in the sky; He who is the bright and the morning star, our Savior, is coming to take us up to Himself.

But how will He find us in whose hearts He has made the corresponding daystar arise? Will He find that blessed hope shining upon our hearts and feet in the light of it? Will He find the light of that hope shining in our houses, and turning them into tents like that of the Patriarch of Mamre from whom the Lord could not hide that thing which He did? He knew that Abraham would command his children and his household after him (318 servants at the time), so that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord might bring upon Abraham that which He had spoken of him.

Let us remember that we are not only to be light bearers, as to the glorious gospel of God and His truth, but that we are to "walk in the light, as He is in the light," "who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." This light, it is true, is to shine in the walk of every individual Christian. He is called, not only to announce, but to adorn by his walk, the gospel of God and the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." J.V.P.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: In 1 Peter 4:5-6, is "quick [living]" and "dead" moral or physical? Is it the same in each verse?

ANSWER: In both verses it refers to physical life and death. In verse 5 it is those currently alive and in verse 6 those now dead, who had had the glad tidings preached to them when they were living. As glad tidings were preached, though not in the same way or fullness, in times past to men then living though now dead, as well as to men living now, it was so that they might be judged as men in the flesh if they refused the message, but live (as regards God) in the Spirit if they accepted it. The Jews were apt to slight the judgment of the dead, through their preoccupation with the judgment of the living at the appearing of the Messiah. Hence the Apostle is the more careful to show the believers from among them, not merely, as in chapter 3 the judgment which awaits those formerly disobedient who are kept in prison awaiting their final doom, but the twofold end of the good news in the promises proclaimed to men in the past. It was either judgment as men in the flesh responsible for their works, or living according to God in the Spirit because the word was mixed with faith and issued in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Bible Challenger-06-June V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that identifies the earth's solid support system becoming out of course because of a lack of understanding. [The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.]

1. A "numeric" son who was prophetically mentioned as the one to start rebuilding a cursed city. [1]
2. Something the One who was fulfilling prophecy said He would do to utter secret things in parables. [3]
3. Something a certain man prided himself on having, but was silenced when the acts of creation were rehearsed before him. [1]
4. The reason an ill-prepared tower builder might have to endure a time of mocking. [5]
5. Something a well-prepared builder did to find a sure footing for his house. [2]
6. Those who have established the sure footing for fellow citizens of the household of God. [3]
7. The measurement of the largest stone used in Solomon's buildings. [2]
8. Something believers are expected to depart from when once the name of Christ is personally owned. [1]
9. Something all the doors in a Roman prison did immediately after a great earthquake. [1]
10. Advice given to him that believeth in view of things tried, precious, and sure. [3]
11. The garnishment for the second support of a wall surrounding a remarkable city. [1]

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

Bible Challenger-05-May Answers V.07

1. Brother Gen. 27:35
2. Land Josh. 15:19
3. Earth Heb. 6:7
4. Storehouse Mal. 3:10
5. Sing for joy Job 29:13
6. I will multiply thy seed Gen. 22:17
7. No sorrow Prov. 10:22
8. Gerizim Deut. 11:29
9. Showers of blessing Ezek. 34:26

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual BLESSINGS in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3.

Slow Travelers

Eleven Days Journey Required Forty Years

"There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea." Eleven days! And yet it took the children of Israel forty years to enter the land! How was this? We need not travel far for the answer. It is only too like ourselves. How slowly we travel onward! What windings and turnings! How often we have to go back and travel over the same ground again and again. We are slow travelers because we are slow learners. We may feel disposed to marvel how Israel could have taken forty years to accomplish a journey of eleven days, but we may, with much greater reason, marvel at ourselves. We, like them, are kept back by our unbelief and slowness of heart, but there is far less excuse for us than for them, inasmuch as our privileges are so very much higher.

Some of us have much reason to be ashamed of the time we spend over our lessons. Our God is a faithful and wise, as well as a gracious and patient teacher. He will not permit us to pass cursorily over our lessons. Sometimes, perhaps, we think we have mastered a lesson, and we attempt to move on to another, but our wise Teacher knows better, and He sees the need of deeper plowing. He will not have us be armchair theorists or superficial learners. He will keep us, if need be, year after year going over the same notes until we learn to sing.

Now while it is very humbling to us to be so slow in learning, it is very gracious of Him to take such pains with us in order to make us well-grounded. We have to bless Him for His mode of teaching, as for all beside—for the wonderful patience with which He sits down with us over the same lesson again and again, in order that we may learn it thoroughly.

C.H.M.

Hand and Heart

We often speak of tracing
things up to the hand of God,
but do we give His heart credit
for moving His hand?

Boasting Excluded

If we could be saved by the works of the law, it is manifest we should have very good reason to boast. Everyone who went to heaven on the ground of his own works would be singing, Worthy am I and till he got there it would be clearly presumption on his part to say he was sure of being saved.

But it is not presumption for those who believe in Jesus to say they are saved. God says they are, and their salvation is due entirely to the grace of God through faith, and that, as Scripture says, excludes boasting. Yes, and more than that, God will have no discord in heaven. There will be no one there who will deserve to be there and so all the song shall be: "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 forever and ever. Amen." Rev. 1:5, 6.

It is not presumption then to say that He has washed me from my sins in His own blood. It is the very thing that shuts out presumption, that leads our hearts away from ourselves and our own doings to Jesus and what He has done, there to make our boast in Him and in His finished work.

"Forever be the glory given

To Thee, O Lamb of God!

Our every joy on earth, in heaven,

We owe it to Thy blood."

A Fruitful Bough by a Well

Joseph is a well-known type of Christ, but it is not every reader of the Bible who delights to trace out the application and fulfillment of the type. Take, for example, John 4:6. Why is it mentioned, "Now Jacob's well was there"? Surely it is to arrest our attention in some special way, and in Gen. 49:22 we discover the secret.

"Joseph," we read, "is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." In this wearied Man, therefore, who sat by the well of Sychar, we see the true Joseph. And even while we gaze upon Him we behold His branches running over the wall of Judaism, and reaching with their goodly fruit to this poor woman of Samaria.

If not actually, yet morally (for this characterizes John's gospel), the archers had sorely grieved Him, and shot at Him, and hated Him. But His bow abode in strength (Gen. 49:23, 24), as is shown by the deliverance He wrought that day for this poor captive of sin.

E. Dennett

Editorial

The Suffering Messiah

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered around 1947 in caves near the Dead Sea, contain early manuscripts of parts of every book of the Old Testament, except Esther. They also contain manuscripts of some other ancient writings.

In some of the scrolls, mention is made of a Messiah-like leader who was killed. They use words like piercings, wounds and put to death. Also of that leader they say the branch of David and Root of Jesse. The language is like Isaiah where it says that for our sins "He was wounded."

At the time when Jesus came most Jews expected a Messiah who would restore Israel to political dominance. However, the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows that the writers had the idea of a Messiah who would suffer and die. They also had the prophecy of Caiaphas the High Priest who said, "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John 11:50.

Even after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the apostles in Acts ask Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The Lord answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:6-8.

In Luke 24, the Lord says to the two walking toward Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ [Messiah] to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" Luke 24:25, 26. Then in verses 44 to 48 He says, "These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which

were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ [Messiah] 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, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

If a Christian, a saved Jew or Gentile, would ask today the same question the apostles asked the Lord in Acts 1, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel," what would the answer be? We suggest this: the answer is still nearly the same. The exact time "the Father hath put in His own power." One thing we do know is that now we are almost 2000 years nearer to the Lord's coming for His redeemed heavenly company, and then after that He begins His dealings with those on the earth. He will, and He alone can restore the kingdom to Israel.

The Apostle Peter writes of the prophets, "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11.

Men cannot be exactly sure when the Dead Sea Scrolls were written, yet it is interesting to see that they testify (and perhaps beforehand) of a suffering Messiah. Ed.

Diamonds

“And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord
of hosts, in that day when I make up
My jewels.”

Malachi 3:17.

Every diamond does not shine alike. Some cannot shine because they have never been cut. The brilliancy of the light depends largely upon the character of the facets. Three things are needed to make us shine: First, we must be diamonds, saved and precious in His sight.

Second, we must be cut and fashioned to His own will.

Third, we must abide in the light of His presence. “In Thy light shall we see light.”

In the Desert with God

IN THESE DAYS of hurry and pressure, we find ourselves face to face with a terrible danger. It is this: no time to be alone with God. The world is running fast in these last days; we live in what is called "the age of progress." We must keep pace with the times, so the world says. But this spirit has not confined itself to the world only; it is also found among the saints of God. And what is the result? The result is no time to be alone with God, and this is immediately followed by no inclination to be alone with God. And what next? Surely the question does not need an answer. Can there be any condition more deplorable than the condition of a child of God who has no inclination to be alone with his Father?

How many of God's dear children nowadays have picked up the "spirit of the age," and how many Christians are pushed into service for God, or thrust themselves into it, who have had no "apprenticeship" —no desert training. They have taken a terrible shortcut into the front of the battle, for that shortcut has cut off entirely the school of God!

Examples How different this is from what meets our eye in the pages of our Father's Book. If it is Abraham we look at, we find him sweetly communing with his God, far away in the plains of Mamre sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day (Gen. 18:1). At the same time, his worldly nephew is keeping pace with the "spirit of the age" in ungodly Sodom.

If it is Joseph we consider, we find him at least two full years in God's school—although it were Egypt's dungeon—before he stepped up to teach the senators wisdom (Psa. 105:22), and "save much people alive." Gen. 50:20.

If we read of Moses, we find him at God's school in the backside of the desert (Ex. 3:1). Then, but not till then, he appears publicly as the deliverer of the people of God.

If it is David we look at, the wilderness for him is the school of God. There he slays the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:34-36), when no human eye was near. He gets the victory alone with God. Fresh from God's school he steps before the thousands of Israel, and while all Israel fearfully follows Saul, the people's man, he is one who does not. He is the one who has been at God's school in the wilderness alone with Him. Surely it is no wonder, then, that the Lord wrought a great victory in Israel that day!

We might multiply instances from God's Word. We might tell of Elijah, a bold witness for God, who was longer alone with his God than standing in the place of public testimony. He found the solitude of Cherith (1 Kings 17:3), and the quiet seclusion of Zarephath (v. 9), a needed training before he delivered the messages of God.

We might tell of John the Baptist who was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel (Luke 1:80). Or we might tell of the great Apostle Paul, whose journey to Arabia seems to have been for no other purpose than to be at God's school in the desert (Gal. 1:17). But from the instances we have already pointed out, nothing can be clearer than this, that if you and I are to be

of any use to God down here—if we would glorify Him on the earth—we must have time to be alone with Him.

Whoever or whatever is put off, God must not be put off. We must have time, every one of us, to be alone with God. It is in the closet that the "lions" and the "bears" must be slain. It is in the secret presence of God, with no one near but Him, that the spiritual Agags must be brought out and hewn in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (1 Sam. 15:33).

God's Work in God's Way

When we appear before our brethren or the world, we shall find ours to be the "strong confidence" which is the portion of all who have to do with God in secret. The "Goliaths" shall be slain—no doubt of that. God's work shall be done—no doubt of that either. We need not fear that God will not use us. It is only by being in God's school that He can use us—not perhaps in the dazzling way that the world and many Christians admire, but in His own way, in a way that shall most honor Him.

The Lord will make all these things clear to us while we are alone with Himself. It is only then we really do God's work; it is only then we do it in God's way, and only then we do the very things God has fitted us for, and at the very time appointed of the Father.

What secrets we get from the Lord when alone with Himself! If we do not care for the secret of His presence, what does He care for all our boasted service? It is ourselves He wants, and it is only service flowing out of the joy of His presence that is worthy of the name. It is only such service that shall stand the fire of the judgment seat, and bring joy that we have not run in vain, nor labored in vain in the day of Christ.

May each one of us have an open ear to the Master's voice when He says to us, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place," remembering that though He were the Son of the Father, we find Him time after time departing into a solitary place, and there praying, although in doing so, He had to get up a great while before day. The faithful witness Himself, as well as His faithful and trusted servants in every age, required a desert experience—a wilderness teaching—alone with God. And so do we.

W. Shaw

Bible Challenger Clues

1. 1 Peter; 2. Luke; 3. Proverbs; 4. Philippians; 5. 1 Samuel; 6. Psalms; 7. 1 Peter; 8. Matthew.

What Is Inspiration?

by H. H. Snell

By inspiration we mean that which is God-breathed. We are told, "All [or every] Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. 3:16. It might be rendered, "Every scripture is God-breathed." The scriptures are therefore a revelation from God, and their force and authority to our hearts and consciences flow from that fact. If Scripture is not God's Word, it has no more value to us than the writings of good men. But it is His Word, so it comes to us with the authority, love, wisdom and holiness of God. Though its pages run over thousands of years, take us back before time was, and lead our thoughts on to the eternal state, and though some of the books were written more than three thousand years ago, it is unlike any other book, for it is always new. Take up an ordinary volume of human composition, written two or three hundred years ago, or even go back to one of the so-called Fathers, and you will find you have scarcely patience to read a few pages, but Scripture, as we have said, is always new. It carries with it a freshness and power to the heart and conscience that no other book does, and all the changes in the world and in mankind never affect it.

Scripture warns us against "men" and their "philosophy", ritualism and its imposing ordinances, and of putting "tradition" instead of Christ in the place of authority. While addressing itself to the heart and conscience, it always has a voice of instruction and blessing to those who believe and receive its words as from the mouth of God. Those who do not believe cannot understand it, for "through faith we understand." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Psa. 25:14. And we have "joy and peace in believing." But "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14.

The Bible is the only book that faithfully tells us what we are, and that 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 also 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 also shows its divinity, for the world by wisdom knows not God (1 Cor. 1:21). The variety of aspects in which the Son, who came forth from the Father to save sinners, is presented to us— His personal glory, moral perfection, finished work, walk, words, ways, life, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, present offices, and future judgments and reign—as the leading truths of Scripture, give it also a divine character.

Its unity carries with it the stamp of divinity as nothing else could. 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 have their accomplishment in the latter, and the immense number of quotations in the New from the Old Testament prove the soundness of the doctrines taught. All these combine to give it a divine character which is incontestable. It is not, then, surprising 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.

There are many who, instead of bowing to Scripture as God's Word and allowing it to judge them, sit in judgment on the things of God and thus take common ground with the infidels. Alas! such is the pride of man, that many prefer their own opinions to Scripture, and make void the Word of God so that they may keep their own tradition. So also, the Word is being solemnly fulfilled in men's rejection of Holy Scripture, which states that "seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13.

If we have not the words of God, we have no basis for faith and must therefore be tossed about with irremediable uncertainty, but having divinely-given communications, we have on their authority divinely-given certainty as to eternal salvation. By it we have present assurance, founded on the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ, that our sins are forgiven, that we have eternal life, are the children of God, and shall not come into judgment (Acts 10:43; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:1). If such are asked why they believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, and why they have such certainty as to their present and eternal blessings, their reply will be, "Because God in His Word says so, and faith needs no other authority for confidence, and no other rest for the heart and conscience."

We live in an evil and perilous time. At first heathen idolaters were chiefly those who scoffed and mocked at the Scriptures being God's own revelation of His mind; later on, avowed infidels in Christendom treated the subject with scorn and ridicule. Today, however, it is those who profess to be

servants of Christ and guides of the flock of God who are so busily engaged in undermining the eternal verity of the holy Scriptures and their divine authority. This too, is seldom attempted as a whole by one person, but by different persons in various places, so that it may be, by Satan's strategies, less evident. At this moment there is scarcely a vital and fundamental doctrine of Scripture that is not being assailed or corrupted within the length and breadth of Christendom.

What has especially stirred many hearts at this time is the consciousness of the appalling state of souls in the neglect of the Scriptures, and the skeptical thoughts that are current among professors of Christianity as to their divine authority. Not that we imagine that we have power to lead any to see and act differently, for we are told that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The prayer, however, of many has been that God will yet work by His Word, and bless and help souls according to His own thoughts and for His own glory.

Obedience and Communion

Communion and obedience go together. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." The Spirit has been sent here in order that, in communion, in relationship and affection, we might be in the good of the place in which He has set us. Let us not forget that obedience and communion go together.

Hold Fast

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Rev. 3:11

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." Psa. 25:14. There has been an outbreak of departure from the inspiration of Scripture. The Lord spoke in John 14:21 of him who keeps His commandments, and in verse 23 (JND) of him who keeps His Word. He tells us these are those who love Him. He then says in verse 24, "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings [words (plural)]." This indicates that the Scriptures are verbally inspired.

Some translations have departed from the verbal inspiration of Scripture, using the words of men to supplant the words used by the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. Which are we to choose—the words of men or the words of inspiration? Paul said, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1 Cor. 2:13.

He says to us today, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Notice the words, "no man". To keep His Word and not deny His name is to put the accent on His Word, and watch against a shift of emphasis away from the Word of God to ministry. The early brethren searched out the truth from the Scriptures. We follow their faith. The direction is toward the written Word. Here is the secret of power—to keep His Word and not deny His name.

Notice the character of the Philadelphian overcomer. It is all heavenly throughout (Rev. 3:12). The words of the message to Philadelphia are all Himself, using the personal pronouns "I", "My" and "He" 20 times. He, Himself, is the center of the circle of brotherly love. This is not human sentiment. It is the product of the word "Philadelphia", but the accent is all on the Person—the center of the circle. Brotherly love is with us in the sweetness of spiritual reality, not to be surrendered through unwatchfulness and sleep.

Do you recall the Lord's meaningful words in John 21:19-22? Here we get our direction in these testing days at the end. Peter was following, but turned to see John also following, and he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, for it was he who leaned so closely on Jesus' breast at supper. Are we to look at one who was in so close communion, who was also a disciple? Notice the Lord's gentle correction to Peter's question, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus says to him, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

There is another Scripture that could perhaps be given as a summary, and act as assurance to our souls. Turn to Rev. 19:13, 14. Here we get a final word as to the Lord's followers. "The armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." The name of the One they followed is called "The Word of God." HE is the Word of God. To be true and faithful, we stand faithfully to "It is written," conscious of the forces of darkness arraigned

against us, and remember, too, that spiritual forces are in the heavenlies. But notice we are given one weapon for aggressive warfare, and that is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:12-17.)

These Scriptures cited above are important and sufficient in themselves to form a suitable conclusion. However, Paul adds an exhortation for all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching unto this very thing, for all saints and for "me" (Eph. 6:18-20). Paul speaks here for prayer for himself as the vessel for the completion of the Word of God. See Col. 1:25, 26. This was the second part of his ministry, but it was arrived at through his boldness of utterance to make known the mystery of the gospel. Paul said, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me." He then gives a meaningful comment: "And there are many adversaries." 1 Cor. 16:8, 9.

"Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4. The Man we follow has a name written: "The Word of God."

M. Priestley

Heavenly Places

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3.

"What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (vv. 19, 20.)

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:6, 7.

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3:9,10.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:12-18.

We have heavenly scenes here. Ephesus had been the center of demon worship—that is, spiritism. Satan had shown his power there (Acts 19:13-20). But now God's Spirit comes and works mightily to glorify the name of Jesus in that place. There was the temple of Diana (Acts 19:27), but God, in His grace, set up His temple there in the redeemed saints of God.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2:19-22.

In Diana we see "woman worship", but God has given us Christ to be the Object of our worship. Our mercies are temporal as having to do with this life, but our blessings are eternal as having to do with the other side of the cross.

There are seven blessings pointed out in Ephesians 1: chosen in Him, v. 4; predestinated, v. 5; accepted in the Beloved, v. 6; redeemed by blood, v. 7; wisdom and prudence, v. 8; inheritance, v.

11; and, sealed, v. 13.

E. F. Smith

The Coming of the Lord

In our Lord's last memorable address to His disciples, He touchingly assured them that, though He was going away to prepare a place for them, He would return. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. This was the bright and blessed hope He set before them.

It is true, the Holy Spirit would be with them, and in them, all through the time of His absence, and forever, but He Himself would come again. He left the world to go to the Father. He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." John 16:28. He assured them that in His Father's house there were many abodes, that He would go and prepare a place for them, and come again to receive them unto Himself, that they might be with Him. No words could more plainly set forth His personal return from heaven.

From other scriptures we learn that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, and that His saints will be raised or changed in a moment, caught up to meet Him in the air and so be forever with the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.) His coming again was the only hope He gave to the sorrowing hearts of His loved ones who would so soon feel bereaved, in a world that had hated Him and cast Him out.

No Hope of Men Getting Better

Our Lord left no hope of men getting better. On the contrary, He said, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

No Hope of the World Getting Better

They were not to hope that the world would improve, nor did He give the least intimation of its getting better. He had already, in chapter 12, pronounced it under judgment: "Now is the judgment of this world," and here He prepares His own to receive hatred from it.

As to the Holy Spirit, He said, "The world cannot receive [Him], because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." Ch. 14:17.

As to Himself, the world would see Him no more. We know it has not, nor will it see Him till He comes in flaming fire to put all enemies under His feet.

As to themselves, they were to have tribulation in it, and hatred, and persecution from it. He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Ch. 15:18, 19.

At the same time they were to know peace in Him and to be of good cheer, not because the world would get better, but because He had overcome the world. Their true hope was that He would come again, and then their sorrow would be turned into joy.

It is scarcely possible that anything can be more clearly taught than that the Christian's position here is one of distinct and practical separation from the world, because he is associated with Christ whom the world has rejected, and still hates. He is here looked at, though in the world, as not of the world, but a sufferer from it, a minister of blessing to it, and going through it glorifying God. He hopes for Christ to come and take him out of it to the Father's house. (See John 14:17, 30; 15:18-20; 16:22, 33.)

The Christian's Hope

To this degree we are left in a world where the Lord is not. However, we are not without hope, and that hope is the highest, the best and the brightest we could have. It is the return of Christ Himself. So it was understood by the early Christians, for by the power of the gospel they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. This is not waiting for the fulfillment of events, but for the Lord Himself.

Looking for the Savior

The believer, already in Christ in heavenly places, abiding, too, in Him as he surely should for daily strength for the walk and all fruit-bearing, is taught to be looking for his loving Savior to come again. This also the Apostle taught the Philippians. He said, "Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21.

Many now seem conscious that it is not the mere knowledge of the doctrine of the Lord's second coming that has power over hearts and consciences, but so receiving it from the mouth of God as a divine revelation as to produce desire and hope. Therefore it does not say in Scripture, "He that knows the doctrine," but that "every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3.

It is this which the Spirit teaches, for "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" Surely, then, those who are instructed and led by the Holy Spirit of God will be taught to say "Come!" while looking and waiting for God's Son from heaven. We have seen also that it is a purifying hope, eminently practical, always associated with ways of separation unto Him, and suffering with Him and for Him, according to His will.

Let scoffers rail, with harden'd brow,
Arid cries of "Peace" resistless flow,
Or reason spurn His Word;
by grace divine 'twill be my choice
To wait for the archangel's voice—
To look for Christ my Lord.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will people who reject God's present message of grace, and are left behind when the Lord comes, have another chance to be saved? Will they be eligible to hear and receive a gospel announcing the coming of the King? Many prominent Christians in orthodox and fundamental circles say, "Yes." But what does the Word of God say? Surely nothing else has any authority.

ANSWER: In Matt. 25 we have the parable of the ten virgins. These ten represent the whole profession of Christianity; that is, they picture the true Christians as the "wise" virgins and the mere professors as the "foolish". When the bridegroom came, the wise went in to the marriage and the foolish were left on the outside. The door was then shut, and the foolish did not have another chance. They picture to us thousands around us who claim to be Christians, but who are without Christ. Such worthless profession will be shut out—lost.

In 2 Thess. 2 we have a class—those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." They are those who will have heard the "gospel of the grace of God" but did not receive it. Is there any chance for them after the door is shut? Read the whole chapter; notice how God is going to send such triflers with His mercy a lie to believe.

Since they would not have the truth when it was preached to them, they will hear such a convincing lie they will believe it, and be damned. It is most solemn for any to reject or neglect God's proffered mercy, and it is very serious to teach error that tends to blind the minds of those that believe not, or to give them a false hope.

At present the Spirit of God is here striving with men; then He will be gone with the Church, and instead of His strivings, the terrible powers of darkness will be let loose to deceive men. If men despise God's mercy under such favorable conditions now, how can they expect to believe then? The deception is going to be so strong that, if it were possible, it would deceive the very elect Jews. (Matt. 24:24.) God will keep them, or they too would be deceived, for the deception will come with great signs and lying wonders.

The Defender of Truth

The defender of truth will need to watch his spirit and temper lest, while he attacks error in doctrine, he fall into error in practice. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." 2 Tim. 4:22. Worship is for spiritual persons who are led by the Spirit. To lower the character of communion, in order to meet the assumed unspiritual condition of some who may be present, is emphatically to make steps up to the altar (Ex. 20:26).

Bible Challenger-07-July V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that identifies the manner of our Savior's expected appearing that forms the basis for the Christian's blessed hope. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 178.)

1. Something to which mortal flesh is likened, to better understand the frailty of this life. [1]
2. That which Simeon foretold concerning the Jewish Messiah in His relationship to the Gentile peoples. [3]
3. A specific group of people on which the color "gray" is deemed to be beautiful. [2]
4. That which describes God's resources in meeting the needs of His people. [1]
5. The name given to a child born at the time of a great cataclysm in Israel, when his grandfather, father, uncle and mother were all taken in death. [1]
6. The similitude of a molten image which the Israelites fashioned to their great dishonor. [1]
7. The undefined magnitude of joy which believers have in Someone unseen, yet greatly loved. [1]
8. A great king whose royal apparel could not compare to the way God clothes the fields. [1]
9. Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-06-June Answers V.07

1. Firstborn Josh. 6:26
2. Open my mouth Matt. 13:35
3. Understanding Job 38:4
4. Not able to finish it Luke 14:29
5. Digged deep Luke 6:48
6. Apostles and prophets Eph. 2:20
7. Ten cubits 1 Kings 7:10
8. Iniquity 2 Tim. 2:19
9. Opened Acts 16:26
10. Not make haste Isa. 28:16
11. Sapphire Rev. 21:19

"They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the FOUNDATIONS of the earth are out of course." Psa. 82:5.

Jesus Made a Surety

Hebrews 7:22 HEB 7:22

"Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. 10:9, 10. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing." John 6:39. There is a striking illustration of suretyship in the words of Judah to Joseph, concerning his brother Benjamin. "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever." Gen. 44:32.

What a place this was for the holy One of God to take: He became surety for His people. My fellow-believer! can you doubt the everlasting love of Jesus your surety? Listen as He speaks to the Father about you: He says, If I bring him not unto Thee, I will bear the blame forever.

Has He died for you, the Just for the unjust? Has He loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood? And now will He fail, can He fail to bring you to glory? No! He says, If I bring you not to glory, I will bear the blame forever. Oh, how He loves!

Editorial

The Spirit of Grace

What spirit do we manifest?

The Lord has promised to be near to us in certain conditions of heart, for He is compassionate. He says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart." Psa. 34:18. Have you had that kind of experience? A broken heart—how it hurts! Does it produce a contrite spirit? If so, the promise is that the Lord "saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Psa. 34:18, 19.

"There is a spirit in man," says Job in chapter 32:8. This is true of every one of us. The question we desire to consider is: what spirit do we manifest, and what spirit should be seen in the Christian? In the same verse Job adds, "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." How very important that we go to the inspired Word of God For the understanding that we all need!

Solomon asked for and was given by God a wise and understanding heart (1 Kings 3:7-12). Much that wisdom and understanding is recorded in god's Word. In Eccl. 7 he writes, "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry." Many times the Christian is tested on these points. What spirit do we manifest?

Another verse in Prov. 16:32 says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Also we see the opposite, sad picture in Prov. 25:28, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." How

exceedingly important it is, then, for each of us to have that control over our own spirit. In 1 Cor. 14:32 the word is, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." A prophet has control over his own spirit.

To His own disciples the Lord says in Luke 9:55, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." They had not yet learned the spirit of grace that the Lord Jesus had come to show to all: precious, wonderful grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). At the very commencement of His ministry, in His own city of Nazareth, it shines out clearly. He stands and reads a portion from Isa. 61, announces the gospel, and then closes the book, stopping short of the verses concerning judgment. They "bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." So it was with Jesus all through His ministry in the gospels. In Him we have a perfect object lesson of a gracious spirit.

All of the New Testament writers (the apostles and prophets) learned something of this spirit of grace, and from the book of Luke on they have written of it for us.

In addition to the spirit of grace we learn in 2 Tim. 1:7 that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." In this poor world it is so important for us to know and to rest in this full supply that we have in God.

It is also beautiful to see that Peter writes of an "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:4. As encouragement for those in fiery trials he writes in chapter 4 and verse 14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified."

The last verse of Galatians exhorts us, "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." This same exhortation is repeated in the last verse of Philemon. How important this is for us to remember and practice. Ed.

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 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.

Divine Love

"Jesus of Nazareth... who went about doing good." Acts 10:38. There is nothing negative about this verse; it does not say, "Who did no harm." There was One who, in His pathway through this world of misery and need, was actively engaged in doing good. His love was unwearied and in spite of rebuffs and even hatred, He "went about doing good." The ungrateful response of those to whom He came is told in the words of the Psalm: "For My love they are My adversaries.... And they have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My love." Psal. 109:4, 5.

Still, that blessed One went steadily forward "doing good," and at last we read of Him weeping over those of that guilty city, not because of His rejection by them, but because of the terrible judgments that were soon to fall on them (Luke 19:41-44).

May we, His redeemed ones, who are left in this same world a little longer be better transcripts of the One to whom we belong—that One who "went about doing good." The needs are great and the "night is far spent." A few verses from Titus may remind us of our opportunities and privileges: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived.... But according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:1-5.

In Gal. 6:10 it says: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

We must not, however, disregard any direct word or any principle of Scripture in doing good. Here we need to keep a balance and remember that we must "strive lawfully." Our enemy is very subtle and would entangle us with associations and unequal yokes in our seeking to do good. But, fellow-Christians, if we are really seeking to "redeem the time" (it is fast going) and look to Him for His guidance, we shall find abundant opportunities. Then shall we not as "royal priests" dispense royal bounty, and show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light? (1 Peter 2:9.)

P. Wilson

Art thou lonely, oh my brother?

Share your little with another!

Stretch a hand to one unfriended,

And your loneliness is ended

Three Daily Things

B. Anstey

The way to live a happy, fruitful Christian life lies in three daily things. All Christians will have a happy ending, but not all Christians have a happy life. The main cause for missing the joy and fruitfulness that God intends for our lives as Christians can be traced to the neglect of these three daily things. The Christian must learn the importance of having an established daily routine of reading the Scriptures, praying, and following the Lord in obedience.

Daily Searching the Scriptures

Daily "searching the Scriptures" (Acts 17:11, 12) implies more than just reading the Bible. It is a diligent, organized study. The Lord Jesus Himself is always our example. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. This shows that He took up the Scriptures in an orderly way. Sometimes we have a habit of reading only our favorite portions, but the Lord read all of the Scriptures. It is all for our learning (Rom. 15:4). "Receiving" the words of Scripture (Prov. 2:1) also implies more than just reading them. It suggests taking them in and personally applying them to yourself in a practical way.

Reasons Why a Christian Reads the Scriptures

- a. To learn more about Christ (John 5:39; Luke 24:44, 25-27; Acts 17:2, 3, 11, 12).
- b. To learn the extent of the blessings that are his through the finished work of Christ, by which he is also built up and established in the most holy faith (Acts 20:32; Jude 20; Rom. 16:25, 26; 2 Tim. 3:16; John 8:32).
- c. They fill his heart with praise and thanksgiving (Psa. 119:171).
- d. To learn practical principles for living, whereby he can be guided, directed, and kept in the path of following Christ (Psa. 119:105; Psa. 17:4; 19:7 "wise").
- e. To cleanse his soul from defilement. Passing through the world, the Christian picks up defilement, but the Scriptures have a washing and cleansing effect on him. If he is going in the path of sin, the Scriptures reveal his bad state of soul, and work on his conscience to produce repentance and confession that leads to restoration (Psa. 119:9; Eph. 5:26; Psa. 19:7).
- f. To receive comfort when passing through trial or sorrow (Psa. 119:49, 50, 76).
- g. To grow spiritually grow in grace, whereby he becomes more like Christ (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).
- h. To rejoice his heart. They make him happy and encouraged (Gen. 15:16; Psa. 19:7; 2 Chron. 31:4).
- i. To learn of future events (prophecy). God's purpose is to glorify Himself in His Son in two spheres—heaven and earth. Prophecy shows how He will bring this to pass (2 Peter 1:19, 21; Rev. 1:1, 3). The Christian is consequently given an intelligent outlook on the world.
- j. To be stirred up to live for Christ, to confess Christ, and to serve Christ (2 Peter 3:1, 2).

Daily Crying Out to the Lord in Prayer

Daily crying out to the Lord in prayer is another important thing in the Christian's life (Psa. 86:1, 3). Prayer is simply speaking to God. It can be either audible or silent. "I cry unto Thee daily" shows we should be earnest and real when we pray. "Everything by prayer" (Phil. 4:6) shows we also need to be specific in prayer. Nothing is too small or too big to bring to Him. Our prayers should also be in His name (John 16:23, 24; Eph. 5:20).

Reasons Why a Christian Should Pray

a. To have communion with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3). Praying is really talking reverently

to the Lord. We need to confide in the Lord as we would in our nearest friend. He wants us to pour out our hearts before Him (Psa. 62:8; Sol. 2:14).

b. To express dependence on the Lord in matters of guidance and direction in our lives (Psa. 16:1; Prov. 3:5, 6).

c. To ask God for things we need in our lives (John 14:13, 14; 16:23, 24).

d. To intercede for others, whether they are fellow Christians or lost persons (1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Eph. 6:18; Heb. 13:3, 18, 19).

Taking up the Cross Daily and Following Christ

Taking up the cross and following Christ "daily" is the third essential thing in the Christian's life (Luke 9:23-26). Christianity is not a popular thing. Taking up the cross is a figurative expression. It implies accepting the rejection that comes from being identified with the rejected Christ. It is not enough for us to read the Scriptures and pray, we must walk in the things we have learned and enjoyed. Following Christ implies obedience in the pathway of faith.

Reasons Why a Christian Follows Christ

a. He knows that if he lives his life for self he is going to lose it in the end, because only what is done for Christ will be rewarded (Luke 9:24). Jim Elliot, who was martyred in Ecuador in 1956, wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

b. He knows that even if he did live for this life only and amassed to himself its wealth and honors, he could not take it with him when he leaves this world anyway (Luke 9:25; 1 Tim. 6:7).

c. He knows that he will lose the enjoyment of communion with the Lord if he chooses not to follow Him in the path of faith (Psa. 66:18). There is a joy in following Christ in the path of faith that is known only to those who walk in it (John 14:23). He concludes that it is not worth it to go his own way through life. The conscious sense of the Lord's approval and the enjoyment of communion with Him means more to him than the applause of this world (Heb. 11:24-27).

What is a man profited,

if he shall gain the whole world,

and lose his own soul?

Or what shall a man give in

exchange for his soul?

Matt. 16:26

Bible Challenger Clues

1. 1 Peter; 2. Genesis; 3. Romans; 4. Titus; 5. Colossians; 6. Romans; 7. 1 Corinthians; 8. Luke; 9. Colossians; 10. Acts.

The Mystery

"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

Romans 11:25

It had been revealed that God would be merciful to the Gentiles, but that God was setting aside the Jews for the very purpose of gathering a people out of the Gentiles was a "mystery" on which the Old Testament scriptures were wholly silent. Until this was fully accomplished, the blessing of Israel must be postponed.

The Epistle to the Romans is not an epistle which takes up the subject of the Church, and therefore neither the name nor the character of the Church is to be found in this passage. But the people that God is gathering out of the Gentiles are believers. It is for the completion of these, or the Church, that Israel is set aside as God's immediate earthly object.

The Old Testament, which unfolds God's plans concerning the world, shows the converse of this. There the Gentiles fill up the interval in God's dealings with His earthly people Israel, and are used to provoke them to jealousy. But the New Testament reveals God's heavenly purposes. Here, therefore, the gathering of the Church, instead of occupying a mere gap in God's earthly designs, is the grand object of all His counsels.

In the Old Testament, Gentile blessing is named, but as waiting upon God's thoughts about Israel. In the New Testament, Israel's blessing is named, but as waiting upon God's thoughts about the Church.

The Old Testament shows a people who were the objects of God's counsels "from the foundation of the world," but the New Testament shows a people who were the objects of God's counsels "before the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:4). In God's earthly plans, everything yields to the former; in His heavenly plans, everything yields to the latter. But as the heavenly people had the first and highest place in God's thoughts, the earthly people must stand aside until His purposes concerning these are fully accomplished.

T. B. Baines

Shepherd

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

The Assembly on Earth

Let us examine in 1 Tim. 3:15, the character which the Apostle gives to the assembly on earth. Paul wrote, hoping to come soon, but in case he might tarry long, it was necessary that Timothy should know how to conduct himself. Paul then tells us what the assembly is.

1. House of God

God dwells in it upon the earth (compare Eph. 2:22). It is viewed as on the earth, because the Apostle is speaking of how to behave in it. This truth gives a character to the assembly of the highest importance with regard to its responsibility. It is not a vague thing, composed of the dead and of the living—a thing which we know not where to find, because one part of it is alive on the earth and another part consists of souls in heaven. It is the house of God here below, in which we have to behave (whatever other position we may hold) in a manner that becomes the house of God. God dwells in the assembly upon earth. We cannot remember this fact too earnestly.

2. Assembly of the Living God

God, in whom is the power of life, in contrast with men and with dead idols, has an assembly, not of the world, which He set apart for Himself. It is not a nation like Israel. The Israelites were the assembly of God in the wilderness. The assembly is now the assembly of the living God.

3. Pillar and Support of the Truth

Christ on earth was the Truth. (He is so always, but He was so on earth.) He is now hidden in God. The assembly is not the truth; the Word of God is the truth. His Word is truth. Truth exists before the assembly; it is faith in the truth which gathers the assembly together. But the assembly is that which maintains the truth on earth. The assembly does not teach. Teachers teach the assembly, but by faithfulness in holding fast the truth taught, the assembly sustains the truth in the world.

When the assembly is gone, men will be given up to strong delusion. There may be few of those who call themselves Christians who maintain the word of truth, but it is not the less true that the assembly—as long as it remains here below—is the only witness for the truth upon the earth. It is God's witness to present the truth before men. At the end, that which God owns as such will be the feeble flock at Philadelphia, and then that which is in the responsible position of being the assembly (Laodicea) will be spewed out of the mouth of Christ, who Himself takes the character of Amen, the faithful and true Witness.

But the assembly as planted by God on the earth is the pillar and support of the truth. Authority is not the question here, but the maintenance and presentation of the truth.

The presence, then, of the living God, and the profession of the truth are the characteristics of the house of God. Wherever this assembly of the living God is, wherever the truth is, that is His house. It is the truth, clear and positive truth, given as a revelation from God in words clothed with His authority. He has given the truth a form, communicating the facts and the divine thoughts which

are necessary for the salvation of men, and for their participation in divine life. This it is which we are to hold fast.

The Truth As God Has Given It

We are only sure of the truth when we retain it as God has given it, in His own words in the revelation He has made. By grace, I may speak of the truth in all liberty. I may seek to explain it, to communicate it, to urge it on the conscience, according to the measure of light and spiritual power bestowed on me. I may endeavor to demonstrate its beauty and the connection between its various parts. Every Christian, and especially those who have a gift from God for the purpose, may do this. But the truth which I explain and propose must be the truth as God has given it in His Word. I hold fast the form of sound words which I have received from a divine source and authority: it gives me certainty in the truth. And here it is important to remark the assembly's part when faithful.

The Function of Ministry

She receives, she maintains the truth in her own faith; she guards it, she is faithful to it, she is subject to it, as a truth, a revelation, which comes from God Himself. She is not the source of the truth. As an assembly she does not propagate it—does not teach it. She says, "I believe," not, "believe." This last is the function of ministry, in which man is always individually in relationship with God by means of a gift which he holds from God, and for the exercise of which he is responsible to God. This is all important. Those who possess these gifts are members of the body. The assembly exercises her discipline with regard to all that is of the flesh in them, in the exercise or apparent exercise of a gift, as in all else. She preserves her own purity without respect of persons as to their outward appearance, being guided therein by the Word of God (for this is her responsibility): but she does not teach, she does not preach. She is the pillar and ground of the truth.

Bible Challenger-08-August V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that describes the mental attitude that will exist between believers when the God of patience and consolation is the pattern. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 208.)

1. Something that might be filthy and should then be shunned when Hock feeding. [1]
2. Someone who was quite grief-stricken because of his newly acquired daughters-in-law. [1]
3. A place in which God must be retained to preclude moral abandonment. [1]
4. The type of work for which believers should be ready, as well as showing forth subjection and obedience. [3]
5. Something which should be put on as a garment in the believer's life, and which is closely connected to long-suffering. [1]
6. That which the One who searches the hearts makes, on behalf of the saints. [1]
7. That which an apostolic letter-writer desired for an assembly to give visible proof of their togetherness, although he feared otherwise. [2]
8. A term applied to the disciples who were overly concerned about food and drink, and thereby were likened to the nations of the world. [2]
9. That which those who were sometime alienated from God by wicked works were called. [1]
10. A searching frequency schedule that those in Berea followed to verify the words that were spoken to them. [1]

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

Bible Challenger-07-July Answers V.07

1. Grass 1 Peter 1:24
2. Light to lighten Luke 2:32
3. Old men Prov. 20:29
4. Riches Phil. 4:19
5. Ichabod 1 Sam. 4:21
6. Ox Psa. 106:20
7. Unspeakable 1 Peter 1:8
8. Solomon Matt. 6:29

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the GLORIOUS appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

Providence and Satan

God's care of His creatures, shown by natural blessings and daily mercies, is called Providence. Those who are satisfied with this bare knowledge of God are in great danger of not discovering the workings of Satan. Such are in danger, even though they may have knowledge of the truth of God in Christ, revealed by the Scriptures.

This danger arises from the ever-flowing goodness and bountifulness of God, "for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." He is pledged by the gracious promise under the Noah covenant that "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Satan can originate nothing of himself that is different from himself—"he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

Satan seeks to take advantage of God's providence, which He shows in long-suffering mercy and grace to His creatures, and use it to work against Him. He makes this goodness of God a point of his attack through the active wickedness of fallen human nature. This evil nature supplies a link to him in his enmity to further discredit God and His love, so that mankind "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." Human selfishness, too, being what it is, will abuse these external mercies so abundantly supplied, and in this way lend its hand willingly or unwillingly to this craft of the devil.

Many Inventions

The result of the "Preacher's" research is solemnly stated in Eccl. 7, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." This wise saying, however, is no longer supposed to be a challenge, or a reflection upon the world's progress, but in independence of God is accepted as a compliment to human genius, and as an encouragement to modern perseverance. On this very account man must be a witness against himself, since this ingenuity can only be displayed by inventions to improve his own state. "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him... that he should still live forever, and not see corruption." Psa. 49:6-9.

Natural Mercies

Adam could never have known an unprovided want, till by his sin against God he was driven out from Paradise. To suppose otherwise would be a reflection on the Creator, for He could not rest from all His works when the creature was not perfectly provided for.

Man elevates himself in his own eyes by his God-given talents in scientific activities of a creative or productive power. Yet the question remains: what gave him the opportunity and desire to exercise these talents? By such activities, when the heart is in a state of rebellion, man only throws himself farther away from God.

Moreover, by this abuse of his natural mercies, both personal and relative, he joins issue with Satan in his line of devices. This forms the common ground of their combined action, which delivers over to the course of this world—to the prince of the power of the air—the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).

The result of this confederation is that these gifts (or natural mercies) bestowed by Providence are taken and used by the receiver as a means for independence and pride, forgetting their Giver and ending in a denial of the claims of God. Compare this to Israel in Deut. 32:15. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked... then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Such a state of things as this must sooner or later bring in judgment, if merely to maintain the government of God upon the earth. Grace will make this its own opportunity for discovering the hidden resources of God's wisdom and love in human redemption by a full and eternal deliverance.

The Rescue

When Adam was an innocent being, the original sin took man out of the hand of the Creator and put him into the power of Satan as a sinner and with an evil nature! What must progressive history be, founded on this double rebellion, but God brightens up the dark pages of its records by promises and types and shadows of good things to come. By sovereign and effectual grace He brings in this remedy for the rescue of the sinner, and the maintenance of His own holiness. The grand reserve of God is Jesus Christ, the Son of His own love!

Man, in the fruitless search after the happiness he has lost, little thinks he is leaving it behind him by still going out, like Cain, from the presence of God who is the only source of blessing, present or eternal. Nor can there be either permanent peace, or personal security, till we are brought by gifts (certainly by "His unspeakable gift") to God Himself. Providence cannot supply these wants, nor reconcile a sinner to God. The cross of Christ is the only meeting-place for needs such as ours. The cross is the place of Satan's defeat and of our salvation.

Mere gifts of whatever kind or range can never put us outside the enemy's power, nor plant us inside the circle of the coming glory. But an association and oneness through grace with a risen and ascended Savior and Lord does place us where the devil has neither title nor dominion. We are beyond the reach of the enemy, and with Christ and through Christ, with God and with the giver, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Blessed portion! "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever." Ex. 14:13.

God forbid that I should glory,

save in the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:14

The Human Ear

I was reading this morning about the human ear. Each ear has a very tiny organ, like a harp, with about 10,000 strings. When a sound is heard, the corresponding string of this little harp vibrates in sympathy, and conveys the impression to the brain!

But these little harps are not always fully developed, are sometimes defective, even malformed, therefore the sounds the ear hears are not accurately conveyed to the brain. So people are spoken of as not having "an ear for music."

When we relate these thoughts to ourselves spiritually, we can see the similarity. No one, by nature, has an ear which can distinguish the things of God (1 Cor. 2:11). The spiritual ear is the direct gift and planting of God. Psa. 94:9 says, "He [the Lord] that planted the ear," but then we also read in Rev. 3:13, "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

So if we have the gift of eternal life, we have that "spiritual ear," for only the believer in Christ can hear the things of God. But just as some natural ears are not trained or developed to relay the perfect sound to the brain, so our spiritual ears need developing and care, in order that we may discern the messages which the Lord wants to send us. Otherwise we miss His mind and make mistakes in judgment.

The ear has another important function—to give us balance. There are three fluid-filled canals and two sac-like organs which are the organs of balance, also sending nerve impulses to the brain. Infection in these causes us to lose our balance. Moral or doctrinal sin allowed in the believer's life is spiritual infection and causes him to lose his spiritual balance, that is, his discernment.

The Lord loves us and desires to fill our life and heart with Himself. There is no other true happiness on earth. Even as God has created that marvelous instrument, the human ear, to hear, so He has given us spiritual ears to hear what He desires to convey to us. In listening to His voice, then putting into practice what we have heard, we learn more. But when we "turn a deaf ear," then we not only cease to learn more, we lose what we seemed to have learned before (Luke 8:18).

N. Berry

The things of God knoweth no man,

but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received...

the Spirit which is of God;

that we might know the things

that are freely given to us of God

1 Corinthians 2:11, 12

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: I was taught by my parents that when we die, we go to be with the Lord. Now I am told by others that all go to sleep in death till the resurrection. If you can, please enlighten me about this. What does Eccl. 9:5 mean, "The dead know not anything"?

ANSWER: The death of the Christian is often spoken of as sleep. (See Matt. 27:52; Acts 7:60; John 11:11; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13-15; 5:10.) But being asleep refers to the bodies, so that they know not anything; they are away from all that is going on here on earth. Ecclesiastes is wisdom under the sun. We need what the Lord Jesus and His apostles tell us, to know the full truth.

We find clear evidence from them that neither saved nor unsaved are unconscious as to the spirit. Death in Scripture is NEVER ceasing to exist. There is no death to the soul or spirit.

Man, the highest of the animal kingdom, is a responsible being, and his existence is for eternity. The body decays at death, but the soul or spirit has gone either to be with Christ in paradise, or to the prison under chains of darkness, awaiting the day when the body will be given again to stand at the Great White Throne to receive the sentence—the wages of the sins of which the person was guilty. The saved are seen in Luke 16:23; 20:38; 23:43, 46; Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21, 23; Rev. 14:13, and another picture of the martyrs in Rev. 6:9-11.

The unsaved are seen in Luke 16:23 and 12:5.

They are warned to "fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell." Notice it is after He has killed. We see the unsaved, who would not listen to Noah's preaching, are now in prison (1 Peter 3:19).

When the Lord Jesus comes for His own, the dead in Christ will rise first, then the living ones changed (Phil. 3:20, 21) will be caught up together to be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-18). These will also stand at the judgment seat of Christ, now glorified in their resurrection bodies, to receive their reward, and be appointed to the place each one is to fill for Him.

The Joys of Christ

We ought to think of the joys of Christ as well as His sorrows. Nothing shows where a man's heart is, and what it is, more than seeing where his heart finds its joy when he is oppressed, distressed and full of sorrow, and seeing if it does find a joy un-reached by sorrow.

We see these joys in Christ—a secret comfort in the midst of His sorrow. He had meat to eat which man knew not of. Besides His communion with His Father, there was this working of love to us. Paradise shone in upon His heart in comforting the poor thief. "Go in peace" refreshed His spirit in the house of the Pharisee. "She did it for My burial" justified Mary against the reproach of selfish man. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" was His joy in the scene of the heartless rejection to which the wickedness of man subjected Him.

How blessed to the heart, besides learning where His joy was, to think that He found it in the working of His love to us!

Editorial

Proverbs: Wisdom from Heaven

This being an election year in this country and in many others, there is an increased need for Christians to have the wisdom of God for themselves. This is true for all of us in any vocation and in every relationship and position. We are all somewhat exposed to the promises, the charges and countercharges, and the propaganda that are around us in an election year. How wonderful that believers in our Lord Jesus Christ can leave all with our God and Father who controls all.

In the Bible, one book clearly stands out which gives us, in words easy to understand, the wisdom which we all need. It is the book of Proverbs. It is good for Christians and indeed for all mankind. In this book we have heavenly wisdom for an earthly pathway. It is a book of ethics.

A proverb is a profitable saying delivered with a moderate concealment of the sense and/or a pithy sentence that in few words expresses much sense.

About Augustus Caesar it is recorded that from certain Latin and Greek authors he wrote out for himself such wholesome precepts as might serve him in either public or private life. If any of us today have the heart to imitate this, Solomon has saved us the labor, for he has put it all (by God's inspiration) in this one book of Proverbs. We must start at the beginning, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

We find here the best advice that can be given to the President or his counselors, judges, and other public officers, as well as wisdom for every citizen. This book fits every relationship and condition. It directs parents in the training and education of their children, and in the management of family life.

This book of Proverbs instructs a man how to get a good wife, and it guides in choosing friends. It instructs businessmen in their transactions with others. There is wisdom for giving or taking good

counsel and reproof, for making or preserving peace, and for judging men and their designs.

Proverbs has instruction for the control of the tongue: "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." Ch. 21:23. He that is wary and cautious in his talk, thinking seriously before he opens his mouth, and takes care to offend neither God nor man by what he says, preserves his mind from much trouble and distress.

Precepts about well-doing and direction for our whole life are found here. Let us agree to one thing, that this book desires to make these precepts familiar to our minds. "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman."

Ch. 7:4. If we do this, we shall not fail to be happy. The sum of all this is in a few words: "Love her [wisdom], and she shall keep thee." Ch. 4:6. Ed.

Of Sea Gulls and Saints

Striving—For What?

Sometimes I toss old bread down on the lawn next to the lake for the wild ducks. Most often it is a sea gull that first notices the free morsel. He carefully circles, inspecting the bread, then lands next to the gift.

Rarely, however, does he get to eat it. Instead of enjoying the "bread from above," the gull usually broadcasts a loud scream heard all over the lake which alerts every other gull. The gull's brethren quickly respond to the apparent challenge, and encircle the first gull. He then begins to vehemently fend off each intruder as they fight for the bread. Finally, as the first gull is busy defending "his bread," another snatches the morsel away and they all fly off in a wild dogfight.

Why didn't the first gull just enjoy the free dinner in peace? Why did he dare all his brethren to come and "just try to steal my bread"? This often seems hilarious to us as humans, but I think sometimes God's saints act a little like sea gulls.

As the gulls were striving needlessly over a piece of bread, so the Lord's people sometimes strive needlessly about "words to no profit." 2 Tim. 2:14. And as a few may strive about words—even the Word of God—sorry to say, many others are subverted. Why do we not enjoy and feed on the Word of God for ourselves and share it with others, rather than challenging our brethren on what we only know in part?

If Christians must strive, could they not strive "together for the faith of the gospel"? Phil. 1:27. Does not the Word of God firmly command us to stand fast in one spirit with one mind to reach out to souls, to give out to sinners, to seek out the lost? Do we not have the unsearchable riches of Christ to freely give to those who are in unsearchable poverty? Shall we argue among ourselves over tidbits of truth we wrongly feel is only ours, when multitudes around us have never heard the truth as it is in Jesus?

How good it is to see saints laboring together in the gospel for the glory of God, and for the knitting together of His people.

T. Clement

Stand fast in one spirit...

striving together for the

faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1:27

The Father: Not Servants, but Sons

Words of Truth

Galatians 4 GAL 4

In Genesis we have the Father. It is the book of the patriarchs, and the affections of the Father are displayed and exercised there very beautifully.

Abraham (as well as others in this book) desires a child. Though his house might have been established in a servant, a loved and trusted servant called Eliezer of Damascus, this will not do for him. As long as he went childless, his heart was not satisfied.

He makes a feast when his son Isaac is weaned. This was his joy, to hear himself addressed as a father. Sarah will then also have the house cleared of the bondwoman and her child.

Jacob adopts his grandchildren, the sons of Joseph. He gives them the place and inheritance of the firstborn, and welcomes them with full affection.

These are among the instances which we find in these early patriarchal days of the counsel and affections of our heavenly Father shadowed or expressed in His representatives in the book of Genesis. There is no law, no Moses, no schoolmaster in this book. God has the elect immediately under His own hand and eye, dealing with them by home method, so to express it, and not by the intervention of tutors and governors.

The law came afterward, and then the elect were carried to school and put under rules and ordinances foreign to the home of the family, and treated rather as servants than as children. The head of a school is a schoolmaster.

Dispensation or the Spirit

The dispensation of the Spirit has now come. The Son Himself has been manifested. He was "made of a woman, made under the law... that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4:4, 5. The elect are now put on the ground of His accomplished redemption, and in the acceptableness of His loved Person.

This condition of things is the Father's delight. There was a need of the schoolmaster for a season, but that need has been answered, and the Father has His child home again. This is not the age of the infant, the child that cannot speak, but the age or dispensation of the son, the elect who have the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption that cries Abba, Father, filling the house with that music. It is the time of the weaned Isaac, and all that appertains to the bondwoman must leave the house.

This again I say is the Father's delight. The affection of the Father finds occasion to indulge itself to the full.

Returning to Ordinances

The Galatians were disappointing His affection. They were returning to ordinances. This is contrary to the Spirit of adoption, taking the elect from the Father's house again to put them under tutors and governors as before, and destroying the free, gracious, confiding communion of children with their Father. They were bringing back Hagar to the house.

It is this which the Spirit so earnestly resents in this part of Galatians. It is the grieved and wounded heart of the Father that speaks in this fervent epistle. Sarah had expressed this resentment in Genesis, when she said, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son." Those words are quoted here, for here in like manner the Spirit, in the behalf, so to speak, of the Father, expresses the same resentment. Paul would act the part of a parent in this epistle (Gal. 4:19).

By faith we are justified (Ch. 3:24); by faith we are made children (Ch. 3:26). A return to ordinances or works of law, therefore, reproaches Christ as though He had not accomplished our justification. It also silences in our hearts the cry of adoption, and thus disappoints the love of the Father. It is this which this chapter, with some indignation, resents.

I do feel that it gives this part of the epistle a very affecting and beautiful character. It is the resentment, or uttered disappointment of Him who, as long ago as the days of Abraham and Sarah, let His elect know this—that no other condition of things between Him and them would satisfy His heart. Only the relationship of a father to those who not only are, but also know themselves to be, children would satisfy His heart. Those who are weaned, like Isaac, from the milk of ordinances and brought home to the good of the Father's table give Him satisfaction. When our relationship to God becomes the subject with our souls, how commanding it is—at least, if it is a real thing with us. We may be anxious or merely calmly inquiring, or, having found, be joyful, but however such affections may vary, they are commanding.

Happy in God

Look at David, happy in God when conveying the ark home. What an "object" in the thoughts of others this made him! Look at him again when, under conviction in the day of Oman's threshing-floor, how full of humiliation and yet of self-sacrifice he was.

The congregation of Israel was happy in God in the day of the coronation of David; how large-hearted they were. And the princes of Israel, how happy they were in the day of dedicating the house of God with David (1 Chron. 29).

Peter, in the hour of his conviction, was without care as to whether the boat sank or not.

We see Zacchæus interested in inquiring after Jesus; how heedless of the crowd and of the tree he was. Then, when happy in Jesus, he was heedless of the injurious speeches of the people.

So it was with the eunuch when, as an inquirer, he was not moved by the strange and sudden appearance of a stranger. Then, when he was satisfied, he was not moved by the still more strange and sudden disappearance of his companion.

When the Galatians apprehended Jesus at the first, see what manner of "blessedness" was among them (Ch. 4). When the Hebrews were "illuminated," what unstinted joy leading to self-sacrifice was in them (Heb. 10)!

Those instances illustrate what I have suggested: when the Lord really becomes the object, how commanding a relation to our hearts He fills and maintains. Others become secondary.

God's People

The Lord presents His disciples to God according to His own thoughts of them, and His own love to them—what they were in their relationship to Him and to His Father. They are the joint possession of the Father and the Son. "They are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them." John 17:9,10.

It is an important thing, in these days especially, to see God's people from the standpoint from which He showed His people to Balaam (Num. 23 and 24), for that is what gives courage to pray for them, and to seek to help them on. Otherwise we might think that we see so little response, and there seems to be so little heart. But there is no less response in God's people now than there was then in the disciples of the Lord Jesus. What they actually were at that time is quite another thing, and when God occupies His people with His people, He occupies such with what they are in His own thoughts. That becomes the measure and standard of service to them.

Do you remember how Moses so failed when He was occupied with the evil of God's people? It is no more strange to see Moses in Ex. 32 and 33, than to see him again in Num. 11:10-15. Here Moses left God out—it's "I," "me," "my," etc., and, "Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me." God's answer is verses 16 and 17, where He took away some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the elders.

How different was the Moses we read of in Exodus 32! How he did plead with God, and there he was so burdened with all that they had just done. He said, "If Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." There he was in the power of the Spirit, but of course, it was God's grace in him.

It is so easy to get occupied with the evil among the people of God. I do not say that the evil is not serious, but what I refer to is the spirit in which we should be occupied with it, considering what they are as God's people.

The law of the Spirit of fife
in Christ Jesus hath made me
free from the law of
sin and death.

Romans. 8:2

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is taught by the seven churches? What is the "synagogue of Satan"? (Rev. 2:9;3:9.)

ANSWER: Seven is the number of spiritual completeness. Rev. 2 and 3 give us a complete picture of the spiritual state, or condition, of the Church as the Lord's witness here on earth from the time John wrote, till its end when Christ comes to claim His own out of it. The chief mark of each we might say is: Ephesus, declension; Smyrna, persecution or suffering for Christ; Pergamos, worldliness; Thyatira, seeking worldly power; Sardis, formal religion; Philadelphia, revival of the truth of Christ's Person and coming; Laodicea, indifference to the claims of Christ. The last four run on concurrently till the end. May the Lord keep our hearts true to Himself.

"The synagogue of Satan" is spoken of in the two phases of the assembly where no fault is found with them. It is there that traditional religion opposes the truth; they "say they are Jews"—the people of God—"but [they] do lie." They try to improve the flesh and to keep the law, and this recognizes good in man, whereas the truth is "in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Compare the word "Jew," which means "praise" (Rom. 2:17,18; Gen. 29:35), with those that say they are Jews, and praise themselves; they are good in their own eyes.

Christian's Sacrifices

By Him therefore let us offer the
sacrifice of praise to God continually,
that is, the fruit of our lips, giving
thanks to His name.

Hebrews 13:15

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrew believers, numerous sacrifices had been offered to God for over 4000 years—from the time of Abel down to his own day. A change had then come in and Paul was instructing them that the time for types and shadows was over, and that now they had been brought into the better thing. They were now to worship God by the Spirit and in the presence of God within the veil. The fat of rams and the blood of goats, or any of the varied offerings ordained under the Mosaic economy, were not intelligent offerings for Christians.

The question might very conceivably arise in their minds, "But have we nothing to offer? Is there nothing for us to present to God?" The Apostle answers that they had been brought to that better place where they had an altar, "whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Heb. 13:10. Those who still offered the sacrifices that only pointed on to Christ had no right to participation in that which was suitable to, and characteristic of, Christianity. Here all that is offered to God is the fruit of His own grace, and is but the outflow of a living connection with Christ. For faith, the old things had truly passed away.

Then the Apostle goes on to name some things that are suitable Christian sacrifices. Yes, they were permitted to offer something, even though they were to leave the temple and all its ritual. It was their privilege to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." No temple was needed in which to offer this sacrifice, nor was it limited to certain set feast days, but it was to God, and it was continually. Obviously, only those who were children of God and indwelt by the Spirit were capable of presenting such sacrifices.

Singing and Making Melody in Your Heart

This is in keeping with a verse in Eph. 5 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." v. 19. (See also Col. 3:16.)

We see something of the character of present sacrifices of praise in the healed leper of Luke 17. He was sent to the temple and its priests where he might offer his gifts, but on being healed he got a glimpse of the glories of the Person who healed him. He promptly turned his back on all the earthly system of worship to return to the Lord Jesus where he "fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks." v. 16. He found in Him one who was greater than the temple, but it was only discerned by faith. The natural man turns instinctively to outward forms and ceremonies for his pattern of worship.

It is important, therefore, that in the midst of God's blessings in giving a man and his wife a home down here where our Lord had none, there should be the spirit of praise found therein. The Epistle of James reminds us that if we are afflicted we are to pray, but if we are happy then we are to sing psalms. In other words, we are to take all from God and all to God. In this way the blessings do not displace the Blessor in our thoughts, for we acknowledge Him and render thanks to Him. A Christian home where the Lord and His things are enjoyed will often resound with songs of praise.

May this be more characteristic of our homes, for these "spiritual sacrifices" are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). Were not the praise and thanksgiving of the healed leper precious and acceptable to the Lord Jesus? Surely they were! And we are assured by the Word of God that our words and songs of praise are acceptable to Him. What a privilege is ours, and how vastly superior to that of the Jews of old.

Two More Forms of Sacrifices

The Apostle Paul continued, "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. 13:16. Here are two more forms of sacrifices a Christian may and should offer to God. He is to do good. This covers a great field, for in many ways he may do good. He is to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6:10. It may be in helping a sick one who needs assistance—either one of the Lord's, or perhaps an unsaved one where we may have opportunity to witness for Christ. We shall not enlarge on the great possibilities which this acceptable form of sacrifice offers. May we have an ear attuned to hear Him direct us in ways and places to so serve Him. Perhaps no one will know about it besides the one helped and the Lord. But that is all the better, for then our treacherous hearts shall not have opportunity to glory in it.

The next in order are the words, "and to communicate forget not," that is, to distribute of our money or of our goods to others, for this also is well-pleasing to the Lord. We know Israel of old was required to tithe, that is, to give a tenth of their increase to the Lord. Now there is no such word for Christians. Why? Simply because we are not now under the law and commanded to do something. We are under grace and lordship. What we render to God of our temporal things should be done as the overflow of a full heart, a heart that is enjoying all that grace has wrought for us. In the matter of lordship, we are to remember that we are no longer our own; we and all we have belong to another. The Lord has purchased us and we are His. A poet has expressed it thus:

Naught that I have my own I call,

I hold it for the Giver;

My heart, my strength, my life, my all,

Are His, and His forever.

David said to God, "Of Thine own have we given Thee," when they had offered generously for the building of the temple (1 Chron. 29:14). P. Wilson

In the Potter's Hand

Some years ago, an old "Pukachumpi" Indian named Mateo confessed Christ as his Savior. He was a potter by profession, and frequently visited us in Tambala, bringing a variety of pots with him. I used to visit him in his mountain home on the side of what is known as "Lliqui" or the inner Andes mountains of Bolivia. It was there I understood in a clearer sense the meaning of Jer. 18:1-6. Some of the lessons I learned watching dear old Mateo at work were:

1. I learned to stoop in order to enter his workplace, for his pottery work was not done in an upper room. It was even so in the days of the prophets. Notice: "Then I went down to the potter's house." v. 3. How contradictory this sounds, but God's way is ever thus. If we would diligently learn this lesson, it is always so that the way up first leads down.

2. In dear old Mateo's hands the unlovely mass of clay became a thing of beauty. We are the clay, which left to itself is ugly, but in His hands, our wise, kind, skillful Potter transforms such into things of beauty.

3. I noticed that the clay did not resist, did not strive against dear old Mateo's skillful hands. Here is a picture of sanctification. How great the gulf between the clay down in the workshop, and the perfect specimen above! God makes a new vessel out of the clay "as seemed good to the potter to make it." Thou art the Potter, we the clay.

God's eye rests, not on our feeble, faulty works, but on the perfect obedience of our great High Priest. How wonderful it is that we stand before our God positionally in all the perfections of our blessed Lord. Our condition varies according to our communion with His blessed heart. Not till Peniel did Jacob become clay; there he was vanquished, and only such become victors.

4. Another thing I noticed was that dear Mateo kneaded the clay over and over again. (Isa. 41:25.) "Why?" I asked. The reply was, "To rid the clay of air bubbles." "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words." Air bubbles caused the vessel to crack open when heat was applied, and the vessel was marred in the hands of the potter. Pride destroys the beautiful vessel. Oh, may we keep low down, remembering always from whence we have been digged.

How many lessons I learned that day! In Jer. 18 we read of the "wheel." Yes, it was a wheel with its axletree sunk into the earth. Mateo with his foot caused it to spin and the formless mass of clay was placed on the wheel, leaving his hands free to make and mold the vessel. Sometimes we think the wheel spins in our little lives altogether too fast; pain is the result. But remember, the Master's hand is molding the clay, even though it hurts in so doing.

5. Then Mateo would burn color into the vessel. How beautifully he did this by a secret process known only to these Indians. Some of us are not willing for this. We are not willing to go through the fire, forgetting that the Master is in the fire with us and in the fiery trial (Dan. 3:24, 25; Isa. 43:2; 2 Tim. 4:17). He trod the winepress alone, but we are never alone in the fire. And so He would

have all His blood-bought ones finished vessels, "as seemed good to the potter to make it."

"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2:20, 21.

E. F. Smith

Bible Challenger-09-September V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words which a good king of Judah, in need of divine help, said in his prayer regarding the Lord's ability to gain victory with many (men), or with those of no power. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer.

1. Something those in the final days of Christendom will say, belying their actual state of poverty. [3]
 2. Something the Lord esteemed more highly than gold, which certain Jews referred to when seeking to add prestige to an oath they were making. [1]
 3. Something to which heathen worshippers sacrifice, not recognizing the one true God manifested in the world. [1]
 4. That which a cake of barley bread was affirmed to be by one hearing the dream of his compatriot. [3]
 5. A stretched compass-point locating the empty place in the cosmology of the world. [1]
 6. The manner of walk which an apostle's association with four bald men was supposed to certify. [1]
 7. The way in which one who seeks wisdom without faith is like sea waves that are driven with the wind. [1]
 8. Something the sun imparts to things of the earth in its daily circuit from one end of heaven to the other. [1]
 9. That which is said about "nothing" to those whose faith is as a tiny seed. [1]
 10. Something clean and empty which became soiled and filled and broken after being letdown, causing its owner much consternation. [1]
 11. That which an Israelite with a large appetite did when he found his food fallen to the ground. [2]
- Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-08-August Answers V.07

1. Lucre 1 Peter 5:2
2. Isaac Gen. 26:35
3. Knowledge Rom. 1:28
4. Every good work Titus 3:1
5. Meekness Col. 3:12
6. Intercession Rom. 8:27
7. No divisions 1 Cor. 1:10
8. Doubtful mind Luke 12:29
9. Enemies Col. 1:21
10. Daily Acts 17:11

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be LIKEMINDED one toward another according to Christ Jesus." Rom. 15:5.

Titles

"I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the off-spring of David, and the bright and morning star." Rev. 22:16 is for the churches, which were previously shown to be in ruin, and about to be judged. The Lord announces Himself as "the root and the offspring of David," a title which showed He had a glory to show to the earth when the churches were set aside.

"The bright and morning star" is a title in which His blessedness is suited for those who watch through the night, as we do, that is, the living members of the heavenly Church who are found amid the ruined churches.

The title of Christ, as to the earth, is that of "the Sun," as may be seen in Mal. 4:2, and in Psa. 19—the day-dawn upon the earth. But before the Sun shines, we shall be with Christ in the heavenly glory.

In 2 Peter 1:19, the exhortation about the Day—star arising in our hearts seems simple enough. "Hold to the prophetic word, and give heed to it, until you see that Christ will appear to remove His Church before He comes down to the earth" is the substance of the exhortation. We talk of the sun rising in London, rising in Paris, etc., and so the light of Christ as the Morning Star—hope of His bride—does not shine into every believer's heart, though the privilege of all. In Rev. 2:28 He says, "I will give him the morning star." This, I should suppose, like eating of the hidden manna, showed a distinctive connection to come with the Bright and Morning Star to the overcomer—an entering, perhaps, into the affections, thoughts and sentiments of His heart, as the One that has been waited for during the night.

In this passage it comes, as it does in Revelation 22, after a clause which points to the earthly side of the Lord's coming glory, and, perhaps, there is a contrast in Peter also. For he speaks of the "more sure word of prophecy" which he had, and which they to whom he wrote had, besides the vision on the mount, and this Day-star shining in the heart.

We know the blessed Lord is spoken of as now upon the throne, either as the Son, or the Lamb. Hereafter, we see Him as entering the heavenlies to receive His Church, and thirdly, as descending from the heavenlies to the earthlies, in which He will shine forth as the sun. Is it not in His transit from where He now is, the Son of man upon the throne of the Father, and the Lamb upon the throne of God Almighty, that this morning-star glory comes in?

It is a blessed subject, one which refreshes the heart.

G. V. Wigram

Bible Challenger Clues

1. Revelation; 2. Matthew; 3. 1 Corinthians; 4. Judges; 5. Job; 6. Acts; 7. James; 8. Psalms; 9. Matthew; 10. Luke; 11. Exodus.

Life to Live

by E G. Patterson

God alone can produce life, and give the power and grace to live it for Himself here below. It alone is fragrant in His sight. The life also of Jesus is made manifest in our body. May we be stirred to the depths of our souls with the thought of this victory, which we can indeed give Him over the enemy, even our faith, overcoming the world which He has passed through in His own perfection. "I have overcome the world." It is a beaten foe and our faith in Him keeps us dependent. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

Thus "life," which walks with God, and waits for Christ, and serves Him while it waits, is the subject in the teaching in 2 Tim. 1. It was promised in Christ Jesus before the world was. It was exhibited in Him on earth, brought to light by the glad tidings of His work and victory (vv. 9,10).

Those who have died with Him shall also live with Him, if we look onward to the future (Ch. 2:11). It was seen in Paul as a present thing as he walked and served continually (Ch. 3:10). The enemy would frustrate it by his counterfeits, but he would be brought to shame by a lowly, unworldly, devoted and separate walk with God (Ch. 3:8, 9). All that would thus live godly in Christ Jesus would suffer (Ch. 3:12).

Paul's Doctrine

Still, the servant was to continue in the things which he had learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them. Never would there come a moment when such were to be abandoned; Paul's doctrine was the last revelation ever given. It was God's secret to those who feared Him and who had an ear to hear. Until we all come in the unity of the faith, it would abide, because the Holy Spirit on earth remained. It has been the last truth restored to the Church of God, as it was the last given. When it was lost at the first, complete ruin supervened. Now when refused, or abused, by taking it up in the form without the power, it sounds as a warning signal to all further progress in those who are thus beguiled of the enemy.

The Scriptures of God are completed by the doctrine of the Church through Paul. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church [assembly]: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God." Col. 1:24, 25.

Spirit of Antichrist

A segment of the complete circle of revelation was needed when Paul was called, and by his doctrine all is told. There is no advance beyond it. John may unfold what was already spoken of, but no further truth is revealed. To go beyond it, and the Scriptures completed by it, is the spirit of error and of antichrist.

John can tell the elect lady and her children that "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." "Whosoever transgresseth [goes forward], and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." How completely does the Spirit of God pronounce against all advance, all development, and all that would not abide in what was "from the beginning," that is, from the complete revelation of the truth in Christ unfolded through His apostles by the Holy Spirit. John could say again, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." 1 John 4:6.

God has cast His people upon the Scriptures in the last days. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20:32. The Apostle said this to the elders at Ephesus where grievous wolves were entering, not sparing the flock. "Continue thou," he says to Timothy, as to all of us, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures.... All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:14-17.

Remembrance

1 Corinthians 11:17

There is something deeply affecting in the plea which our Lord Jesus put before us in connection with His supper. He appeals to us to do it in remembrance of Him. It is a commemorative act, an act showing that our hearts have personal affection for Himself

"This do in remembrance of Me." I am sure our souls feel how little we know in comparison to the large revelation of truth God has given as to the Person of Jesus. The sweetest part is to do it "in remembrance of Me," and you and I, while in the wilderness, can remember our Lord Jesus and sympathize with Him in His death and sufferings! This is the place in which we stand in connection with Him. He can look on us poor sinners that we are, though saved ones, and when there are a few gathered to His name keeping that remembrance, surely it is joy to God our Father, and to the heart of the Lord Jesus. Thus He can joy in our joy at the remembrance of what He has done for us. It is bearing affection to Him.

Personal remembrance of Him is not mere doctrinal knowledge, but sweet thought and assurance. Very often we find much personal love to the Lord when there is very little clear understanding of truth. We could not do it intelligently without seeing the love of Christ.

Editorial

World Peace by Jesus

"Only the dead have seen the end of war," said Plato more than 2000 years ago. The truth is that in these last two millennia war has come more frequently, and has been more ferocious and destructive than ever before.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars," and so it has been, and still is even to this day. One of the great wars of this present century was spoken of as the war to end all wars. Philosophical men have said that war is unthinkable, and have looked to science and reason to gain the victory and remove war from the face of the earth. Because science and reason cannot guarantee good conduct, men must now say that war is not unthinkable, but unacceptable.

What has happened since the "mother of all wars" ceased a year ago? One notable certainty is that the armaments of most nations that surround Israel have increased noticeably. Science has multiplied the power and destructive force of weapons to a formidable height, yet it does not stop war, but rather makes it that much more horrible.

In Job it says this about reason: "By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty." Job 35:9.

To whom must we look to bring peace to this poor war-weary world? The prophet Micah fully answers this question. Read chapter 5: the birthplace of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem is predicted in

the second verse. He is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). He is "to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2. In verse 5 it says, "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land."

By following the teaching of this chapter, we learn when this shall be. Because Israel rejected and crucified Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, we learn that God has given them up until a certain time.

"Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." v. 3.

The time of Israel's travail is the time of Jacob's trouble, which is the tribulation. (See Matt. 24; Jet 30:4-9.) At the close of this time, the Lord comes to His earthly people and delivers them. The Assyrian is the last enemy to come up against God's people and it is then that it is fulfilled, "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land."

As believers, we do not wait for that peace, but rejoice in that same blessed Man of whom it says in Eph. 2:14 "He is our peace." Ed

Bible Challenger Clues

1. Mark; 2. 1 Samuel; 3. Job; 4. Ruth; 5. Psalms; 6. Genesis; 7. 1 Samuel; 8. Psalms; 9. Genesis; 10. Luke; 11. Isaiah.

Dressing the Camps

“Aaron shall burn thereon [the golden
altar of incense] sweet incense every morning:
when he dresseth the lamps, lie shall
burn incense upon it.”

Exodus 30:7

It was necessary to dress the lamps of the tabernacle from time to time to keep them burning brightly. The word "dress" in the original is used with the meaning: to make something good, right and beautiful. But before dressing the lamps, Aaron was to burn incense on the golden altar in the holy place. The sweet savor of that incense was to fill the holy place when those lamps were dressed.

Since "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," we find beautiful instruction here. Often in the history of God's people, the lamp of testimony needs to be dressed to keep it burning brightly. How important when such dressing is necessary to make sure that the sweet savor of Christ's Person fills the place. (See Sol. 1:3.) After all, it is not dressing according to our thoughts or desires, but Christ must be the pattern and measure before our souls. How often it happens that when we undertake dressing the lamp (seeking to correct some matter out of order in our brother) without the sweet savor of Christ filling the place, the results are negative.

Paul kept the correct order in his Epistle to the Philippians. In every chapter, Christ is set forward so that He could correct the differences that were arising among those dear saints. It is especially evident in chapter 2. How beautifully and passionately he pleads with them to "be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." v. 2. What filled the Apostle's soul to make him plead in this way? Was it not the sweet savor of that incense that we have in verses 5 to 8, where we have the Highest (the eternal Son of God) taking the lowest place?

May God graciously grant that care be used that the incense might be burning when dressing the lamps is necessary.

R. Thonney

“Set a watch, O Lord,.
before my mouth;
keep the door of my lips:”

Psalms 141:3

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the difference between redemption and atonement?

ANSWER: Atonement is the act itself before God, and is the ground of redemption. Man is redeemed by the atoning work of Christ. The one is the act, and the other is the result.

In the first three hours on the cross, Christ's suffering was from man's hand, and in the last three hours His suffering was from God's hand. We can immediately see the mighty difference. From the sixth hour to the ninth, there was darkness over all the land. Up to that, there had been communion with God in all that He had endured on the cross, and He was pleading with God.

Psa. 69 says, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none." At the last there was no God to appeal to—He had withdrawn. He had not only withdrawn, but was visiting judgment on the Lord Jesus. As the Lord drank the cup of death on the cross, it was in the realization that God had forsaken Him, because sin was on Him. But not only that, for that is general, but God was laying on Him the stripes by which we are healed. How well may we say there is nothing like the cross, and there never will be in time or eternity—heaven or earth.

With Jesus and Their Own Company

"They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.. Being let go, they went to their own company.... And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Acts 4:13, 23, 31.

In verse 13, where "they [the religious leaders] took knowledge of them, that they [Peter and John] had been with Jesus," it also says that they "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." Those who were thus passing judgment on them were the learned, the educated, the intelligent class of men. They had before them for judgment Peter and John, two men of very limited education, who, I suppose, knew a great deal more about fishing and mending nets than they did about the classics. They saw that Peter and John were unlearned and ignorant, and they despised their lack of knowledge. Nothing that these two might say would have any weight from the viewpoint of their intellectual standing in this world.

There was something beyond intelligence and learning about those two men that impressed itself on their audience, so an explanation was sought. How is it that two unlearned and ignorant men dare with Jesus and Their Own Company face us to contend for their cause, and are not the least intimidated by what we put before them? Then they began to weigh the evidence, and there was just one explanation for it: "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

If you are seeking power, if you are seeking a place in this world, let me tell you that there is a kind of power and place that you can have in this world, that you will have to get through other channels than human intelligence, or education, or schools. This kind of power that I refer to baffles the most intelligent and the most educated unbeliever. It is transmitted in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a blessing it is! "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Pressure was laid on them by every means, as we learn, to stop their mouths, but the fact that they had been with Jesus made them undaunted, and they left the presence of those men to go right back to serving the Lord as they had been doing previously.

They Went to Their Own Company

I suppose that each one of you has friends and those whose association you enjoy. If you are a Christian, if you have been brought to Jesus, if you are one who is called by His Name, I wonder if you have yet found your joy in associating with those that love that same Name! Supposing that you were to be let go, that is, if you were given your own will and had some leisure time, where would you go?

I heard a statement the other day to the effect that "what a man is, is what he does in his leisure time," and I think that there is something in that. We might say that you are putting in eight hours a day as a carpenter and someone asks you what you are. You will answer that you are a carpenter. Is that true? That is what you work at as a means of livelihood in this world. Yes, you are a carpenter, but that does not tell what the man is. In the evening, after your work is done, after you have discharged your responsibility for providing for your own—a responsibility that rests with each one of us and we cannot escape it—what are your interests then? What is your real life? For that is what tells the story "Being let go, they went to their own company."

What has the strongest grip on you while you are following your vocation, whether in an office, at school, or household duties? Is it the interests of God, the interests that pertain to the things of Christ in this world? Or is it some worldly ambition or interest that you are occupied with? It is astonishing what trivial things Satan can put before us to rob our souls of our privilege in Christ! I am often very much surprised at my own heart, what a vain and empty thing can get and hold my interest, until I wake up to the fact that what I have been occupied with might have been something far more rich and profitable to my soul. "Being let go, they went to their own company."

A good criterion by which to learn something of the status of our souls is to notice whether we love the association of God's people, and whether we love the companionship of other Christians who are ready to speak about Christ. It is a good sign if we do, and it is a bad sign if we do not.

In John 13 where the Lord Jesus is just about to leave for heaven, there is a very sweet word: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Could you get anything more personal than that word "His own"? If you possess something that you value very highly, you call it your own. What must the Lord Jesus have thought of that little group there when He said, "Having loved His own which were in the world"! What a choice place that is! Is not that an association worthy of your richest desires, to be in company with those whom the blessed Savior calls Mine? He looks down from heaven and has His eye upon you, and He is saying in His heart, "My own," so should not we choose for association those who love our Lord Jesus?

A Threefold Secret

Notice in Acts 4:31 the three things that will help us in our learning to be with Jesus. That verse gives us a threefold secret of being with Jesus.

1. "When they had prayed."
2. "Spake the word of God."
3. "Where they were assembled together."

In them we have the secret of all wholesome growth in the things of God. We also have the explanation of the sad fact that many of us do not make a wholesome growth, that we are dwarfed and emaciated in our spiritual life.

Prayer

Have you learned to pray? I don't know that any of us would say we have done so, because we all make such bumbles in these matters, but it does no harm to search our hearts with the question, "Do we pray?" What I mean is this: Do we definitely engage God each day with a request of which we feel a burden on our own heart? Do we know what it is to have dealings with God about our lives? I believe there are many Christians who are living a prayerless life. Do we get off alone with God and pour out our heart before Him in actual supplication and request with thanksgiving? That is the important thing and it is one of the secrets of going on with God.

The Word of God

Do you know what it is to have a Bible of your very own, or does the family Bible do for you? Do you read your own Bible to gather a portion for your soul at your own time? Has the Word of God a place in your life? This is one means that the Holy Spirit is pleased to use to keep us going on in communion with God.

Assembled Together

You know what it is to enjoy the meetings of God's people, but we would prize them more if we felt that everything else is secondary. There may be occasions to keep us away from a meeting, but if there is such, it should be a real occasion. A dear, godly old brother was feeling ill one night, and someone remarked to him about going to the meeting. "Well," he said, "my heart is there, so I guess the poor body will follow!" He went to the meeting.

That is the kind of spirit that God can bless, to be with God's people and give it the first place. "Where they were assembled together." What a place that has in Scripture. And it is largely a matter of cultivating an appetite for those things—a matter of habit, though I don't like that word. Therefore, form the habit while still young in your Christian life, so that when there is a meeting, you are going to be there and you will be blessed for it, unless you have a definite word from the Lord that He does not want you to go.

We each can make a lot of excuses for missing a meeting. If you want to keep happy in the Lord and go on in the truth, take advantage of the meeting together of God's people. Form the habit! Do not even raise the question if you should go or not, but leave that question entirely out. Take it for granted that you are going. There are some people who miss a meeting, and no one ever knows it. There are other people who miss a meeting, and the next time we see them we inquire why they were not there. They can always give an answer. Isn't it a sad situation when someone can stay away for quite a while and no one ever says a word about it? In such a case they take it for granted that such a person does not come regularly, and for that reason is not expected. But if it is evidenced that our desire is to be with God's people, they desire that we be there.

What a blessing it would be to all Christians if those three things were of primary importance in their lives: prayer, the Word of God, and the assembling together with God's people. Very soon people would begin to take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. They would find a real blessing in the joy of being with their own company—those that are dear to our Lord—and having the sense in their souls that they are seeking to please the One that brought them to Himself. What is there to be compared with Him? What is there to be compared with walking under the eye of God, with the approbation of Christ in a world like this? May the blessed God enable us all to do this with purpose of heart.

Growing up

God produces desires within us that nothing but the glory can satisfy. The Holy Spirit produces the power now to enter into these things. This shows the importance of our minds dwelling there. "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report... think on these things." How bright the heart would be! What growing up to the knowledge and preciousness of Christ, if accustomed to be where God dwells.

Genesis

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, is the remark' able preface, as Revelation is the equally striking conclusion, of the revelations of God. It presents the germ, in one form or another, of nearly all the ways of God and man, which we find separately developed in the succeeding books of Scripture. Likewise, Revelation is the natural close, presenting the ripened fruits, even for eternity, of all that had been sown from the first, the ultimate results of every act of God and of His intervening enemy. Thus we have in Genesis the creation of which man is chief. Chapters 1 to 50:

1. Creation.
2. The principles of moral relationship with God and His creatures.
3. The temptation of Satan and his judgment by the seed of the woman.
4. Sin against God and man (and especially against Christ in type), sacrifice and worship, the world and the household of faith.
5. The heavenly and the earthly testimonies to Christ's coming.
6. The apostasy of man.
7. God's warning by His Spirit and judgment in the deluge, with the salvation of a spared remnant in the ark, and mercy to the creature.
8. Reconciliation in its relation to the earth and not to man only.
9. God's covenant with creation.
10. and 11. Government and the history of the present world in its early rise and progress.
12. The call and promises of God, and the history of the called.
13. The heavenly blessing and earthly calling.
14. The Melchisedec priesthood.
15. The Jewish portion unfolded and confirmed with the disclosure of long oppression previously from those who are to be specially judged.
16. The typical introduction of the law or Hagar covenant.
17. The intervention of God's grace sealed by circumcision, and displayed in the heir of promise.
18. The further announcement of the heir is linked with the divine judgment about to fall once more, and with intercession as the due place of those who, outside the evil, enjoy communion with God.
19. Salvation so as by fire out of the tribulation and judgment which swallow up the ungodly.

20. Failure of the faithful in maintaining their real relationship before the world.

21. The son of promise is born, and the child of the law according to the flesh, is cast out, followed by the world's submission instead of reproof.

22. Then follows the grand shadow of Christ's death, as the provision of the Father's love, and His resurrection.

23. The covenant form of blessing disappears.

24. The calling of the bride for the risen bridegroom ensues.

25 to 50. Finally is seen the sovereign call of him, afterward named Israel, who is identified with the sorrows, wanderings and ultimate blessing of that people. The episode of his son Joseph, who is first rejected by his brethren after the flesh, and suffers yet more at the hands of the Gentiles, is very striking. Next he is exalted (as yet unknown to his natural kindred) to the right hand of the throne. And lastly he is owned in glory by the very brethren who had rejected him, but now owe all to his wisdom and majesty and love.

Genesis is at once a book of matchless simplicity to him who glides over its surface, and of infinite depth to him who searches into the deep things of God.

“We must always be in dependence or fait:”

Bible Challenger-10-October V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words David said as to who might find an abiding relationship of life in this world. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 256.)

1. A scribe's evaluation of the dissertation regarding the greatest of the commandments. [1]
2. A sacred word ascribed to the Lord by a praying mother who had just made a loan of her most prized possession. [1]
3. That which a certain upright man eschewed which even Satan himself could not discredit. [1]
4. A directive of one kinsman to another regarding a parcel of land which, if purchased, carried an additional obligation. [2]
5. Words used to quantify how many of the children of men have gone back (wards) and become defiled with the pollution of this world. [2]
6. That which an imprisoned slave was called on to do when a certain monarch proclaimed, "I have dreamed a dream." [2]
7. A kind of feeling a distraught king found lacking in his servants, because of the league his son had made. [1]
8. The proximity of trouble sensed by one in great anguish of heart when no one was able to help. [1]
9. That which the Egyptians told Joseph they would give in exchange for bread during the great famine, indicating their willingness to be slaves in their own land. [2]
10. Something Israelite parents imparted to their sons on the eighth day, which in the case of Elisabeth and her husband caused much consternation among neighbors and kinfolk. [1]
11. That which was not created vainly, but formed for habitable purposes. [1] Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-09-September Answers V.07

1. I am rich Rev. 3:17
2. Temple Matt. 23:16
3. Idols 1 Cor. 8:4
4. Sword of Gideon Judg. 7:14
5. North Job 26:7
6. Orderly Acts 21:24
7. Tossed James 1:6
8. Heat Psa. 19:6
9. Impossible Matt. 17:20
10. Net Luke 5:5
11. Gathered much Ex. 16:18

"And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, IT IS NOTHING with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee." 2 Chron. 14:11.

Heaven and Earth

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The scene of the divine handiwork was twofold, and accordingly, "in the dispensation of the fullness of times," God will display Himself again, both in heaven and on earth.

Let us begin this divine subject with Genesis chapters 1-47 which present a beautiful view of the Lord acting by turns in heaven and on earth. At the close we find them together in a way typical of what their connection, yet distinctness, will be in that coming dispensation of the fullness of times. May our meditations always be submitted to His truth and Spirit, and conducted in the spirit of worshippers.

Genesis 1 and 2:GEN 1GEN 2

It was only of the earth that Adam was made lord. The garden was his residence, and he was to replenish and subdue the earth. This was the limitation of his inheritance and of his enjoyments. He knew of heaven only as he saw it above him, and by its lights dividing his day and his night. But he had no thoughts which linked him personally with it.

Genesis 3GEN 3

But Adam transgressed and lost the garden and became a drudge in the earth instead of being the happy lord of it (Gen. 3:17-19). He was now to get a bare existence out of it till he was laid down in death upon it.

Genesis 4 and 5:GEN 4GEN 5

Such was man's changed condition. To cling to the earth now as one's delight and portion was to act in bold defiance of the Lord of judgment. Such was the spirit of Cain and his family. He thought the earth good enough for God and desired nothing better for himself. He gave God the fruit of it and built a city for himself on the face of it, furnishing it with desirable things of all sorts. He was unmoved by the thought of the blood with which his own hand had stained it, and of the presence of the Lord on whom he had turned his back.

This was not Adam, or Abel, or Seth, or that line of worshippers who "call on the name of the Lord." They have in the earth only a burying-place. Grace having provided a remedy for them as sinners, and righteousness having separated them from a cursed earth, they believe in the remedy and seek no place or memorial in the earth. The Lord gives them a higher and a richer inheritance, even in heaven with Himself, as signified in the translation of Enoch.

Genesis 6 to 9:GEN 6GEN 7GEN 8GEN 9

Though the Lord is thus removing the scene of His counsels and the hopes of His elect from earth to heaven, yet the earth is not given up. It is, we know, destined to rejoice, by-and-by, in the liberty of the glory, or as I have already quoted, in "the dispensation of the fullness of times." Eph. 1:9, 10. Accordingly, this purpose the Lord will rehearse and illustrate at times, as He does now, in due season in the history of Noah.

The heavenly family, as we have just seen, only died both to and in the earth. They could speak, it is true, both of its coming judgment and blessing. Enoch foretold of the one, and Lamech of the other (Jude 14; en. 5:29). Neither of them was in the scenes they thus talked about, but Noah who comes after them is a man of the earth again. In his day the earth reappears as the scene of divine care and delight. God has communion with man upon it again. It has passed through the judgment of the water, and God makes a covenant with it. He has the prophet, priest and king upon it providing for its continuance and godly government. Noah's connection with it was quite unlike that of either Cain or Seth. He did not, like the former, fill it and enjoy it in defiance of God; nor did he, like the latter, take merely a burying-place in it. He enjoyed the whole of it under the Lord. The Lord sanctioned his inheritance of it, his dominion over it, and his delight in it.

Genesis 10 and 11:GEN 10GEN 11

Thus the earth, in its turn, again takes up the wondrous tale and is the care and object of the Lord. But again it becomes corrupt before Him. Noah himself, like Adam, begins this sad history, and the builders of Babel, like another family of Cain, perfect the apostasy seeking to fill the earth with themselves independently of God. They were mighty hunters before the Lord. They scoured the face of the earth, as though they asked in infidel pride, "Where is the God of judgment?"

**Gen. 12 to 36: GEN 12 GEN 13 GEN 14 GEN 15 GEN 16 GEN 17 GEN
18 GEN 19 GEN 20 GEN 21 GEN 22 GEN 23 GEN 24 GEN 25 GEN 26 GEN
27 GEN 28 GEN 29 GEN 30 GEN 31 GEN 32 GEN 33 GEN 34 GEN 35 GEN**

36

This, however, was not allowed. Another judgment comes upon them. They are scattered, and the whole human social order is awfully broken up. But Abram is called out to find his fellowship with God and apart from the world. His family dwelt in Mesopotamia beyond the Euphrates. He came from the stock of Shem, but was a worshipper of idols as all the nations were. But sovereign grace distinguishes him, and the God of glory calls him forth from kindred, from home and from country.

It is a call that does not interfere with the order of the earth or government among the nations. He is called to be a stranger, and not a rival of "the powers," or a new model governor of any people. He walks with God as the God of glory—a higher character than that of the one by whom "the powers that be are ordained." He is a pilgrim and stranger on earth, and walks as a heavenly man. He has the promise that his seed and inheritance in the earth shall become linked together by and by. He and Isaac and Jacob dwell in tents all their days, however, and a tent-life is that of a stranger here, of one that is not at home and at rest.

Here, then, we have a heavenly people again—heavenly in the character of their walk, and heavenly like Enoch or Lamech in their intelligence about the earth's future history, and the promise to their seed of inheritance in it in due season. But we have still deeper and fuller mysteries in the history of him who comes after them.

Genesis 37 to 47:GEN 37GEN 38GEN 39GEN 40GEN 41GEN GEN 42GEN 43GEN 44GEN 45

Through the wickedness of his brethren, as we all know, for it is a favorite story, Joseph is estranged from the scene of the promised and covenanted inheritance. He first becomes a sufferer and then a husband, a father and a governor in the midst of a distant people. At last his brethren, who once hated him, and the inhabitants of the earth are fed and ruled by him in grace and wisdom.

Nothing can be more expressive than all this. It is a striking exhibition of the great result purposed of God "in the dispensation of the fullness of times." Joseph is cast among the Gentiles, and there, after sorrow and bondage, becomes the exalted one and the head and father of a family with such joy that his heart for a season can afford to forget his kindred in the flesh. This surely is Christ in heaven now exalted after His sorrows, and with Him the Church taken from among the Gentiles and made His companion and joy during the season of His estrangement from Israel.

In process of time, Joseph is made the depositary and the dispenser of the world's resources. His brethren, as well as all beside, become dependent on him; he feeds them and rules them according to his pleasure. And this surely is Christ as He will be in the earth by and by, with Israel brought to repentance and seated in the fairest portion of the earth. Then all the nations will be under His scepter, and He will order them according to His wisdom. He will feed them out of His stores and resettle them in their inheritance in peace and righteousness.

Surely the heavens and the earth are seen here in type as they will really be in "the dispensation of the fullness of times," when all things, both in heaven and on earth, shall be gathered together in Christ.

This is a rehearsal of the great result, and the heavens and the earth tell out together the mystery of God!

I cannot but observe the willing, uncomplaining subjection which the Egyptians yield to Joseph. He moves them hither and thither, and settles them as he likes, but all is welcome to them. And so in the days of the kingdom, the whole world will be ready to say that Jesus has done all things well. What blessedness! Subjection to Jesus, but willing and glad subjection! His scepter getting its approval and its welcome from all over whom it waves and asserts its power!

Again I observe that all this power of Joseph is held in full consent of Pharaoh's supremacy. The people, cattle and lands are all bought by Joseph for Pharaoh. It is Pharaoh's kingdom still, though under Joseph's administration—as in the kingdom of which this is the type, every tongue shall confess Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

These features give clear expression and character to the picture. But there is one other touch (the touch of a master's hand, I would reverently say) in this picture which is not inferior in meaning or in beauty to any. I mean that in all this settlement of the earth, Asenath and the children get no

portion. They are not seen. There is not even mention made of them. Jacob may get Goshen, but Asenath, Ephraim and Manasseh, nothing. Is it that the wife and children were loved less, and the father and brethren more? No, that cannot be. But Asenath and the children are heavenly, and they have their portion in and with him who is the lord and dispenser of all this. They cannot mingle in the interests and arrangements of the earth. Even Goshen, the fairest and fattest of the land, is unworthy of them. They are the family of the lord himself. They share the home, and the presence, and the closest endearments of him who is the happy and honored head of all this scene of glory.

Is not this the great result in miniature or in type? Have we not in all this the promised "dispensation of the fullness of times," when God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth? Are not the heavens and the earth here seen and heard together in their millennial order? I surely judge that they are. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18.

J. G. Bellett

"Come near to Me."

"Let us draw near."

'But now, in Christ Jesus,
ye who sometime were far off,
are made nigh by the
blood of Christ.'

Gen. 45:4; Heb. 10:22; Eph. 2:13

Branded

Just outside my bedroom window is a field of cows.

One of them has the letters J. D. B. burned on her back. We say that this cow is branded. These letters are probably the initials of the former owner of the cow.

A man once said, "I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus." Gal. 6:17 [Lit. Greek].

This man had suffered much for the Lord Jesus, and perhaps it was some of the scars from the beatings he had received, or marks from the stones thrown at him (2 Cor. 11:24, 25), to which he referred.

The same man who could speak of himself as bearing in his body the brands of the Lord Jesus, once wrote a letter to a young friend of his and said in it, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." Titus 3:8.

He was not referring to good works in order to get saved, for in the same letter he said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." We are to do good works because we are saved.

Is it known to whom you belong? Are you "branded for life"? No matter where you are may you carry the Name of your Master upon you. May it be known by your doings whose you are and whom you serve.

J. T. Armet

I Am the Lord

Ye are not your own.... 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

What comfort may be found in the words: "I am the Lord's." The Lord Jesus has redeemed us with His own precious blood. Having set such a value upon us, and having bought us for Himself, He will assuredly keep us. None shall pluck us out of His hand. Our life is safe beyond all contingencies, for it is "hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:3. "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. 14:8.

We may be tossed about by ever-changing circumstances. To be entitled to say, "I am the Lord's," however, may well keep the soul in abiding peace. It is heaven begun below.

Come what will, painfulness or weariness, poverty or persecution, bonds or imprisonments, fire or flood, still the sweet words, "I am the Lord's," should enable us to say, "None of these things move me." Acts 20:24.

What strength will it impart if these little words, "I am the Lord's," become an abiding thought running perpetually through the heart! It will detach us from an evil world; it will keep us calm and patient amidst all its restlessness and striving, and its tumultuous commotions and disturbances. It will raise us above its empty pleasures, and protect us from its dangerous devices. We shall then be anxious about nothing, careful only to please our Father. For whatever troubles may threaten or assail, we can come with confidence, making our requests known unto God, and His own peace, according to His Word, "shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:7.

Death itself is not the end to the believer; it is the entrance into life, unhindered by any of the obstructions that press us down here in this lower world. Not only will peace be our portion, but joy will be ever bubbling up, knowing that "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37), and then we shall be forever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17).

E. J. Checkley

Out of His Treasure

When the Lord came the first time, He took our sins away; when He comes the next time, He will take us away to scenes of rest and glory

There are only two souls in the gospels to whom the Lord told who He really was. In John 4 He reveals Himself to the outcast sinner, and in John 9 to the outcast saint.

Editorial

Jacob's Trouble

To begin with, the first and most important thing for each and every person is salvation. God offers eternal life to all through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. It is for Jew and Gentile; God is no respecter of persons.

But 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; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3:21-24.

With this before us, we take up some reasons for a Christian not to help Jews to return to Israel. It makes absolutely no difference where a Jew is living if he knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, because all believers will be caught up at the rapture before the tribulation period.

When we know that the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), or great tribulation, will be centered in Judea (Matt. 24), and that it is fast approaching, how could we help any to go there?

We believe that the sentence was changed for the guilty nation that rejected and crucified Jesus their Messiah by the Lord's words from the cross. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. The charge against them now, during these 2000 years, is manslaughter instead of murder.

For these many years since the cross, cities of refuge (see Josh. 20) are provided for Jews. The man-slayer was not to return to the site of the crime until the death of the high priest.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came as a Prophet. He has ascended to heaven and now has the office of High Priest. When He returns, it will be as King of kings and Lord of lords. Until Jesus comes as King, and His main office of High Priest changes to being revealed as King, Jews ought not to return to the Jerusalem area, which will be the center of the tribulation. It is there that the avenger of blood will catch them. All the Jewish people said to Pilate, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. 27:25. Some of the children are there; others want to go there. Do you want to help them?

Truly, the Jew and every person in the whole world needs Christ and salvation in order to escape the "wrath to come." 1 Thess. 1:10. It was to the Hebrews that God wrote: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." Heb. 2:3. Ed.

Bible Challenger Clues

1. Acts; 2. Galatians; 3. Romans; 4. Acts; 5. Hebrews; 6. 1 Peter; 7. 2 Corinthians; 8. 2 Thessalonians; 9. Jude; 10. Hebrews.

The Salvation of God

by J. G. Bellett

The salvation of God surely may be traced all through Scripture, from the earliest, simplest revelation of it in the opening of Genesis to the celebration of it in realms of glory at the close of the Revelation.

It came with the first utterance of God after sin entered this world. The promise of the seed of the woman conveyed it. It was illustrated in patriarchal stories all through Genesis. It was presented in a thousand shadows or symbols in the ordinances of the law. It was echoed in a thousand voices of the prophets. And thus the current of it may be traced all through the ages of the Old Testament, and the line of light that was revealing it then may be seen as spanning, or stretching across, the whole volume.

In due time, in the fullness of time, the New Testament age begins, and then at the very outset the salvation of God appears again. It becomes embodied. The child that was to be born, the Son that was to be given, was given by God the name of JESUS.

If the first divine utterance in the Old Testament bore witness, so does the first divine utterance in the New Testament, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." The salvation of God was now embodied. It entered unveiled, thereby and therein to accomplish all eternal purposes of grace (Matt. 1).

Not only was salvation thus embodied, but its arrival here was celebrated by the ecstatic joy of heaven, and the full, earnest-hearted welcome of the earth. Angelic hosts in the light and presence of the glory and angels in their individuality tell us of this joy. The vessels anointed by the Holy Spirit proclaim this welcome. Mary rehearses it and so do Zacharias, Simeon and Anna. The shepherds in the fields and the babe in the womb wait in their several ways to greet it and rejoice. (Luke 1 and 2.)

When thus arrived, it is active. What had been ushered forth in the midst of such congratulations could now stir itself and be at its work under its high commission. And this is the life, the ministerial activity of the Lord Jesus. He was dispensing health and salvation all around Him. Every sickness and every disease among the people had to tell that "Jehovah-rophi" was here: Christ the healer. The salvation of God was abroad dispensing itself to the need of a ruined, death-stricken world.

Preached to All Being thus announced and arrived, and having thus dispensed itself in the ministry of Jesus, as we read in the four gospels, it is now the subject of preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jews hear of it first, and then the Gentiles. Peter calls on the Jew to come to it, and goes to the house of the Gentile with words that convey it (Acts 2 and 10). Paul preaches it to the nation of his kindred in the flesh, and then to the ends of the earth on the authority of God by His prophet (Acts 13). When at the very end he leaves Israel in unbelief, under sentence of blindness of eye and hardness of heart, he lets them know that it—the salvation of God—is sent unto the

Gentiles and that they would hear it (Acts 28:28). It is as fresh in the day of Acts 28 as it was when first announced in Gen. 3. The Spirit of God was as full of it then as the mouth of the Lord was when He uttered His earliest word in a world where sin had entered.

What a moment in the history of this world when it witnessed the arrival of salvation from heaven to earth. As we have seen, heaven in its hosts and its glory was rejoicing then; earth in its anointed vessels, great and small, was answering it.

Received by Faith

Throughout this story, we may see that the sinner may possess this salvation, taking it immediately from God without owing to any other. Adam took it from the lips of God and made it his own at once. It entered the house of Zaccheus, and came there simply and solely in company with Jesus. It is faith that gets it; faith is the individual act of the soul, the sinner's exercise of heart and conscience entirely with God alone. Old Simeon illustrates this. He took the child in his arms as God's salvation, without asking permission of its mother, for faith knows it to be God's gift to the sinner as a sinner. It knows that it is our necessities as sinners that constitute our fitness and our title for it and to it.

From the day of Acts 28, "the salvation of God" has come forth to this wide, wide world under divine commission. It has been sealed with the broadest seal—the clear and deep stamp of heaven or of God—has been put on it. No one speaks from God, under commission and authority from Him, who does not publish it. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles."

Celebrated in Heaven and on Earth

The epistles, in their season, teach salvation to those who have received it as preached to them. They teach it in its glories. They distinguish it in its present and future relation to us. We now have the salvation of the soul. We wait for that salvation which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7). We have now "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." We wait for that form of it which the second coming of the Lord shall bring with it (Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:28).

Then when we pass the epistles and reach the very end of the divine book, and read the Revelation, we find that this salvation is celebrated—not preached nor taught. It is not as addressing itself to a wide world of sinners or assemblies of the saints, but celebrated, whether in heaven or on earth, in courts of glory or regions of renewed creation (Rev. 7; 12; 19).

Surely then, the salvation of God is tracked all through the Word of God; it is promised, illustrated, typified, prophesied, embodied, dispensed, preached, taught, and celebrated.

Salvation is too great a thought for the heart of man to suggest or indeed to receive. God must provide us with it, and the Spirit must enable us to accept it. The religious mind of man resents it as inconsistent with the obligation he owes to God, and with the responsibility under which he lies to Him. The moral sense resents it as being no security of practical life and righteousness. How deeply at fault both are! How unequal is the best human thing to reach the divine. While neither man's religion nor man's morality give toleration to the idea of salvation, God, as we see, is occupied with it from first to last. The promise of it, the history of it, the display of it, and the illustration of it in one sinner after another stretch across the whole volume. God dispenses it now and would have us enjoy it. He will display it in all its glory by and by, and will call us to celebrate it.

Jesus, the Imperishable Name

"Jesus" is the imperishable name, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." This is the name which abides in bloom and freshness still, the unfading name which eternity has no power to efface. Time may wear away rocks; eternity will do nothing with that name but celebrate it. "Jesus," or Savior, was the first word written by the finger of God in the record-book of this world of sin, as we have seen, and it has ever since been kept, like the bow in the cloud, in the vividness of its earliest power. It is the unchanging, unchangeable name. It is not the unutterable name, it is true, but it is the imperishable one. We have heard that the Jew, under the law, found the divine name to be too high, too distant, too sacred, for human lips to use. But the sinner under grace, talks now of the divine name all day long, and will forever.

When God spoke in law, He satisfied Himself to speak in a sequestered nook of the earth, and in the hearing of the smallest of all the nations of the earth. But when He came to speak of salvation, He summoned the whole wide world to listen!

The Foundation

Great and glorious as it is, it rests on the simplest foundation which God has found in the sacrifice of the cross. God is satisfied in Christ: the believing sinner is saved. God has found His satisfaction in Jesus. I have found my salvation in God. Call our good thing by what name we may—justification, acceptance in the beloved, sonship, peace, glory, redemption, reconciliation, or whatever other name that good thing may carry, all rests on this: Christ has satisfied God in that which He has done for sinners. The rent veil, the empty sepulcher, the resurrection and the ascension, the glory of the Purger of our sins in heaven, and the mission of the Spirit testify in the mouth of the most august witnesses this satisfaction of which we speak. Himself our Justifier, we are to accept salvation from God just because He has accepted satisfaction from Christ—to accept it with all thankful, worshipping assurance.

God has rent the veil, and it is obedience in the sinner to enter. When I lay my burden on God's foundations, I am glorifying as well as using them.

Salvation is to be enjoyed by faith. As we read, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Faith comes by hearing. We cannot get it by working. We dare not count on deserving it, for it is God's salvation, "prepared" as we read, by Him (Luke 2:28-32), counseled, brought out, revealed by Himself, and sent out into the world by Him. We have to gaze and to listen as debtors to the provisions of grace.

Sweetest rest and peace have fitted us,

Sweeter praise than tongue can tell

God is satisfied with Jesus,

We are satisfied as well.

Bible Challenger-11-November V.07

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words which tell of something that has appeared to all men, bringing with it the potential gift of salvation. [3] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 285.)

1. That phase of ministry which a servant of God referred to as he contemplated his finished course. [1]
2. Something that cannot come by the law because of the vain inference. [1]
3. Something said concerning the extent of God's free gift to countermand one man's offense which brought death to many. [3]
4. An apt exhortation to those in the early Church, as well as for ourselves, which will require purpose of heart to fulfill. [4]
5. Those for whom the One now crowned with glory and honor once tasted death. [2]
6. Those to whom we, who have received the gift (of God), should be faithful to minister the same. [3]
7. That which is diametrically opposite to godly sincerity, and is certainly unbecoming to the believer's manner of life in this world. [2]
8. That which the name of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes when believers are walking worthy of their heavenly calling. [1]
9. A word used to signify the divine appointment of certain men who crept and turned and denied. [1]
10. A recommended war of looking to detect the springing up of an unwanted root. [1]

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

Bible Challenger-10-October Answers V.07

1. Truth Mark 12:32
2. Holy 1 Sam. 2:2
3. Evil Job 1:8
4. Redeem it Ruth 4:4
5. Every one Psa. 53:3
6. Interpret it Gen. 41:15
7. Sorry 1 Sam. 22:8
8. Near Psa. 22:11
9. Our bodies Gen. 47:18
10. Name Luke 1:61
11. Earth Isa. 45:18

"For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and THERE IS NONE abiding." 1 Chron. 29:15.

Are We Watching and Serving?

by H. H. Snell

Luke 12LUK 12

In meditating on our Lord's discourses in the gospels, we should remember that He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12:50. That is, He could not then bring out the full truth, because His death and resurrection had not been accomplished. He was straitened. This is why the coming of the Lord as our hope could not be so distinctly set forth as it was afterward in the epistles. There we find the distinction made between the coming of our Lord for us, and the revelation or appearing of our Lord when we come out of heaven and reign with Him. This could not be made known till the nation of Israel under the law had rejected their Messiah, and came under God's judicial dealings.

Now that we have the instruction of the epistles, we can go back and trace, in the parable of the virgins and in the beginning of our Lord's farewell discourse, an allusion to His coming for us, when only those who are truly His will be caught up.

In Luke 12 after the Lord had spoken much about His coming, Peter said: "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household?" (vv. 41, 42). Knowing full well that He would be rejected, His coming for us was anticipated by Him. This shows also that the great thing our Lord looks for now is caring for His household during His absence.

This question of Peter's also reminds us of our Lord so kindly allowing Himself to be interrupted by questions to which He graciously replied, and then resumed His discourse. In the end of John 13 and 14 our Lord was interrupted by Peter, Thomas, Philip and Jude asking questions, each of which He at once answered. We see the same in our chapter. The Lord began by addressing His "disciples" in the presence of a multitude of people; then, in verse 13, "one of the company" asked Him to speak to his brother about dividing the inheritance with him. The Lord's reply to this extended to the end of verse 21, when He again addressed His "disciples." It is sweet to trace these gracious ways of our adorable Lord!

Little Flock

His disciples were a "little flock." They were few indeed when compared with the multitudes of professed people of God, but they were not to fear. They would have the kingdom, which now is in postponement. This will be enjoyed by those whom the disciples here set forth as having received the Messiah with the hope of His reigning in Mount Zion. It will be their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom (v. 32).

It need scarcely be added that those who form the Church, the body of Christ, hope for a heavenly inheritance, and to reign with Him as His heavenly people. The state of our heart is the all-searching question now. For "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Till He comes He would have us watching and serving.

From this touching discourse we learn that it is our Lord's mind that we should be girded servants. "Let your loins be girded about," always ready to be sent here or there, as He may direct. In many large businesses there are men ready to carry out any emergency their employer commands. "Be ye therefore ready also." The loins being girded indicated they were prepared. The flowing garments of those days, folded up and tucked round the waist, showed they were ready for hill or dale, or even a path of thorns and briers. A girded servant is one ready to go, and waiting to be told when and where. May we truly be girded servants.

Shining Servants

We should also be shining servants—"your lights burning." Instead of their lamps going out, they are well supplied with oil, trimmed and burning brightly. This implies dependence, faith, communion with Christ, and the Spirit ungrieved by our walk. There will also be unsparing self-judgment. John was spoken of by our Lord as "a burning and a shining light." Such should we be, as the Apostle so pointedly instructs us: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." Phil. 2:15, 16. We should then be shining servants. Our light should shine before men, and will do so if we are abiding in our Lord Jesus. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5:8.

Waiting Servants

As "men that wait for their lord," so should we be waiting servants. The servants should be looking for their master's return during the night. They do not know when, but they wait. They do not go elsewhere, but wait. They do not retire to rest, but simply wait, so that they may open the door as soon as they hear the knock. Our Lord Jesus would have us to be waiting servants, momentarily expecting His coming.

Watching Servants

Our Lord would not only have us waiting, but watching for His coming. He looks for watching servants. As the night becomes far spent, and watch after watch passes, such know it cannot be long before the Master will come. They listen with increasing watchfulness. Such are watching servants, and such our Lord highly commends. He says, "Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Can anything exceed this testimony of our Lord concerning the servants whom He finds watching? Do we lay it on our consciences as we ought? Is it because it suits His loving heart that we wait and watch?

It surely cannot be long before we shall actually see His face, and be with Him forever. Our Lord, therefore, added, "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." How pleasing, then, to Him is the watching servant!

The Watches

Regarding the various watches, we know that the first watch was from six to nine o'clock, the second watch from nine to twelve (midnight), the third watch from midnight to three in the morning, and the fourth watch from three to six in the morning. Now it is certain that the first and second watches have both passed, for we read in the parable of the virgins that "at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Matt. 25:6. It is a fact that over one hundred years ago, this cry did go forth. Since then it has extended to almost every part of the civilized world and in a way, too, that has not been known since the days of the apostles.

In Paul's day, believers turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. But according to our Lord's prophetic word, "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." So that as regards the watches, we are now in the third watch, and that watch considerably advanced. We say we are in some part of the third watch because in the fourth watch our Lord will come to His ancient people (Israel) as their great Deliverer.

There is a beautiful illustration of this in Matt. 14. Our Lord was in the mountain praying. His position there answers to His present place of ministry in heaven. At the fourth watch of the night His earthly people are in a great trouble and danger, and He meets them in their deep distress. Jesus reveals Himself as their Deliverer, so that when He came into the ship the wind ceased. They worshipped Him as Son of God, for the people of Israel will know Him by and by as "Son of God" and "King of Israel."

If, then, we are in the third watch of the night, and it is far advanced, and He is coming to bless Israel in the fourth watch (and it is clear that we shall be taken up to meet the Lord in the air before He delivers Israel, for then we shall come out of heaven with Him), it certainly can only be a very little while before He that shall come will come, and will not delay.

Faithful and Wise Servants

At this present time our Lord also looks for faithful and wise servants, because not only has He set us in a position to wait and watch, but He has also given us talents to use for Him. He has given us grace to minister to others and thus made us stewards. So our Lord added, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." Luke 12:42-44.

It is scarcely possible that language could convey more strikingly our Lord's approval of servants who care for His saints during His absence. It is faithfulness to Him to use for the benefit of His household the talents He has given us. It is also the path of wisdom, because it lays up treasure in heaven. To give seasonable aid to those who form "His household" during His absence is what distinguishes true from false profession of His name.

Longing Servants

Besides all this, we know from another scripture that the Holy Spirit would have us to be longing servants. Not only girded, shining, waiting and watching, faithful and wise servants, but ardently desiring His coming. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." When the Lord presents Himself as "the bright and morning star," saying, "Surely, I come quickly," what should be the effect on our souls but the hearty response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? Few subjects are more solemn, and none more eminently sanctifying. For he that "hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." May we be so taken up with our precious Savior where He is, that our constant cry may be, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Evil Servants

There is another very solemn word added by our Lord. It is about the evil servant. He is fundamental enough perhaps in his views, and full of scripture truth, but in heart (oh, how appalling!) putting off the Lord's coming. He said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," and as a result he began to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken. With all his profession he loved not, because he had not tasted the love of Christ. His portion, then, when judgment comes, must be with the unbelievers.

We may be sure that our Lord is not delaying. Everything needful to be accomplished before He comes is going on in perfect harmony with all the attributes and counsels of God, while His long-suffering toward this evil world will be to His eternal praise and glory. His unchanging desire while on the Father's throne is to have us with Him where He is, to behold His glory, and share with Himself the inheritance and the glory which the Father has given Him (John 17:24). What infinite love to us! Are we watching and serving?

Obedience to God and Love to the Saints

by A. H. Rule

Perfect obedience characterized the life of Christ here on the earth. He was always the dependent One, always the obedient One. "In the volume of the book" it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." And when on earth He could say, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." And again, "I do always those things that please Him." This was perfect obedience.

His path of obedience to the Father was also the perfect exhibition of God's love to man. His words, His ways, His acts, all spoke of God's love to His guilty creatures. And the cross was the full revelation of this, together with the infinitely perfect expression of His obedience to God the Father. In the life of Christ as a man on earth, perfect obedience and perfect love were united. The life in which these were displayed in Christ is the life which, through grace, is imparted to the believer.

In Christ there was no imperfection. His was a life of perfect obedience—perfect love. In us there is much to hinder the manifestation of this life, yet the life in us is the same in its nature, its traits, and its characteristics—it is the same life. Whether in Him or in us, it is characterized by obedience. Obedience is the state in which it subsists. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3. No matter what our pretension may be, it is worth nothing unless there is this obedience. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." v. 4.

Love

The other characteristic of the divine life is not separated from this. Where there is obedience there will also be love, because they belong to the same life—the same nature. "Whoso keepeth His word"—this is obedience—"in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." 1 John 2:5. His Word is the expression of what He is, of His nature, and "God is love," so that if we keep His Word, His love is perfected in us.

"His commandments" are not only the expression of what He is, but of His authority as well. We are called to obey, and to obey as Christ obeyed. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Christ. And if we say that we abide in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked; that is, in obedience to God, for His whole life was that. There was not a single movement in His soul, not a single act of His life, that was not obedience to His Father's will. Blessed indeed it is to behold that perfect One in His path of perfect obedience! And happy are they who follow His footsteps, who walk even as He walked!

Old and New Commandments

The commandment to obey as Christ obeyed, to walk as Christ walked, was not a new commandment. It was the word they had heard from the beginning in connection with the manifestation of the divine life in Christ. It was the Father's commandment to Christ, according to Christ's own words: "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. So John says the commandment was "old." Again, it was a "new commandment," because true in Him and in us. The commandment was the expression of the divine life—"His commandment is life everlasting," and was first seen in Christ. But now it is true in us too, "because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

God had revealed Himself through the cross, and the light of life was now shining for man, and dispelling the darkness. This life for man, and in man, as the fruit of redemption, life in Christ, life in the Spirit, was a new thing. It is Christ in us, Christ as our life. The commandment is "old" because the obedience which characterizes this life was seen in Him which was from the beginning, "the word of life." It is "new" because the same thing is seen in the believer now. If they were seeking something new, according to the Gnostic philosophy, the bane of Christianity in that day, the Apostle John gives them this. But he would not disconnect it from Christ, the believer's life, "that which was from the beginning." "Which thing is true in Him and in you."

Until redemption was accomplished Christ remained alone. Now He is no more alone; we are in Him, and He in us. This is a wonderful truth, and it gives a wonderful character to the children of God. The Holy Spirit in us is the power of it all—the divine answer in us down here to all that Christ is in glory as a man. It is no longer Christ as a man walking alone in this world, but Christ in the saints, and the "eternal life" displayed in them.

In John's epistle, Christ is seen as "eternal life" down here in this world, first alone, and then in the saints, "which thing is true in Him and in you." And this life, whether in Christ alone, or in Him and in us, is first an obedient life, and second a life of love. 1 John 2:3-8 is obedience and disobedience; verses 9-11 are love and hatred.

Obedience and Disobedience—Love and Hatred

Obedience and love characterize those who are in the light. Disobedience and hatred characterize those who are in the darkness. A man may say he is in the light, but if he hates his brother, he is still in darkness, and has never seen the light. He knows not "the light of life." But if we see the outgoings of divine love toward a brother, we can say that he is a man who dwells in the light. He has found God who is light; having found the light, he has the love also, for "God is light," and "God is love." We cannot have the one without the other, just as we cannot have the sun without having both light and heat.

Have our eyes been opened to see the light? Have our hearts tasted the love? Oh! then to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." We are to "walk as children of light; (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Eph. 5:2, 8-10. Let us walk in the light and sunshine of His presence who could say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," never swerving from this path, and who, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Jesus in the Days of His Flesh

There was no "loitering" in the path of the Blessed One through the world, no seeking, as we may seek, for ease. Life with Him was taken up with the untiring activities of love. He lived not for Himself. God and man had all His thoughts and His service. Did He seek for solitude? It was to be alone with His Father. Did He seek for society? It was to be about His Father's business. By night or day He was always the same—on the mount of Olives praying, in the temple teaching, in the midst of sorrows comforting, where sickness was, healing. Every act declared Him to be the One who lived for others. He had a joy in God that man cannot understand, a care for man that only God could show. Never do we find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness, He worked no miracle to supply His own need; if others were hungering around Him, the compassion of His heart flowed forth, and He fed them by the thousands.

"I seek not Mine own will, but the will
of the Father which hath sent Me."

John 5:30

Editorial

Blessed Are the Meek

Do you want to be blessed? Yes, surely all want to be blessed. In Matt. 5 it tells us of nine ways to get a blessing. The fifth verse says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

About Moses, we read in Num. 12:3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." The Jews render that verse this way: "Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than all the men that were upon the face of the earth."

Had it not been for the jealous attack of Miriam and Aaron on their brother, there would have been no need for God to come to the defense of Moses and mention his meekness or humbleness.

Moses is greatest in meekness, and, as to Old Testament prophets, it seems that he may be greatest according to Deut. 18:15. Here he writes, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken."

John the Baptist was asked, "Art thou that Prophet? And he answered, No." John 1:21. The Prophet is identified in John 6:14: "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." Moses, then, gets the place of being a type of Jesus as prophet as well as being greatest in meekness.

Moses is the only one whom God addresses face to face, in contrast to those like Aaron and Miriam who perceived God through visions or dreams (Num. 12:6). Then God says, "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches."

Surely there is a connection between greatness as a prophet and humility. First God records, "The man Moses was very meek"; then God says, Moses "is faithful in all Mine house." Completely trusted, Moses can move throughout God's house. Being so much in the divine Presence produced humility. Mere man cannot be proud in God's presence. How can we be humble? By spending more time with God; by spending more time in prayer.

The true greatness of Moses was seen when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. The reproach of Christ for him was greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

As Christians living in this modern world at the end of the 20th century, we might ask ourselves how we rate the reproach of Christ? Is it higher than this world's treasures? Do we really desire to be with the people of God? Do we forsake this present Egypt-world? Do we fear the wrath of its king (Heb. 11:24-27)? Ed.

Many Antichrists

J. N. Darby

"All that is... not of the Father...

is of the world."

1 John 2:16

A Christian has no right to have a will of his own, nor should he desire it, but rather to know "what is that good, and... perfect will of God."

All that is in the world is not of the Father; the affections of the flesh are in the world and there is the power of Satan. The Father delights in Christ. If I delight in Christ, there is communion of affection. I have the affections of the Father: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," and the fashion of this world passes away, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." All His counsels He will make good morally. I am brought into the way of God's will, and He is not going to destroy His own will; it abides forever. I am to grow up into Christ.

The address to the little children in 1 John 2 would be esteemed by many as the most obscure part of Scripture, "It is the last time." The thing that marks it is that there are many antichrists. That which characterizes the last time is the corrupting and spoiling of God's last testimony of good, and thus bringing weakness where there should be power.

We see in the case of the disciples and the dumb spirit that man is not able to use the power God gave to cast out Satan's power. "Why could not we cast him out?" This brought out the exclamation: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" It is as much as to say, "It is no use my staying here if there is not power to put out the evil."

"It is the last time: and as ye have heard... even now are there many antichrists." That is a solemn thing. God's patience, how wonderful! As long as there is a soul to win, God's patience goes on bearing with wickedness and corruption, but many antichrists are come in. It is often thought to be something requiring depth of knowledge. No, little children are told of it; it is a common truth. Antichrist was to come in, but before he comes there are many antichrists, and they might seduce them—there is danger. The Antichrist is to come, who will deny both the Father and the Son.

They cannot mistake him, for there is no subtlety in Antichrist. His is a bold, open denial, but John speaks of antichrists already come. He says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." Jude says, "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." It was a common doctrine that Antichrist was to come, and the babes knew he would come in opposition to Christ, to oppose and set aside what Christ had done.

But the Apostle tells them there are many antichrists now, and there were those before the Antichrist came. He tells them they will need the unction of the Holy One, as well as the warning of

the Apostle to be able to detect, for Satan transforms himself "into an angel of light." It is the seductions of the antichrists now in the world, against which he warns them-those who, by the power of Satan, set up to seduce away from Christ, not to frighten away, but to ensnare those who have not the unction from the Holy One.

He does not tell them there were many antichrists to come, but many now, and it is the direct power of Satan. That is what properly characterizes Antichrist. Satan is not only called a liar, but a serpent. Antichrist is a religious character; he works miracles and all that have not received the love of the truth are seduced by him. He is a prophet, and has a religious character, as spoken of in Thessalonians, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, not merely civil power.

Of what is Satan the prince? Of this world. And how? By the lusts of this world. Where the object of the heart is the grandeur of the world, or prosperity in this world, the character of it is to obliterate that which shows what man is. The spirit of the world hides from man the secret of man's departure from God. I must keep myself from it. The saint has to be kept out of the spirit of the world. Whatever has not the character of the Word of God is of the world. And Satan is the prince of it; I cannot have Satan's prosperity without having Satan's idols.

If you take Christ and His glory, you must take His cross; you cannot have Christ and the world that rejected Him. Where there is the unction from the Holy One (if the Spirit is not grieved in us), though only a babe, we can say at once, It "is not of the Father, but is of the world." The Apostle said, "He that knoweth God heareth us." Where there is not due place given to the Word of God, there is no protection against the seducers. Is the place of the Church of God in the world that rejected Christ? No, it is in heaven joined to Christ. The Church takes the Word of God as a guide while on earth. If I desire a single thing in the world, it is not of the Father, it is of the world.

Speaking of responsibility in Christ, I do not see how we can be kept from imbibing the spirit of antichrist, except it is as being not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.

First, then, we must have the Word of God abiding in us. Next, there must be the unction from the Holy One by which everything will be judged. And last, there must be the perception of the distinctness and definiteness of the place of the Church of God. The world cannot know the place of the Church. "They went out from us, but they were not of us.... But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

We are to judge, before the Antichrist comes, the many antichrists who minister to the flesh and seduce from the Father. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." It is a moral thing to be kept from the things of the world; they are not of the Father. We must be identified with Christ if we would realize joy and strength.

Into the Red Sea and Out of Jordan

It is very striking to notice that you see Israel as a company go into the Red Sea but you never see them come out. They did come out, but it does not say they did. I think the reason is that you do not read of them going into the Jordan—you see the Ark going in, but you see them come out. The Red Sea and the Jordan unite. To bring them out of Egypt and into Canaan was God's purpose. The wilderness was in His ways and became the occasion to learn what they were and to learn God's ways of grace. But His purpose was to bring them out and to bring them in.

When God recounts the history of the path in Heb. 11:29, 30, you have the Red Sea and the fall of Jericho put together—the 40 years in the wilderness is not mentioned because that was the path of failure, not faith.

Who Shall Confirm the Covenant?

"He shall confirm the covenant with
many for one week."

Daniel 9:27

I believe that it is legitimately impossible to connect the death of the Messiah with the covenant confirmed with the mass, or many, for one week (seven years) in this passage, and that for several reasons: First—The Messiah was already regarded as cut off at the close of a previous division of the weeks, that is to say, after the first $7+62=69$ weeks, or 483 years.

Second—The disastrous end of the city and the sanctuary is supposed to have come before the seventieth week begins. (See the conclusion of verse 26.) After the Messiah was cut off and before the last week, it will be noticed by the careful reader that there is an interval of indefinite length, filled up by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and a course of war and desolation which is not yet terminated.

Third—After all this comes the last, or seventieth week, which has to do with the beast as clearly as the first 69 weeks bring us down to Christ's death, the interruption of the chain of weeks being left room for, and supplied, in the latter part of verse 26.

Fourth—It is clear that when the Messiah has been cut off, another personage is spoken of as the prince that shall come, whom it is absurd to confound with the Messiah, because it is his people who ravage the Jewish city and sanctuary; that is, it is a Roman prince, and not the promised Head of Israel.

Fifth—As this future prince of the Romans is the last person spoken of, it is most natural, unless adequate reasons appear to the contrary, to consider that verse 27 refers to him, and not to the slain Messiah: "And He shall confirm a covenant" (JND).

Sixth—This view is remarkably strengthened by the time for which the covenant is made, namely, for seven years, which has no sense if applied to anything founded on the Lord's death, but exactly coincides with the two periods of the earlier and the later half weeks, during which the Roman beast acts variously in the Revelation.

Seventh—It is yet more fortified by the additional fact that when half the time of this covenant expires, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," just as might be gathered from Rev. 11 and other scriptures.

Bible Witness and Review

Bible Challenger Clues

1. Revelation; 2. 2 Samuel; 3. Acts; 4. Genesis; 5. Isaiah; 6. Acts; 7. Psalms; 8. Jude; 9. 1 Samuel; 10. Deuteronomy.

Three Appearing of Christ

The Past

"Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Heb. 9:26.

He has thus appeared, and He has done the mighty work for which He came from heaven to this earth. He will never thus appear again. The cross is eternal in its issues. What He has done can never be added to nor taken from. By the sacrifice of Himself He has accomplished this most mighty work, and, for His people, sin is put away. It will be put away from the earth by virtue of that sacrifice, and then the Father's will shall be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

The Present

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. Risen from the dead, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus, the High Priest, has entered into the holiest by His own blood. The Man Christ Jesus now appears in the heavens in the presence of God for His people, for whose sins He died. He lives to die no more, and He Himself, once the Sacrifice on earth, is now the Priest on high for His people. He appeared on earth to die for us; having died, He appears in God's presence to live for us. He abides there as our Priest.

The Future

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

On the great Day of Atonement, the high priest of Israel took the blood of the sacrifice into the holiest of all—God accepted the atoning blood, and Israel was free. The proof to the people that all was well was the fact that their high priest lived. And when he came out of the tabernacle they saw in him salvation. He had made atonement, and having made it and it having been accepted, He appeared before them as a witness to salvation.

How graciously will the type be fulfilled! For the heavens, which now hide Him from our eyes, will presently open and Jesus will come forth to bring His people into the full blessing of His accomplished work. He is coming to bring about the lengths and breadths of salvation—salvation absolute and complete!

Christ in the past put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

Christ in the present lives in God's presence for us, and bears us up through this life's journey.

Christ in the future will come and take us home forever. Young Christian

As Ye Have Heard From the Beginning

If you look at 2 John 6, you will find that the elect lady and those with her are exhorted thus: "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

John had seen the Lord in His wondrous life, had seen Him die on the cross, was a witness of His resurrection, and beheld Him taken up into heaven. He was present on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down from an ascended Christ to baptize believers into one body and thus form the Church. He had lived long enough to see evil come into the circle of the professing church.

What is the remedy? Is it to begin afresh with a new and purer sect or an improved constitution? Listen to his reply by the Holy Spirit: "This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." The Spirit of God makes it plain that He suffers no innovation of man to trespass on the sacred principles of God's Word for the guidance of His people, whatever their exercises may be, or whatever the date of their history.

Now apply this principle today and you must find yourself in one of two positions-either on God's ground of gathering the disciples at the beginning, or on some ground that man, in his fancied wisdom or mistaken zeal, has set up since the beginning.

J. G. Bellett

Luke

Luke 8 is the Lord's own ministry, chapter 9 is the ministry of the twelve, and chapter 10 is the ministry of the seventy. The very fact that we have the ministry of the seventy is symptomatic of Luke's Gospel. Very properly, we do not get it in Matthew. The Lord is there in contact with the Jew, and the ministry sent forth is accommodated to the Jew. Here He was more on moral ground, and human ground, and therefore He sends forth a ministry characterizing the gospel sent forth largely to the whole human family.

Did you ever think it a strange thing that the kingdom of God had to be preached in this world? It is a witness against the world that God has to publish His claims in it. The Lord has not only to announce that which meets the necessity of sinners, but God's rights in the world. We find that God lays His claim to me, as well as makes provision for me. I cannot accept salvation without bowing to His claims. The Creator has to publish His rights in His own creation. What a thought! Earth is in mad rebellion against its Creator. We get both these thoughts in what is called preaching the gospel, and preaching the kingdom of God. God is proposing His rights to man, as well as revealing His provision for man.

When the Lord went forth, how was He attended? By the twelve—by men that had been attracted to Him, and women out of whom He had cast devils. That is His suited company—quite a different company from that of Him who comes on the white horse in judgment. That is a suited company too. "The armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses," but this is a degraded company, and the more largely you sum up the account of their degradation, the more you magnify the grace of Him who led them on. It will not be so when He comes in judgment.

The chapter begins with the parable of the sower. Do you think you have found the secret of that parable? It is to expose man. The seed was one and the same, but the dropping of the seed here and there was to expose the character of the soil. The seed makes manifest the soil. There is not a heart that is not seen in one or the other of these soils. The first character is the highway; that is where the devil prevails. The second is the rock; that is where nature prevails. The third is the thorny ground; that is where the world prevails. The fourth is the good ground; that is where the Holy Spirit prevails. If you examine your heart, day by day, you will find that one of these has its pleasure with you. The business of the parable is to expose you to yourself, and to make manifest the four secret influences under the power of which we are all morally moving every hour. Take the joy of the stony-ground hearer. It is well to rejoice, but, if when I listen to the claims of God my conscience is not reached, that is a bad symptom. It is the levity and sensibility of nature. How wretchedly we are treating God if we do not deal with Him in conscience! If I have revolted from such a one, am I to return to Him without conviction of conscience? It would be an insult to Him. Supposing I had insulted you, would it be well for me to come and talk to you about some light matter? We have all insulted God, and are we to come to Him with a little animal-like joy?

The thorny-ground hearers are a grave-hearted people that weigh everything in anxious balances. They carry the balances in their pocket, and try the importance of everything, but the mischief is

that, as they weigh, they make the world as heavy as Christ. Are we not often conscious of that calculating spirit prevailing? In contrast with the others, we get the good ground. We are not told what has made it good, but suppose we have the devil, nature and the world (in the first three parables), what is the only remaining influence? There is nothing but the Holy Spirit. It is very needful nowadays to testify that the plow must come before the seed is planted. What makes the heart good? He that has gone forth to plow the fallow ground and sow the seed.

God could never get a blade of grass from our hearts if He did not work Himself. The heart can never have anything for God that has not gone through the process of the plow. Whether it be with the light measure of the eunuch, or the deeper strength of the jailer, the plow must go through the fallow ground. Those of the thorny ground talk of their farm, their business, their merchandise. Those by the highway say, Oh, let us think of it tomorrow. Then, too, there is a sensibility that can rejoice under a sermon. It is happy for me that my conscience has to do with God, for when my conscience has to do with Him, then everything has to do with Him. We should try to get our hearts into the ministerial glories of Christ. Then we have Himself, because everything that passed from Him had the mark of deep truthfulness. Then, if we reach Himself, we reach God. It is the way we are introduced to God in this world. The world is full of its speculations about God, and the issue of them all is thick darkness which the wisdom of man finds impenetrable. But in Christ we find nothing less than the full glory of God. Let me take the happy path of studying Jesus. By that blessed, happy path I can study the Father.

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The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that Moses spoke on a certain seashore concerning something he would prepare for God, because of a great deliverance. [1]
The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 319.)

1. Something unclean and associated with fallen Babylon that might be found in cages. [2]
2. Something a faithful king wanted returned to Jerusalem, even as he fled from a rebellious son. [3]
3. Something forfeited by one of the twelve that was taken by another as foretold in the book of Psalms. [1]
4. Something, not very flattering, destined to be with two of twelve brethren as foretold by an aged father. [3]
5. Something destined to become springs of water at the time when the desert shall rejoice. [2]
6. Something an apostle told ignorant worshippers that their unknown God had made of one blood. [2]
7. Something connected with mercy in much the same way as justice and judgment are joined together. [1]
8. The divinely-appointed way in which certain angels are restrained until their great day of judgment. [3]
9. That which a very old priest was told should never again be found in his house. [2]
10. Something identifying the God of Israel that was to designate the divinely-appointed gathering place. [1]

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

Bible Challenger-11-November Answers V.07

1. Gospel Acts 20:24
2. Righteousness Gal. 2:21
3. Abounded unto many Rom. 5:15
4. Cleave unto the Lord Acts 11:23
5. Every man Heb. 2:9
6. One to another 1 Peter 4:10
7. Fleshly wisdom 2 Cor. 1:12
8. Glorified 2 Mess. 1:12
9. Ordained Jude 4
10. Diligently Heb. 12:15

"For the GRACE OF GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11.

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.

Paul and Felix

The Prisoner and the Judge

Acts 24ACT 24

Acts 24 furnishes a very remarkable contrast between a genuine Christian man and a man of the world: Paul, the prisoner, and Felix, the judge. They are brought face to face, and we are permitted to see, in the light of inspiration, the springs of action in the prisoner and the judge. Paul's eye was resting on the unseen and eternal; the eye of Felix was resting on the seen and temporal. Paul was standing in the light of heaven; Felix was involved in the darkness of earth. In short, they present a vivid and instructive contrast in every respect.

Let us meditate for a few moments on the striking picture. On looking closely at it, we see what we may venture to designate the faith, hope and practice of the two men.

Faith, Hope and Practice of Paul

First, let us hear from the lips of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, a statement of his faith, his hope and his practice.

(1) "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets." Here was Paul's faith: "all things which are written in the law and the prophets." A Christian man has, as we know, a wider field, being able to add "all things which are written in the New Testament."

This is the faith of a Christian man—the whole Word of God—the undivided canon of inspiration.

He wants nothing more, he can do with nothing less, and he desires nothing different. "All scripture"

is the creed of the Christian, and, assuredly, it is amply sufficient. In it he finds his standard, his confession, his touchstone and his all. By it he can test himself and all around him—his own thoughts

and the thoughts of his fellow men. Morals and doctrines can all be measured by this rule, and weighed in is this balance. It is divinely sufficient for all ages and all nations may find in the High and all ages and all low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant precious volume of God all they want. To say that we can ever stand in need of anything beside is to cast dishonor on that which our God has so graciously given.

(2) What was Paul's hope? "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." This is the hope of a Christian—hope toward God and hope of resurrection. It is not toward man, nor has it reference to anything on this side of the grave. All earthly hopes and creature expectations vanish like the morning cloud. The stamp of death is on everything down here. The grave is the gloomy terminus of man's history in this world. Blessed be God, the hope of the Christian carries him beyond the grave altogether, and connects him with those unseen and eternal realities which belong to him as risen with Christ. There is nothing worthwhile down here for which to hope. All is rapidly passing away. The chilling breath of mortality is continually passing across earth's brightest scenes, and withering them. The fondest hopes we cherish, in reference to the creature, are sure to be disappointed.

Paul was wise, therefore he said, I "have hope toward God." Had it been otherwise, his lot would have been most miserable. He had reached the end of all that this world could offer. He had proved the hollowness of man's fairest pretensions. What remained, therefore, for him but to build all his hopes on the One who quickens the dead—the living God—the God of resurrection.

(3) Finally, we consider Paul's practice. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Such is the practice of a Christian. May

it be ours, from day to day, in all the scenes of life. May we be able to carry ourselves in such a way as to give no offense—no just occasion to man, to keep a clear and an uncondemned conscience in the presence of God. We ought not to be satisfied with less than this. We may be misunderstood, we may do things ignorantly, make mistakes, and fail in many things. But at this we should always earnestly and uprightly aim, to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. It will, unquestionably, demand "exercise." It cannot be reached without difficulty. But it should be diligently sought, for it is the practice of a Christian.

Such, then, is the lovely picture presented in the person of Paul, the prisoner—the picture of a true, practical Christian. His faith reposes on the revelation of God. His hope reaches forth after resurrection, and his practice is characterized by earnest exercise to live a blameless and harmless life in the sight of God and man. God grant that we may know and exhibit these things in this day of so much empty profession.

Faith, Hope and Practice of Felix

Now we may look at the picture of a thorough man of the world. We shall not dwell on it, but merely call the reader's attention to its three prominent features.

(1) As to what we may call the faith of the man of the world, the Spirit of God has given it to us in very forcible language in our chapter, Acts 24. "And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

The faithful ambassador in bonds stood before the governor, and thundered into his ear solemn and faithful words concerning righteousness, temperance and coming judgment—weighty themes! As the prisoner spoke, the judge trembled. How unusual! It was something new, something quite the reverse of what is ordinarily witnessed in judgment halls. "Felix trembled." Poor creature! Well might he tremble, and it would have been well if his trembling for himself had led to his trusting in Jesus. But he contented himself with the faith of a more "convenient season" which, so far as the record informs us, never came. It is vain for a man to speak of a more convenient season, inasmuch as he is sure never to have it.

There will always be something occurring to hinder his looking seriously at the great question of his eternal destiny—something to make it inconvenient. He may tremble under some powerful appeal on the momentous subject of "judgment to come," but the world, in its varied forms, will come in and make it an inconvenient season. So he goes on from day to day, and from year to year, until death comes and ushers him into that place of everlasting misery, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." God's time is now! "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

"To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

(2) Look at the hope of Felix. "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul." What a thought! Felix could send for Paul "often" with the hope of getting money, but as to righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, he had no convenient season for them at all. What an unfolding of the hidden springs of action is here. What a development of the roots of things—eternity put off, and money diligently sought after. All seasons are convenient if there is a hope of money, but no season is convenient if it is the fear of judgment to come.

(3) Now a word as to the practice of Felix. "After two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." This completes the melancholy picture of a man of the world. His faith was "a convenient season," which never came. His hope was "money," which he never got, and his practice was to leave a blameless man bound to gain a little popularity.

May the Spirit of God engrave on our hearts the profitable lesson suggested by this graphic picture of Paul and Felix.

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me!
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus found in Thee!

Dead to Sin and Alive to God

"By the grace of God I am what I am."

1 Corinthians 15:10 1CO 15:10

As Christians, we learn that not only are our sins put away, but we, ourselves, are put away. Some say, "I am not what I should be." If you are a believer, you are what you should be. It would be better to say, you don't do as you should—your ways, your acts are not as they should be. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit, a child of God, a member of Christ. You cannot improve the old nature, but God has shown how to keep it in its proper place—the place of death. Let me tell you, dear child of God, you cannot improve it. If God could not find any good in it, you cannot. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:11. Now what is your occupation? Self? Oh, no! Christ. You need Him as the object for your heart, and you should learn the application of the truth; you are not going to be the servant of sin any longer, but hold sin as a judged thing. Seek the things of the Lord; set your mind on things above. If you could get satisfaction in your own life, you would only be pleased with yourself, and this God does not want; He wants us to find our pleasure in Christ. Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10)—not, I do what I should. A man in Christ should look at himself as brought into that new place, and we do that, if faith takes in that blessed truth.

"Set your affection on things above,

not on things on the earth.

for ye are dead, and your life is

hid with Christ in God."

Colossians 3:2, 3

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