

CHRISTIAN TREASURY VOLUME 8

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Christian Treasury Volume 8, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

209 Chapters

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Christian Treasury Volume 8

A Righteous and Holy God

"Righteousness" is spoken of in Romans; "sanctification" in Hebrews. The scene in Romans is the throne, and a righteous God; in Hebrews it is the sanctuary and a holy God.

In Romans the point is the guilt of the sinner, but in Hebrews his defilement. With regard to the sacrifice of Christ, of which both speak, Romans sets before us its perfection as meeting the righteous claims of God, whereas in Hebrews we get its eternal character in being offered once for all.

On these two foundations our peace rests. Christ's work must be perfect that we may have any standing before a righteous God. Also, the work must be of eternal value that this standing may never be lost.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Justification and sanctification both stand on a threefold basis: In Romans we are justified by the grace of God, by the blood of Christ, and by faith, the operation of the Spirit (Rom. 3:24; 5:1-9).

In Hebrews we are sanctified by the will of God, the work of Christ, of which the Spirit is the witness (Heb. 10).

Righteousness and sanctification are both the combined work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father's will and grace gave the Son, the Son's blood and work accomplished our redemption, and faith and the witness of the Spirit cause us to accept this work. Young Christian

Reward

Reward is for our labor. As to our place, we will all be in glory with Christ, when He "shall appear," we—that is, all Christians—"shall... appear with Him in glory." 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. 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 never is the motive for action in Scripture; it is the encouragement in the service, when the person gets into trial by the service.

Editorial: Israel: God's Chosen Land

One place on this earth is special to God; in fact, His eyes are always upon it from the beginning of the year unto the end of the year. It is so special it is called, "Jehovah's land." The dimensions of this land are quite large. The wilderness is on the south, Lebanon on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, and the Euphrates on the east.

Contemporary events, although not easily understood, are working out as the eye of God sees best for that land, and where present-day Israel has only a small part of the whole. Current peace talks are a word-struggle for peace, but have not brought peace.

A Jew living in Israel today is liable to have his back stabbed or a rock thrown at him. If a Jew lives beyond the so-called Green Line, he becomes known by the United Nations as a settler, even if it is in Jerusalem.

As one year ends and another begins, it is still true that "the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Deut. 11:12.

One part of that land is also very special to God. He has stated His claim on it. "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Psa. 132:13, 14. This was written about 3000 years ago and is still waiting to be fulfilled.

When the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came the first time, there was only a partial fulfillment of the prophecy in Zech. 9:9, 10. Jesus did ride into Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:4-9). The multitudes cried out, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Later in Luke 13:33 the Lord says, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." He was that prophet. He completed redemption's work when He came the first time. He is coming again with His redeemed ones and will clear the earth with judgments and then fulfill Zechariah's prophecy.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off and He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

This is the land for which the Lord God cares, and His eyes are upon it from the beginning of the year unto the end of the year.

Jesus Christ, and He alone, can and will fulfill the prayer of Psa. 122:6, 7. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." Ed.

Abishai and Joab

or, Family Characteristics as seen in Scripture

by P. Fournier

A brother once told me that, while filling out papers to support his claim to being a conscientious objector for the military, he came across this statement: "Your beliefs must influence your life." How striking that the world should recognize that what we believe should make a difference in how we behave! We will look, with the Lord's help, at two brothers in Scripture who may show us, in type, what it is to submit what we are by nature to our blessed Lord.

As we look at the story of Abishai and Joab, we see that the men were of similar temperament. They were both courageous, fearless, but hot-tempered men. In the former, however, we see how his apparent love for David often kept him from doing what he would naturally have done. In the case of the latter, we see that almost without exception, he did what his natural tendencies directed him to do.

The First Instance of Devotedness

There are three striking instances in the life of Abishai that indicate that he was a man of faith and a true lover of David. The first instance is recorded in 1 Sam. 26:6, "Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee." Abishai knew, of course, that Saul was only there because he sought David's life. To go down with David could only be at risk of his own life, and could only serve to subject himself to the animosity of the then-ruling king. Yet he goes with David, proving that devotedness to God's anointed, but rejected, king was the most important thing in his life.

What was it about David that had won this man's heart? Had he possibly been present, like Saul's son Jonathan, at the conquest of the Philistine? We know that he was David's nephew, the son of David's older sister Zeruiah. Yet, it would appear that he was at least the same age as David, and possibly a little older. But surely it was something more than the natural relationship that attracted Abishai's heart, for he is once and again set apart from his own brother Joab as having special affection for David.

The Second Instance of Devotedness

It has often been pointed out that Joab is not listed among David's mighty men in 2 Sam. 23, though both his brothers and his armor bearer are listed there. It is in this chapter that we see the second example of the outstanding devotedness of Abishai. I believe that Abishai was one of the three men spoken of in 2 Sam. 23:16.

And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.... And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three. (vv. 16,18.)

Here we find one of the most extraordinary examples of devotion in Scripture. How it delights our hearts to think of these three men. Though having received no order from David, yet his wish becomes a command to them. And at what personal cost it was! It seems from David's comments that he recognized that he was truly unworthy of such devotion. But it appears that so great was the affection of Abishai, that no personal sacrifice was too great, if by it some good and blessing might come to David.

The Third Instance of Devotedness

The third instance recorded of Abishai's devotedness is found in 2 Sam. 21:15-17.

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succored him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

From the context I would gather that David was perhaps sixty years old at this battle, and so it is small wonder that he waxed faint. But if we remember that Abishai was little, if any, younger than he, our hearts would rejoice to see that the years had not changed his love for David. What a testimony it is to young people to see older ones going on with real affection for the Lord Jesus, and that it is manifest in their life and ways!

Remember, too, that this enemy was a giant, the brother of Goliath. Perhaps Abishai's thoughts went back to that time when, as a youth, David had fearlessly gone out against Goliath and all Israel had fled before him. Whatever might have been the thoughts of his heart, we find that he is once again heedless of personal danger to himself in his defense of David.

Having established the fact that Abishai's affections had been truly won by David, I think we find it very significant that Abishai's natural tendencies were so effectively curbed by a word from his lord. In the aforementioned reference to Abishai's willingness to go down to the camp of King Saul, we find that Abishai is all too ready to smite the king. "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" 1 Sam. 26:9. One short admonition from David was sufficient to keep him from his natural tendency.

Again we see in the case of Shimei, who cursed David when he fled from Absalom, how Abishai seeks to right the wrong done to David. "Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." 2 Sam. 16:9. He lacked understanding of the government of God to which David was willing to submit, and his hot temper would have prompted him to cut off Shimei's head.

David responds, "Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." v. 11. We find that Abishai submits to David's wishes. Once again, on David's return, Abishai is anxious to avenge his lord's maltreatment from Shimei. Yet, he submits again to David's will that Shimei not be put to death.

What a beautiful picture we have in all this of a man whose "beliefs influenced his life." He loved David, and was willing to submit his hot temper and hasty spirit to David's will. What an example for ourselves who have a much higher object.

David, though he was God's anointed, was still a failing man himself. The Lord whom we know is not only God's anointed One, but also God incarnate, perfect in wisdom, power and love. His will is always best for us. Has His love won our hearts? Do we believe that He knows best and wants the best for us? Are we willing to submit our rebellious spirits to His perfect will? If so, we too will know what is "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:2.

Joab, Abishai's Brother

Without going into much negative detail, perhaps it would be profitable to look a little at the life of Joab, Abishai's brother. This man served David for most of his life. He seems to have been a man of considerable intelligence and foresight. He was an effective and valuable general to David. We even find at times that he had greater wisdom than David, as in the matter of the numbering of the people (2 Sam. 24). Yet, he was motivated entirely by self-interest, as opposed to his brother who was motivated chiefly by his love for David. We find David's final appraisal of Joab in 1 Kings 2:5.

Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

Notice here that David does not mention the killing of Absalom, for there is no doubt that David was wrong in wanting to spare the life of such a guilty man as Absalom. Yet, a look at the circumstances surrounding the death of Absalom can teach us something of the utter disregard that Joab had for the will of David.

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. 2 Sam. 18:9-14.

Here we see that Joab acts in utter disregard to the manifest will of David. His only thought was to rid the earth of this man, not because he intended to kill David, but because his attempt to overthrow the government, to which Joab was attached, represented another threat to Joab's position of power.

So we see the contrast between these two brothers of such similar temperament. The one was motivated by an unselfish and intense love for David, and the other was motivated by an intense love of power.

It is with sorrow that we see one blot on the character of Abishai in that he is mentioned in 2 Sam. 3:30 with his brother in connection with the death of Abner. It appears that though the primary

force and actual murderer of Abner was Joab, yet because of the family relationship of Abishai and Asahel, Abishai was at least consenting to Joab's wicked deed.

What a lesson for us, that we may not be turned from obedience to our blessed Savior by some wrong, real or perceived, that may have been done to a member of our family. How often it has been so! May the Lord give to each one of us the unselfish and devoted character that was so often displayed in Abishai!

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Acts 9:6

My son, give me thine heart,

and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Proverbs 23:26

Bible Challenger-01-January V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word which identifies something that was determined to be finished in seventy weeks. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 21.)

1. Something for which a conscience-stricken king besought God, knowing that His loving-kindness was able to supply multitudinously. [2]
2. Something Old Testament saints received justly for every act of disobedience. [3]
3. The first man who sought to hide his iniquity in his bosom. [1]
4. Something which describes a wicked man as to what is (or isn't) before his eyes. [4]
5. Something said to be familiar to which an early king of Israel made inquiry and thereby lost much more than his kingdom. [1]
6. An animal destined to carry a remarkable load on its head as it wandered in the wilderness. [1]
7. Something one does, often inadvertently, that separates very friends. [3]
8. Two compass points whose distance relatively is a reminder of the Lord's thoroughness in removing the sins from every believer. [2]
9. That which the Lord Jesus endured, as prophesied in the Old Testament, to bring healing to those suffering under the curse of sin. [1]
10. Something belonging to a king which proved the absence of animosity in the one who was now displaying it to its owner. [4]
11. A verdict which a renowned servant of the Lord knew would rightly follow if he were kept from presumptuous sins. [1]
12. The authoritative way in which the law of Moses was introduced in the hand of a mediator. [3]
13. The only possible antecedent to "no transgression." [2]

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

Bible Challenger-00-December Answers to V.07

1. Hateful bird(s) Rev. 18:2
2. Ark of God 2 Sam. 15:25
3. Bishopric Acts 1:20
4. Instruments of cruelty Gen. 49:5
5. Thirsty land Isa. 35:7
6. All nations Acts 17:26
7. Truth Psa. 89:14
8. In everlasting chains Jude 6
9. Old man 1 Sam. 2:32
10. Name Deut. 12:5

"The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him a HABITATION; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." Ex. 15:2.

Prophecy Accomplished

We cannot have the accomplishment of prophecy as long as the Church is the platform of God's activity in grace. But when it is taken up to heaven, then God's suspended dealings with Israel and the nations are resumed. The Church—Christ's body and bride—is an election out of both, and is not itself a subject of prophecy, but of New Testament revelation (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 3).

Political and religious events, which are the growth and result of centuries, are transpiring before our eyes. But in the prophetic week of 7 years (Dan. 9:27), changes of the most startling character are witnessed. The whole political government of Europe is then rearranged under Satan's prime minister, the beast of the Revelation—a gigantic confederation of 10 powers.

The old Roman Empire will reappear under new conditions, guided and controlled by its active, blaspheming and persecuting head, the little horn of Dan. 7. His partner in crime and sharer in everlasting ruin is the Antichrist who guides religiously in Christendom, as the beast does politically.

The whore, or the mystical Babylon, is the concentration of everything religiously vile. Her political dethronement in the revived empire is effected instrumentally by the 10 kings (Rev. 17:12, 16), who at first upheld her. Her ruin is mourned over by kings, merchants, and peoples outside the Roman earth (ch. 18:9-19), and she is subsequently destroyed by God Himself (vv. 21-24) a short time before the destruction of the beast. This latter is effected by the Lord in Person, and at His coming in power (ch. 19). The destruction of Babylon and the beast are separate events. The former precedes the latter.

There can be no public development of these and other events of a like character so long as the Church is on the earth. Evil at present is a mystery, though actively at work, but it is restrained or kept in check by two powers. What restrains (2 Thess. 2:6) is the Church on earth, and He who restrains (v. 7) is the Holy Spirit. Hence there cannot be the public abandonment of the faith till the Church and the Spirit leave the earth. But the principles are at work which are surely and rapidly undermining the moral foundations of the professing Church and of society in general. W. Scott

I am the LORD: I wilt speak,
and the word that I shall speak
shall come to pass.

Ezekiel 12:25

Sweeter Than Honey

By C. H. Macintosh

In Judg. 14:5-9, we find that Samson was pursuing his journey, and when he came to the vineyards of Timnath "behold, a young lion roared against him." So it was when Jesus came into the world, He found Satan going about as a roaring lion and he roared, too, against Him.

How crafty was his device to put the young child to death through the proclamation of Herod the king to slay all the young children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under! How the roaring of the lion is heard in this.

Again, how he tried to overcome the Savior by direct temptation, as well as by the hatred of men, their scorn, rejection, and snares to catch something out of His mouth that they might accuse Him. In how many ways the lion roared against Him! But the tongues of the despising Pharisees, as well as of the infidel Sadducees and Herodians, were silenced by Him, and all Satan's temptations resisted.

We are told in this typical narrative that "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him [Samson], and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand." (v. 6.) So the Lord Jesus not only resisted Satan, but destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. This He did, not by taking human weapons, for instead of taking anything in His hand, He was crucified through weakness; His hands and feet were pierced. It was through death that He triumphed over Satan.

He went into death for us, even the death of the cross to pay the penalty of our sins. By going through death and rising out of it triumphantly, He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Had Jesus remained in death, Satan would have gained the victory, but Christ rising out of death thus set aside victoriously Satan's power, and gave us deliverance from the fear of death. Thus death is abolished and Satan vanquished for all who believe on the Son of God.

Though Satan is still the deceiver of the world, and the accuser of the brethren, and his messengers are allowed of the Lord to buffet the Lord's servants, yet nothing of the kind is permitted unless for our benefit. "All things work together for good to them that love God." What a triumph Christ accomplished, when He did by Himself purge our sins, and sat down on the right hand of God!

What Is Sweeter Than Honey?

We are told that after a time Samson "turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion." Do not those who look back and contemplate the finished work of Jesus on the cross, and His triumphant work in resurrection, find sweetness and comfort to their souls? Surely we triumph in His triumphs. We there see that God is for us, and "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

We are reminded of peace made, righteousness established, justice satisfied, sins judged and put away, God glorified, and Satan vanquished. Thus we are forgiven, delivered, redeemed, and forever objects of divine favor and blessing. This gives us comfort beyond all else. It is sweetness indeed, so that with such thoughts we can truly exclaim, "What is sweeter than honey?"

When the soul is thus happy, it cannot but wish others to participate in the same blessings. Samson, having found and enjoyed the honey, is at once prompted to communicate the blessing to others. We are told that he "went on eating." He fed as he walked, and the honey out of the carcass of the vanquished lion strengthened him as well as comforted him. When he came to his father and mother, he gave to them and they did eat.

Practical Christianity

How significant is all this! How it reminds us that the very essence of practical Christianity is caring for the blessing of others. This is like Christ. It has often been said that in the gospels you never find Christ doing anything for Himself. He loved His enemies, prayed for His murderers, went about doing good, and died for the ungodly. To the man named "Legion," out of whom He had cast many devils, He said, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee."

And we are told that "he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." Luke 8:30, 39. Are we not also instructed by an apostle to "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"? But we must taste and know the goodness of the Lord in our own souls, before we can communicate sweetness and comfort to others. The principle is surely not less true in us than it was in apostolic days that we comfort others "by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. 1:4.

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1. Psalms; 2. Hebrews; 3. Job; 4. Psalms; 5. 1 Chronicles; 6. Leviticus; 7. Proverbs; 8. Psalms; 9. Isaiah; 10. 1 Samuel; 11. Psalms; 12. Galatians; 13. Romans.

Questions and Answer

QUESTION: I have read that Rev. 21:1-8 refers to the eternal state, and the remainder of the chapter to the millennial state. It does seem like it, but the last few verses rather puzzle me: "no night there." Will there be no night in the millennium, and does the last verse mean that all will be saved?

ANSWER: Rev. 21:1-8 is a continuation of the subject taken up in the latter part of the previous chapter, that is, the eternal state of the lost and saved that succeeds the millennium. Then in verse 9, the Spirit of God reverts to the millennium for the special purpose of showing the place that the Church, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, holds during that period. A description of it is given, as previously that of Babylon had been given.

One of the seven angels shows the prophet this scene as in the previous case. "No night there" has reference to the city, and not, we understand, to the earth. It seems from other scriptures there will be night and day on earth during the millennium. (See Gen. 8:22; Isa. 66:23; Jer. 33:20; Ezek. 46:1.)

In the last verse the inhabitants of the city are in question, and their title to be there is that their names "are written in the Lamb's book of life." As to the inhabitants of the earth, we are only told that they "walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it," as owning the heavens and the heavenly kingdom, the source of it all.

"The nations of them which are saved" refers to salvation from the temporal judgments on earth, not that they are individually saved from eternal judgment; on the contrary, the masses of these very nations, thus saved, apostatize at the end of the millennium. (See Ch. 20:8.)

Godliness with Contentment Is Great Gain

by J. B. Dunlop

The words in this title imply that there may be a kind of contentment without godliness, and in that there is of course some gain.

What is godliness? "God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. True godliness is God-likeness as in the above portion and as in Eph. 5:1.

Christians are to be followers (literally, imitators) of God—to be God-like or godly. They are always to be giving themselves up to God for others, as Christ did on the cross, excepting, of course, what only Christ could do—making atonement. But our godliness, our walking in love is to have no lower standard than this. The Holy Spirit, too, in 1 John 4:16 teaches the same standard as to Christians loving one another.

Then godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Tim. 6:6.) Godliness not only has "promise of the life that now is," but also "of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8), and both are "gain." So godliness with contentment is great gain. Where there is not this "contentment," the heart is not satisfied—not resting in the joy of communion with the Father and the Son.

Covetousness

Satan knows this well, and tries to rob us of this joy by stirring up covetousness. So we are exhorted in Heb. 13:5, "Let your conversation [conduct as a Christian] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And again in 1 Tim. 6:7, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

But with what am I to be content? Food and clothing. Hear, too, what our Lord teaches as to this in Luke 12, and what we are to consider! We are to consider the ravens and the lilies, and how He feeds the one, and clothes the other (vv. 22-30).

What is covetousness? In Scripture there are different words in the Greek all translated by the same English word "covet" or "covetousness." In Luke 12:15-20 and Heb. 12:15-17 it is "greediness for gain." Then in 1 Cor. 5 we are told to put away, not only a fornicator, or drunkard, or railer as a wicked person, but one greedy for gain—a covetous person. Does not all this show how hateful greediness for gain is to God? It is idolatry (Col. 3:5). How it robs God of His proper place!

It robs the soul of the great gain of godliness with contentment, and the joy of the Father acting a father's part to those who are separate from any unequal yoke with unbelievers! Some lines come before me that illustrate the above, and I pass them on to you:

Overheard in an Orchard

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,

"I should really like to know

Why these anxious human beings

Rush about and worry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,

"Friend, I think that it must be

That they have no heavenly Father,

Such as cares for you and me!"

The sparrow was wrong, we know. Humans have a heavenly Father, but they do not trust His almighty love and care for them, so they "rush about and worry so."

Not only does covetousness produce restlessness of soul and worry, it hinders quiet happy communion with the Father and the Son. Joy is lost and there is no strength for either worship or service, except perhaps in a legal way. And the Christian becomes dull and cold and shows little

sign of life. Such are seldom heard to open their mouths, either in the worship meeting or the prayer meeting, to God the Father or the Son. Yet the Son says, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Sol. 2:14.

If the Christian goes on indulging this spirit of greediness for gain, God tells us that such "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.... But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:9-12.

Spiritual Strength

Does not all this need power, that is, spiritual strength? Certainly it does, and it is to be found in the risen, ascended One to whom we are united, as well as in whom we are accepted, and to whom we belong. For all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and His "grace is sufficient" for us. His "strength is made perfect in weakness," so we must neither excuse ourselves, nor be discouraged. We who look to Him "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us. He loves us (as a man loves himself) as part of Himself.

Let us not be misled by a frequent misquotation of Rom. 12:11 as telling us to be "diligent in business." It does not say so. Read it carefully, "not slothful in business," and in the J.N.D. translation, "as to diligent zealousness, not slothful." For I am persuaded that many of us are, by misquoting this scripture, falling into the snare of covetousness, or greediness for gain. This is a very different thing from diligently giving all of our time and energy to making money—greedy for gain, and little or no thought of serving the Lord in business. We are not only being robbed of much joy in the Lord, but are injuring others and turning them out of the way by our example.

In Luke 12, our blessed Lord says to us: if inclined to anxiety as to providing necessary things for self or family, don't take anxious thought about these things. And in Matthew, when speaking to His own in the Sermon on the Mount, He tells us to seek first the things of God—the kingdom. Then all that is necessary, that with which we are to be content, that which the ravens and lilies get from Him, shall be added unto us. That precious expression of His loving care for us comes in to encourage us, for "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Luke 12:30.

May we consider these things and the Lord give us understanding in all this. His love for us is great and gracious and unchanging, as told out on the cross and it still goes on towards us now from His throne on high. May this love so constrain our hearts that we may put Christ and God's things first. Let us not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again, and enjoy the great gain of godliness with contentment.

The Bible

The Bible has the highest place on the earth in the sight of God. By it God speaks to man, making known His thoughts, His mind, His purposes, and His plans in connection with man on the earth. Through it He reveals His thoughts about heaven.

The Word of God is absolute, and God has magnified it above all His name (Psa. 138:2). What God has done, what God is doing and what God will do are made known to us in the Scriptures. Although we have had no further communication for over nineteen hundred years, there is no need, for the Word of God is complete. He has "made known unto us the mystery of His will."

The Bible, therefore, leaves no room for speculation, or for the opinions of men, or the development of the mind and thoughts of men as time rolls on. It is as true today as it was in the days of Isaiah the prophet that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, neither are God's ways man's ways.

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer 9:23, 24. The Young Christian

Editorial: In God We Trust

In the year 1955 the United States Congress ordered that the words IN GOD WE TRUST be printed on all paper money and all coins. This has surely pleased God and also been a blessing to this country. If you look at a one-dollar bill, you will see that the seal shows an American eagle with a ribbon in its beak and the insignia E PLURIBUS UNUM (out of many, one). In its talons are the arrows of war and an olive branch for peace. The reverse side of this seal shows an unfinished pyramid with an eye above it.

Why was an eagle chosen? Deut. 28:49 says this: "As swift as the eagle flieth." Also there is a wonderful comparison to the eagle in ch. 32:9-12, "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him."

These scriptures give two reasons that suggest why the eagle was placed on this country's seal. The eagle is a symbol of swiftness and of training and protection. Job says about the eagle, "Her eyes behold afar off." So we see also that the eagle is noted for keenness of vision. Then in Psa. 103:5 we find another quality of the eagle: "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Another comparison to the eagle is found in Isaiah 40:31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Not only is money admired, but it is also desired. Do we desire it too much? "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. Some are taken over by this covetousness, and have wandered away from the Christian faith and reaped great sorrow.

Money can be used well and frequently we do use it well. But let us not trust in it, but rather "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Prov. 3:5. Ed.

"Behold the fowls of the air:

for they sow not, neither do they reap,

nor gather into barns; yet your

heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are ye not much better than they?...

your heavenly Father knoweth."

Matthew 6:26, 32

A Secret

by M. Priestley

May I tell you a secret I have often tried to tell myself? God has a number of secrets. You know, I expect, that it is a law of nature that we can physically stand an immense pressure exerted on us externally by the atmosphere, namely 14 lbs. to the square inch. This totals up to about 14 tons on the total area of an average man. Remarkable, yet a fact.

This pressure could not be endured unless there was a counter power within exerting pressure outward, through the air that is within the physical body.

God's natural laws are set in relation to His spiritual laws. I would say that at the present time pressures are mounting on you in business, and they will increase, no doubt. There will be much to contend with in the way of planning, finance, decisions, not without anxieties and hard, time-absorbing work. In fact, as you already find, there is not enough time.

How do we cope with this situation? Just as God gives us strength as we come into His secret. Here it is: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psa. 91:1. Notice it says "Almighty." All the power is for us as we learn the secret. In this case it is a dwelling place. We may say that time is too pressing to have daily prayer. Yet it is good if we can, even if limited to personal prayer.

This secret, however, is not exactly a set time and place. It is what we carry with us continually. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:3. This statement is true of every Christian. Nobody can see this life. It is hidden, an unalterable fact, and not dependent on our state. If this is true of us, then we must make it true in experience. This side of it is given to us in Psa. 91:1, where we are viewed as putting ourselves in the good of the secret place. Nobody can see this either, for it is dwelling in the nearness of inward communion. Even in our busiest moments, we may just yield ourselves up to a secret consciousness of God's presence. It may not even be in words.

Other scriptures help here as well. "Trust in the Lord." "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psa. 37). As we cultivate this inwardly, it will work outwardly. The Lord can control and guide as He takes over. Grace is supplied to relieve us of pressure, and we can organize our time and affairs more effectively. I would seek it more myself. I suggest this will lead to personal and family devotion. This is a great bulwark in the home.

Often Christians forget the real secret, and outward things swamp the inward life and decline sets in. God may have to discipline to bring us back (Heb. 12:5-11). There is protection under the shadow of His wings, and rest and peace. He who dwells there learns the way of true wisdom as a portion the unbeliever can never have. Listen to the words of Job as he says of the ungodly, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Job 27:10. No, but the godly do. Now hear his words as to wisdom in Job 28:12,13. "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of

the living."

He concludes with the secret to all matters of this life: "And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." v. 28.

God has given us our natural abilities to use and promote. His seal of approval was on His creation as well as His Word. The whole vast field of spiritual and earthly things lies before us to explore, with the accent on the spiritual. Wisdom comes down from above, where we dwell with God, to order our affairs with men and the world of material things (James 3:17).

As to Heb. 12:5-11, chastening is an act of love. God does it for our profit, not always for correction.

He did not disclose His tender feelings to Job when He put him through the purifying fires of affliction, but He disclosed them to James in the New Testament in James 5:11. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

The Seven Feasts

The feasts of Jehovah were seven in number (Lev. 23), and are termed in John's Gospel "feasts of the Jews," because there the moral rejection of the Lord is assumed from the commencement of the gospel (chapters 1,10 and 11).

1. The Sabbath—God's eternal rest for man and creation (Heb. 3;4).
2. The Passover—Redemption by blood, the foundation of all blessing and glory (1 Cor. 5:7).
3. The Feast of Unleavened Bread—Holiness of walk and life (1 Cor. 5:5).
4. The Feast of Weeks—Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down and formed the Church (Acts 2).
5. The Feast of Trumpets—Israel again summoned and gathered to her land and God (Psa. 81).
6. The Day of Atonement—Israel coming into the blessing of redemption (Zech. 12).
7. The Feast of Tabernacles—Millennial glory of Israel (Zech. 14:16).

How Do You Worship?

John 12:1-11JOH 12:1-11

Mary did not come to hear a sermon, although the greatest of teachers was there. To sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke 10:39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She did not come to make her requests known to Him. There was a time when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." John 11:32. But to pour out her supplications to Him as her only resource was not her thought now, for her brother was seated at the table.

She did not come to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, "Jesus loved Martha... and Lazarus." John 11:5. Fellowship with them was blessed, but fellowship was not her object now. She did not come after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world to be refreshed from Him. Surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness, and probably knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him.

She came at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out on Him what she had treasured up (v. 7). That which was most valuable to her, and all she had on earth, she poured on the Person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. She passed the disciples by. Her brother and her sister in the flesh and in the Lord did not engage her attention then. Jesus only filled her soul; her eye was on Him; her heart beat true to Him; her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart as she "anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair."

Adoration, homage, worship and blessing were her thought in honor of the One who was "all in all" to her. Surely such worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (v. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause. He showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it. A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is by the One who accepted it, and the one who rendered it.

Is this your mode of worship, or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days of toil? Oh! if every eye were on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him, and if we were each determined to see "no man, save Jesus only," what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Spirit, a stream of thanksgiving and worship of the highest character would ascend in honor of the blessed One who now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. May we thus worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

D. T. Grimston

Worthy of homage and of praise;

Worthy by all to be adored;

Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!

Thou, 'Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the significance in the order observed in Heb. 12:22-24?

ANSWER: There are eight things in all, each being separated by the word "and": (1) the mount; (2) the city; (3) the innumerable company of angels; (4) the Church; (5) God; (6) spirits of just men; (7) Jesus; (8) the blood.

The earthly Zion raised the apostle's thoughts to the heavenly city and to heaven generally, then to its innumerable angelic hosts, and then to the Church enrolled there by the grace of God. God, as judge, naturally introduces the spirits of those faithful ones who had suffered righteously on the earth.

This leads on to the new covenant and its Mediator, who will again establish relationship with God's ancient people, and not only with them, but in virtue of His precious blood (that does not cry for vengeance as did Abel's), with the whole millennial earth. The passage thus speaks of God, Christ, heaven, angels, the Church, the remnant of the Jews, and the redeemed earth.

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All the references for this month's Bible Challenger are found in the Psalms.

Witnessing

"Thou shalt be His witness."

Acts 22:15 ACT 22:15

Paul, the former enemy, was proclaimed to be his Savior's chosen vessel to fulfill the purpose expressed in the Lord's words, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness." Acts 26:16. The ever-present consciousness of the high and holy favor that had constituted him a witness led to his continuous, faithful testifying, which he recounted years later in words that should even now stir our hearts: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great." Acts 26:22.

The believer may appropriate the Savior's parting words to those who followed Him to Olivet: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Acts 1:8. And he may prove, as the Apostle John did, that the "testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9) leads to separation from the world and rejection, as his banishment to Patmos indicated in his day.

For our witnessing, the Holy Spirit presents to us the blessed Lord Himself who is the true and "faithful Witness." Rev. 1:5. The lowly One perfectly testifies of the Father who sent Him, and exhibits to us the manner of witnessing to which we are called.

Just as service is summed up in the words, "Follow Me," so all true testimony that we may bear conforms to the manner of testifying the following scriptures denote.

"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." John 5:31.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." John 5:19.

"I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true.... But I know Him; for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me." John 7:28, 29.

"As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." John 8:28.

"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." John 12:49.

"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18.

"I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it." John 17:26.

Such precious testimony the Spirit of God reveals as rendered by the One of whom it is written. "Christ pleased not Himself." Rom. 15:3.

"I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29.

"I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." John 5:30.

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." John 4:34.

May the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and cause our hearts' affections to be moved by the true and faithful witnessing of our blessed Lord. And may the testimony recorded of Him, "what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth"

(John 3:32), enable us to reproduce, in our measure, the witness of those humble and true followers whose record reads: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:3.

"The things concerning Himself" still cause our hearts to burn within us. His talking with us tells of love that fulfilled divine and gracious purposes, even at the cost of Calvary, glorifying God and binding us to His heart forever. Before our eyes He is seen in lowliness, submission and devotion to His Father's will, yet all the while the brightness of "eternal glory."

Surely, such knowledge of Himself must produce, in those who are His own, a witness unto Him which will faithfully reflect the glory of His Person. To our admiring, adoring hearts the Spirit has ministered Christ, the glory of His Person, the preciousness of His love, the faithfulness of His testimony and the dear desire of His heart that we should be His witnesses. E. J. Checkley

"Did not our heart burn within us,

while He talked with us?"

Luke 24:32

"That which we have seen and heard

declare we unto you."

1 John 1:3

Obey, Observe, Occupy

Hebrews 5:8; Matthew 28:20; Luke 19:13 HEB 5:8 MAT 28:20 LUK 19:13

What a pattern we have of obedience in our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a Son, and yet learned obedience through the things He suffered. He was made perfect, and is now the author of eternal salvation unto all them that "obey" Him. We who believe, can say, "Blessed Savior, Jesus the Lord."

In the next scripture we are to teach those who believe to "observe" all things whatsoever the Lord commands. I am afraid there is a good deal other than this taught. Let me ask you to make God and His Word your guide, and the Holy Spirit your counselor, and keep near to the one you are taught by God to believe on: Jesus, His beloved Son.

The servants are in trust in the third scripture, and they are to "occupy" till the return of the "nobleman." The citizens hate him. How Christ is hated today! The servants (any who serve) must occupy; they will be called on to give an account of their stewardship on the return of the "nobleman." "Obey" Christ, for only then are we really able to serve. "Observe" His things and teach them. "Occupy" fully and constantly till He comes. O, fix our earnest gaze, so wholly, Lord, on Thee, that, with Thy beauty occupied, we elsewhere none may see.

Peace

God's Peace

Christ's Peace

Your Peace

1. "Peace with God" is that which you, the sinner, possess and enjoy in believing. You are justified by God on the ground of the shed blood of Christ, who has "made peace through the blood of His cross." Col. 1:20.

Faith lays hold of and believes in an already completed work, which has answered for the sinner, and has satisfied the claims of God. Thus he has peace—cloudless, never-ending, unalterable peace. This peace does not depend on the enjoyment of its possessor, but on the work of Christ who made peace by the blood of His cross. A God of judgment went into the entire question of sin to its very depths with Christ on the cross. It was the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20). A risen Christ is our peace in the presence of God (Eph. 2:14).

Now all this is true for the believer, without his feelings or his enjoyment of it entering into the matter. Apart from all these things, he possesses this unalterable peace with God.

It depends, not on his enjoyment of it, but on its reality before God. It was the parting gift of Christ to His people. "Peace I leave with you." "Peace be unto you." John 14:27; 20:19. He had made peace by His blood. The God of peace had brought Him again from the dead, and He had nothing but peace to leave them.

2. The "peace of God" is God's own peace in which He dwells. It is the peace of the God whom nothing can change, who knows the end from the beginning, and has ordained everything from the beginning to the end. Though man may strive and hinder His purposes for a while, all will eventually be brought to pass.

Can we not for a moment contemplate the perfect, unruffled, conscious peace in which God dwells? And this peace is promised to keep the hearts and minds of the believers who have committed all their anxieties, all their cares by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to God. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:6.

Then what is promised? "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." God's own peace in which He dwells keeps guard over the heart, and the heart rests in the midst of every trial and every difficulty. The mind is not on the rack of anxiety, but is filled with God's peace when all has been laid out before Him and committed to Him.

3. The "peace of Christ" is another thing. To be sure, Christ is God, but still, God's peace and Christ's peace are not the same.

Therefore there is a difference in John 14:27 between "Peace I leave with you" and "My peace I give unto you." Christ did not need peace with God as we do as sinners. He "knew no sin." He gives us this through His precious blood. He did not need this for Himself. The spotless Lamb of God "did no sin." He was separate from sinners while among them. We receive the changeless portion, peace with God through His precious blood.

But as a Son with His Father, He passed through the world in the conscious communion of perfect peace ("My peace") in every step of His way. His was a life of sorrow here below, but there never was a cloud between Him and His Father during His whole pathway. It was a life of perfect unity of thought and object, as He lived by His Father: "I live by the Father." John 6:57. There was one solemn moment when the three hours' darkness and sin bearing and judgment on the cross shut this out, when He was atoning for our sins. It was but for that moment, for all the rest was unvarying peace—"My peace." This, then, is the peace of Christ.

Summary

The first, peace with God, then, is the portion of the sinner who believes: his unalterable portion.

The second, God's peace, is that which the Christian has when he has unburdened his heart of every care, and committed every thought to Him who knows the end from the beginning.

The third, Christ's peace, is what we enjoy when living by Him, even as He enjoyed when living by the Father. "I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." John 6:57. Communion is with Him and with the Father who has been revealed in the Son. Also, when we are thus enjoying Christ's peace, we have the enjoyment, too, of that peace with God, which as saved sinners we possess through His work on the cross. Words of Truth

"Now the God of Hope flit you

with all joy and peace in believing,

that ye may abound in hope,

through the power of the

Holy Ghost."

Romans 15:13

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The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words identifying something quite common to the human body, and for the Lord's counterpart there is exaltation because of the valiant deeds done thereby. [2] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 39.)

1. The added attribute to truth and meekness that a ready writer ascribed to one most Mighty. [1]
2. The conclusion one having a goodly heritage anticipated with rejoicing after setting the Lord always before him. [5]
3. The attribute an upright man saw in his God that brought greatness into his life. [1]
4. The words David used in describing his soul's desire of following God in close proximity. [2]
5. The unpleasant figurative place in which a well-known man of praise was contemplating being in the midst, when thoughts of the Lord's saving and reviving hand comforted him. [1]
6. The place David mentions as the dwelling-place of the Lord when prayers of His anointed come before Him. [3]
7. Something mighty which the Psalmist, who sang of the mercies of the Lord, mentioned along with something strong and something high: [1]
8. Something all believers should sing unto the Lord, because of the marvelous things He hath done. [2]
9. Something the Psalmist wished to be when realizing God had cast off His people and showed them hard things.[1]

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

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1. Tender mercies Psa. 51:1
2. Recompense of reward Heb. 2:2
3. Adam Job 31:33
4. No fear of God Psa. 36:1
5. Spirit 1 Chron. 10:13
6. Goat Lev. 16:21
7. Repeateth a matter Prov. 17:9
8. East... west Psa. 103:12
9. Stripes Isa. 53:5
10. Skirt of thy robe 1 Sam. 24:11
11. Innocent Psa. 19:13
12. Ordained by angels Gal. 3:19
13. No law Rom. 4:15

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the TRANSGRESSION, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." Dan. 9:24.

Precious Blood of Christ

by H. H. Snell

Scripture gives us several lines of instruction concerning the blood. It is found in the types given in the books of Moses, as well as in the epistles of the apostles. We propose to look at three aspects of the blood of Christ that speak to us of peace, communion and consecration. We can enjoy them all for present comfort and blessing.

1. Remission of sins is the general thought of Christians when considering the blood. Knowing ourselves to have been sinners against God, the blood was necessary. How could we have a moment's peace unless we knew that our sins had been judged, and were assured of His forgiveness? The testimony of our Lord Himself was that His blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, and this gives unutterable relief to the troubled conscience.

We read in Acts 10:43 that the universal witness of the prophets is that whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall receive remission of sins. This settles the soul in rest and peace before God, because the intolerable load of sins is gone. By the testimony of the Holy Spirit, we know that we are cleansed from all sin, and that God will remember our sins and iniquities no more. Precious and comforting is the truth that Jesus made peace through the blood of His cross!

2. Communion with God inside the rent veil is, however, another thing. It is this communion into which we are introduced by the precious blood of Christ. Besides the blood being shed for the remission of sins, we are sweetly taught that "by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place." Heb. 9:12. That is, into the holy of holies, or "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

So we see that blessed Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us, now in heaven, the veil being rent, or heaven opened, and He having gone in by His own blood. There is everything to encourage us to be, in spirit, inside the veil by faith.

It is no marvel that it says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near." Heb. 10:19-22. This is where God in His grace has brought us. This is where the blood of Christ gives us title to be now by faith, and in glorified bodies when Jesus comes. This is where we have access with confidence.

Communion with God by the Spirit, as well as worship and thanksgiving, are founded on the blood. We are, therefore, enjoined to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." It is our highest and happiest occupation.

Communion Broken

When we lose this communion we soon become unhappy, and should be alarmed. Our communion with the Lord is very easily broken, but not always soon restored. It is restored by simply approaching God through the rent veil and the blood of the Lord Jesus.

What a blessing to the troubled soul who gets away from the true ground of fellowship, and then with all the struggling to get back, has to learn that all his ways of doing so were wrong, and that it is only by the rent veil and the precious blood of Christ, who is gone into heaven itself for us, that we can draw near. When we have wandered from Him, it is an immense thing to have really learned from God that there is no other way of approaching Him than by the blood of Jesus. On no other ground would we have title to be there.

Then the soul is at home again where he can pour out his heart, judge himself, and through wondrous grace confess his sins. There he finds the One who died for his sins; there he knows Him as his Priest, and there the blood of sprinkling always speaks on behalf of all who come to God by Him.

The Rent Veil

It is one thing to know these things doctrinally, but it is another to know them in our own experience—to be consciously inside the veil where all the perfectness of that peace and love is realized. All believers are entitled to it, but a careless walk, the practice of unjudged evil, or not abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, will hinder our enjoyment of the Lord and every privilege He has graciously given us. To be where Jesus now is with worshipping and thankful hearts is what should characterize the saints of God. Happy indeed are those who know the sweetness and blessedness of having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

3. Consecration, or the blood of Christ on us is another aspect of the blood that we may connect with those that we have already noticed. We read of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." This is the blood applied to us, brought to bear on the conscience to purge it, and also to mark us out for God. Thus we are sanctified, or set apart, to God. "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13:12.

The priests of old, having been first washed with water, were afterward sprinkled with blood. The blood of the sacrifice was not only shed for them, and carried into the holiest of all and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, but it was sprinkled on them. The blood (and the oil also) was sprinkled on parts of their bodies so as to set forth with remarkable significance how they were set apart for God.

They were to hearken to God, to receive communications from Him, to hear His voice and not the voice of a stranger. Hence the tips of their right ears were sprinkled with blood. They were to minister obediently to His Word, and do His will. Therefore we read that the thumbs of their right hands were also sprinkled with blood.

They were also to walk in His ways, and not in evil ways, all these steps being ordered by Him. They were thus to be detached from every unclean path, and walk in paths suited to His holy name. This, no doubt, is why the great toes of their right feet were also sprinkled with blood. (Lev. 8.)

How little we really know of the power of the precious blood of Christ practically setting us apart for God. Many who thank God with their whole hearts for the blood of Jesus giving remission of sins have no idea of the liberty they have of now being in the presence of God inside the veil. It is because Jesus, our forerunner, has gone into heaven itself by His own blood. There may be comparatively few of God's children who live and walk day by day as those who consciously have the blood on them, and the Holy Spirit in them. When these wondrous truths are realized as facts, what practical separation and devotedness to the Lord there must be. Who then can do otherwise than wait for God's Son from heaven?

Book of Results

The Revelation may truly be called the book of results. In it, though Christ's faithfulness to His own abides, declension marks the churches. Sin receives its eternal wages. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are seen in full bloom, and pass away forever. False religion is judged, its blazing glory extinguished, and the smoke of the torment of the unchaste woman rises up forever and ever. Man living in rebellion is crushed under the feet of Jesus, and the dead are banished from His presence forever. The Antichrist and his associates meet their just and most terrible abasement and misery. Satan is everlastingly consigned to the lake of fire. The created heavens and earth are cleared of evil, and Christ's powerfully known, His worth fully owned. The Church is seen in glory, in uncreated light and beauty, and the new heavens and the new earth speak to us only of righteousness and blessing from God to man. It is emphatically a book of judgment on things on earth, although prophetic in its character.

H. H. Snell

The Two Natures

Man is a fallen creature, born in sin, with an evil nature that does nothing but sin against God. This evil nature is utterly incorrigible, and cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). But God condemned sin in the flesh at the cross (Rom. 8:3).

When a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he is born of God, receiving a new nature which cannot sin (1 John 3:9). But the old nature remains in him still, and not one bit improved by the presence of the new. Thus an unconverted man has one nature which is sinful; a Christian has two natures: the old, sinful one and the new one which cannot sin.

Many, when they are saved, are surprised and downcast because they sin again, and they sometimes even fear that they are lost after all. This arises from the erroneous thought that their old, evil nature is improved, and thus Satan gets an advantage.

In Rom. 6:6,7 we read, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [not improved], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [justified] from sin." God has given up the old man; it was crucified once for all on the cross. Believe God and you are freed from sin. It is no longer your master.

Then as to the practical side, we are taught in the verse 11 to reckon ourselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It does not say to realize, nor feel, nor experience, but to reckon. There would be no need for such an exhortation if sin were not still in us, or if the old nature were made better. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6. The Young Christian

I am crucified with Christ:

nevertheless I live; yet not I,

but Christ liveth in me:

and the life which I now live in the flesh

I live by the faith of

the (Son of God, who loved me,

and gave Himself for me.

Gal. 2:20

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1. 1 Peter; 2. Romans; 3. Colossians; 4. 1 Peter; 5. 2 Corinthians; 6. Ephesians; 7. 1 Thessalonians; 8. Hebrews; 9. Galatians.

EDITORIAL: the Effect of Light on Darkness

The privileges of the true followers of Christ, in standing fast and being true to His profession, have never been greater or more difficult than they are today. Because of the gross evil in the world and the giving up of light once known or professed in Christendom at large, any light seen in the Christian shines out brightly. Nothing exposes evil or unbelief more than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a diligent and heavenly minded Christian who is divinely instructed. Men hate to have their evil and unbelief exposed, and so they hate the faithful person who so exposes them. This makes it difficult for the Christian.

Opposition to the truth is more keenly felt by faithful followers of Christ when it comes from those who once professed truth, but have let it slip away. Such have a conscience which was once enlightened and active. Light again pricks a dormant conscience and the result is often bitter anger.

This present evil world (Gal. 1:4) is where we are. Surroundings and circumstances are getting so dark and wicked that we have to be extremely watchful lest we become affected by the very conditions of this present evil world.

Being what we are by nature, it is a constant tendency to the soul to get occupied with that evil and even to sink down under it. We might even think that the evil is greater than good. To do so is to suppose that the evil is greater than God, but He is above and over all. He is greater than all and He is for us, and it is a great thing to count on Him.

The Word of God gives us instruction and exhortation in this present world at the end time when the house of God is called the great house (2 Tim. 2:20). We list a few of them: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 2:1.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." 2 Tim. 1:8.

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel." 2 Tim. 1:8.

"Hold fast the form of sound words." 2 Tim. 1:13. "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. 2:3.

"Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions." 2 Tim. 4:5.

"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.

Paul says for himself, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:18. This, too, is our confidence, so that even when living in such a bad world today, we can trust our God who is greater than all. He soon will send our Lord and Savior to take us out of the presence of evil. Ed.

Object of Worship

by F. Lavington

God our Father is the One who has been revealed to us as the Object of worship, the One to whom our worship is presented. This is very important, because it shows the truth that we have been fitted to take our place before Him. The place God has given us is not "some lone place within the doors." The precious blood of Christ has given us the confidence, not only to take our place before Him now, but to know that our fitness for the inheritance is in the light of His holy presence (Col. 1:12). You and I, as purged by the precious blood of Christ, are as fitted to take our place now in God's own presence as we ever shall be.

God Himself is revealed to us as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who sustained Him in all His perfect walk of grace, love, patience and lowliness. All the beauties God desired, and ever longed to see in man, were found in His Own beloved Son. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was the Object and worship of this ever blessed One in the perfection in His pathway here. He was the God of our Lord Jesus Christ also, and the God whom He served. He was the God on whom, as a man, His faith was set. God was daily His delight. He was always in the bosom of the Father.

In Christ In process of time, when the way was cleared by our sins being removed, redemption having been accomplished, and the Holy Spirit being given at Pentecost, the sinner was for the first time enabled to take his place before God as fully blessed, and "in Christ." The Church was formed here by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Everyone who was Christ's by grace was united to Him by the Holy Spirit, and there was a new unity constituted on the earth. Henceforth, all believers are linked with each other and united to our Lord Jesus Christ.

As to our relationship with the Father, the Apostle John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father." We need as much direction from the Lord to be in communion with Him in thanksgiving and praise as we do to minister His Word. We cannot dwell too often on the truth that true worship is the soul's being brought to God in all the liberty that Christ gives by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Then we can bring the Lord Jesus Christ before God our Father in whom we find common joy with Himself. Communion comes from our appropriation of Christ, not merely according to man's thought of the word, but by the things that the Holy Spirit has made good to us and in us, and which He enables us to present to God our Father.

1 Tim. 3:14-16 indicates in a few words what seems to be the blessedness of our portion.

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

We see that the Apostle was longing that Timothy might have fullness of joy in the place where he was. He was parted from him, but he was coming again. The Apostle writes with the voice of Christ for His servant, and he writes with the voice and heart of Christ for His Church. As the Apostle was coming again to his son Timothy, so our blessed Lord is coming for us. It may seem to be a long time that the Lord Jesus has remained at the right hand of God.

House of God

Here the Apostle is writing that we might know how to behave ourselves in the house of God in the Lord's absence. God has brought us to Himself as members of the body of Christ, to take our place in the house of God—the habitation of God by the Spirit—in which the saints are builded together (Eph. 2). God has a habitation on the earth, and the Lord's portion is His people. We have the privileges of the house on the one hand, and we are subject to the discipline of the house of God on the other. God by His Spirit dwells in the house of God. The Apostle explains it further in this blessed way: the house of God is the Church—the assembly of the living God. We approach to the living God.

No longer will dead formality meet His heart and His thoughts. The assembly, of which we form part through grace if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, is the house of God. We are brought into that unity, which composes the assembly of the living God.

It is as true today as it was then that where two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, they are taking their place as part of "the assembly of the living God." It may be a feeble expression of it, perhaps, but in its complete unity it comprises all the saints on earth who by the Spirit of the living God believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is a living Person who desires to engage our affections with Himself, in order that we might in our turn present Him in His loveliness to our Father. That is worship.

Mystery of Godliness

What we have here expressed to us is this priceless heritage of the Church, "the assembly of the living God"—the "mystery of godliness." It is this knowledge which makes the "house of God" to enjoy, through grace, the revelation by the Father of the Son. We have this in the case of Simon Peter in Matt. 16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," or the revelation of Himself to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." To the Church of God today is committed the mystery of piety. So we are faced with the fact that the mystery of piety is nothing else than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in all the mystery of His divine and, in one sense, unapproachable glory. He is a divine Person, and yet with that intimacy of a Christ made known in humility and love which distinguished Him as a man.

It is having this committed to us, and keeping it enshrined in our hearts above all else, which makes the assembly of the living God "the pillar and ground of the truth." God makes us, aided by His Word and Spirit, to be those who know how to "withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." We must withstand the wiles of the devil, and stand in this blessed truth that God has manifested in the Son. God in all His glory has made Himself known to us in that lowly guise.

The Word Made Flesh

In John 1:14, the blessed Lord Jesus is spoken of as the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth." The Apostle writing these words with his heart taken up in worship and thanksgiving says, "We beheld His glory." He did not mean with his physical eyes; he meant that by faith he had beheld the loveliness of that Man now at God's right hand. It was the expression not only of what God looked for in man, but the presentation to us of God in all the grace of His heart. God in all the righteousness of His nature, His holiness and His truth is made known to us in this blessed One. It all comes to us by revelation, God acting in the power of the Spirit of God. Only God Himself can give us to know this, but it is the cherished treasure of the souls of the saints collectively. It is the knowledge of this which makes for true godliness in us.

It is wonderful that God Himself should take this place of a man in His own world, and come as a lowly Stranger "manifest in the flesh." Elsewhere we are told more fully that Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," known only to those whose eyes could see divinely. "His visage was so marred," yet He "is over all, God blessed forever."

We find in succeeding verses that the Spirit of God presents these different pictures of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we can dwell on Him personally for adoration and praise.

Justified in the Spirit

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit." In His unbroken communion with God His Father, He walked in obedience and lowliness. Everything He said and did was in the power of the Spirit of God. He always lived in the power of that Spirit, and the Spirit of holiness was manifested in all His life. At the close of His earthly pathway we find that God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in glory according to the Spirit of holiness. "Justified in the Spirit." From this we may get something for worship in the Person of God's beloved Son.

Seen of Angels

This is a subject which the Scripture refers to several times in the pathway of the Lord Jesus. When that blessed Babe was born in the plains of Bethlehem, there was a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." They saw Him at the very first moment of His existence as a man on earth (Luke 2:9-14).

We find, as time went on, He goes as a perfect Man to meet the enemy, having no advantages as the first man had. He perfectly met Satan in obedience and dependence on the Word of God. Then we are told how the angels ministered to Him there in the wilderness (Mark 1:13).

At the close of His ministry when He was in the garden and the cross was approaching, He was in fullest communion with His Father, yet in that anguish of soul that none could ever know. His heart was taken up with all that was due to the holiness of God, but He would go on in obedience to the Father's will. In anguish His heart was torn. He was there in perfect weakness and trust in God, and an angel from heaven strengthened Him as He prayed earnestly (Luke 22:43).

When the women went to see the place where the Lord lay, He had been seen by angels (Luke 24:4-7). Well did Simon Peter say in recalling some of the blessedness of the Lord's work and His ministry, "Which things the angels desire to look into." 1 Peter 1:12.

Now, these angels are promised to those who are the heirs of salvation, and they are interested in us (Heb. 1:14). Then too, a remarkable scripture in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that the Apostle brings before us in his prayer, is that we might "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." His desire for the saints even now is that "unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3:10. The angels contemplate the wisdom of God in the assembly.

God has given us the place of brethren before Him, of whom Christ is the firstborn and has the preeminence. If He is the object of our worship and our hearts are occupied with Him, we also shall be seen of angels; we also shall present a savor of Christ.

How blessed and full are these words, "seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles." Here is God in His grace going out to us who were far off, as well as to the Jews who were near, in order that both might have access to Him by one Spirit to the Father.

The Fullness of His Person

"Believed on in the world." On the simple ground of faith going out to sinners of the Gentiles, to us who were far off and through this blessed One, God has confided to our hearts the mystery of godliness and the mystery of the Church. We have Christ before us in all His preciousness, the One who has come from glory and was received up into glory.

This heavenly Stranger, our Lord Jesus Christ, appeared among us "full of grace and truth," in order to lead our hearts into the knowledge of His God as our God, and His Father as our Father. He has given His own Spirit to us, and our place is the house of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and ground of the truth. We have the truth committed to us, "God manifest in the flesh," in all the blessedness of His own Person.

May the Lord have full worship from our hearts when we come together. While we are musing, may the fire of divine love burn, being touched, as it were, with a coal from the altar. May it burn that we might more fully worship the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in Spirit and in truth.

The Scriptures

The more we look at the Scriptures, the more they transport us to their scenes. The Bible has the wonderful power of putting us, by faith, in the place it describes, as though we are there as one of the company and we are conscious that we are there in the scenes it describes. It is this that gives a blessed character to the whole Word of God.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," every part by the Holy Ghost! The Bible is a history of original sin and its fruits, and God's method of putting sin away. God has "a fit man," a fit Person (Lev. 16:21). In the Old Testament, we are waiting for a fit Person, and if we look at the New Testament, we find Him. In Matthew we see Him as the Messiah; in Mark as the perfect Servant. In Luke, He is the Son of man, and in John as the Son of God. In the Gospel of John the beginning is before Genesis.

We are attracted by the grace which is in the gospels, and we get the application of this grace in the epistles. Our eyes in the gospels look through the carpenter's Son, and see His divine glory. The aim of the epistles is to get the soul on the same platform of standing and walk as that of the Lord Jesus.

In the Old Testament we see, as it were, the unity of the Godhead, and in the New Testament the trinity of the Godhead.

In Genesis we see the election of the people of God.

In Exodus we have their redemption.

In Leviticus it is their priestly service and worship.

In Numbers is their walk and warfare in the wilderness.

In Deuteronomy there is a recapitulation of God's dealings with them up to the time that they are about to enter into the land.

Leviticus is a wonderful book for bringing out the detail of the work of Christ which we do not get elsewhere. Just as we enter into the significance of the sacrifices in Leviticus, so in worship we enter into the joy of God in the different aspects of the sacrifice of His Son.

Oh, the delight of God in His Christ! What a thing it is to have a heart to enter into it! What gives joy to God is the soul's entering into all Christ's work; having the heart bowed with a deepened sense of His worth—divine Person as He was—all His graces go up to God. We should want to be in Mary's place as learners!

If we wish to know Israel's experience after the Church is translated, look at the Psalms; Israel will then be under law again. The difference between Solomon's Song and Ecclesiastes is that in the one we have God Himself, and our hearts are too little for Him; in the other we have the world and all things in it, and our hearts are too large to be filled by it.

Prophecy is as a lamp in a dark place, as a lamp in a tunnel. "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." We should be interested in all that interests Christ. John closes the book when he says, "Come." He is perfectly satisfied when he is waiting for Jesus, and then he ceases to write! Young Christian

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What works were finished from the foundation of the world (Heb. 4:3)? What is the rest which remains to the people of God (verse 9)?

ANSWER: God had wrought in creation and then rested from His works when He had finished them, but man did not enter into it. Neither did Joshua nor David give God's people rest; so that the rest of God is still future, and believers will enter into it. We are to take care not to appear as though we come short of it. Now our portion is laboring as Christians; it will be resting when God's rest comes.

"Pray," but how?

"Without ceasing."

"Rejoice," but when?

"Evermore."

"Give thanks," for what?

"In everything."

The Will of God

The will of God has always been
A thing that others seek,
While I go on complacently
From week to peaceful week.
I've seen how people hesitate,
Not knowing where to turn.
"How faithless they must be!" I say—
"When will they ever learn?"
I've even offered my advice—
Just pray and you will know
The road to take, the path to choose,
The way you ought to go.
In smug all-knowingness I raised
My spiritual facade.
"All things together work for good
To those who trust in God."
Then suddenly my bark is tossed,
And threatens to capsize.
The spray is salty, and it stings—
I have to close my eyes.
My vision gone, and in its place
A host of doubts and fears.
The salty mist that dims my sight
Is now a flood of tears.
I look to others for advice—
I pray that God will show

The road to take, the path to choose,
The way that I should go.
Some people, though they hesitate,
Are blessed at every turn.
"How faithful they must be!" I say—
"When will I ever learn?"
How long, oh Lord, how long before
My sightless eyes may see?
How long before I understand
Thy purposes for me?
Must I be satisfied to wait
For miracles and signs?
Is this the only way to know
My Father's will divine?
Or should I take each step by faith
When there's no light at all,
And trust that God in sovereignty
Will never let me fall?
D. H.

The Thessalonians

We exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. Thess. 2:11

by F G. Patterson

There is something very beautiful in the condition of soul in which we find the Christians at Thessalonica. There is something so fresh, and bright, and happy in the whole tone of their life, walk and ways. Paul's letter to them is not so much a grand doctrinal essay, as some portions of his epistles, but it is the joyous outflow of the heart of one who looked on them as a father does his children (1 Thess. 2:11), or as a nurse does over her charge, over whose growth and wants she has watched and whom she has cherished.

We see this state of soul sometimes in a young Christian, or a young assembly of saints. There is such freshness and earnestness and love, and the things of Christ are so dearly prized. The Spirit of adoption is so strong, and the confiding love of children so marked that even an older saint, while he can truly desire a deepening knowledge of Christ Himself to possess the soul, must feel his heart warmed and encouraged when he sees it.

How sad, too, is the reverse, or the declension from this state, when the heart grows calculating and cold, and the freshness of the things of Christ has lost its power, when the truth is feared, and the world is not overcome. The faces of those who strengthened the laborer when he saw them drinking in the truth, and who, as regularly as the hour came, were at their accustomed place in the assembly—were now seldom there. And when he meets them, there is no longer the old, warm welcome and the bright, intelligent look when Christ is mentioned, but the heart is filled with other things, and open to the charge, "Thou hast left thy first love."

In God the Father

The Thessalonians is the only epistle in which Paul addresses the assembly as "in God the Father." It was their characteristic feature. As little children, the Spirit of adoption filled them while they waited for God's Son from heaven (ch. 1:9, 10). And this, their blessed hope on which they dwelt much, worked into the very texture of their whole life here below. The coming of the Lord Jesus for His own was what they awaited, and by this Paul would see the fruit of his labor, as Paul's Master would also see the fruit of His labor (ch. 2:19).

To be established unblameable in holiness, and the time when holiness would have its true value, would be at that day (ch. 3:13). Those who had slept in Jesus would not lose the blessing of such a hope, and those who mourned their loss, for the moment, would see them again at that day (ch. 4:13-18). And lastly, God preserved His people to the time when Christ would come for them (ch. 5:23).

How heartily, then, could Paul give thanks about them, and always make mention of them in his prayers—not as though they needed something, but that they might be preserved in the freshness and true-heartedness of this beautiful condition of their Christian life. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

Faith, Hope and Love

All the graces of Christian life which ever abide—faith, hope and love—the "threefold cord" binding together all that they did, were there. If they wrought, it was a work of faith. The soul counted on God and was sustained in doing His work, that He would be with His servants and own their service as His own. Their labor was not a mere routine or duty, but it was a labor undertaken in love. And the Lord Jesus was the object before the heart, and the affections were centered on Him. He who had identified Himself with His people was coming; while the labor went on, He sustained the heart, and the heart waited patiently for Him.

The conscience, too, was kept right—each one walking before a God and Father's eye, and in His presence nothing was allowed contrary to His nature and will. Thus heart and conscience were filled and directed. Nothing can exceed this beautiful picture of the freshness of the first blush of Christian life in the world.

Affliction

Surely, then, it did not need that the Apostle should see into the counsels of the Book of Life, to know if they had been the objects of God's election. In their lives he saw that which was as plain as day to him. "Our gospel," he says, "came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." And they became followers of Paul and of the Lord, "having received the word in much affliction." How could the enemy permit such a bright testimony in his domain without persecuting and afflicting those who bore it?

What can you do? What can he do with those who, if they are beaten before the council, depart, rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name? (Acts 5:41.) What can be done to those who, if imprisoned with their feet made fast in the stocks, fill the prison courts with praises sung to God? (Acts 16:25.) When put in prison and in chains, they could lift up a triumphant head and desire that their captors might have what they had, the joy which filled their hearts, and the helmet of salvation which covered their heads, except the bonds (Acts 26:29). What can you do to people who, if the enemy kills them, go to heaven praying for their enemies, unmindful of the stones which killed them? (Acts 7:60.)

Such, in its truest sense, is Christianity. God filled the hearts of these beloved ones "with joy of the Holy Ghost," when the enemy cast them into the fire of affliction. God was seen in these beloved people, and His Word had produced in them what the world had to bear testimony to—a power that was above its malice, and do what it would, it could not take this away.

The Thessalonians

Paul had no need to speak of his loved children in the faith. The world took knowledge of them in spite of itself, and their faith to God was spread abroad. How wonderful it is when the enemy is forced to bear testimony to such a state of the children of God, instead of having to point at them with the finger of scorn, when they are not in the practice of what they profess to be in their faith. In some weak measure we can enter into the deep anxiety of Paul's heart when he would know how they were enduring these afflictions. Also we share the joy he had when he had learned how they had endured, and how they had held him in the affectionate remembrance of their hearts. "Now," says he, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." (Chapter 3:8.)

May the Lord give His beloved people to know, in their inmost heart, that He has never changed, and that they may count on Him with all the confidence of these first children in the faith. May He energize their hearts to more earnest devotedness in view of His still nearer coming, and a more true-hearted following of Him. And may they be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

What We See Not yet and What We Do See

"We see not yet all things put under Him." Heb. 2:8. On the earth we do not yet see the beautiful order of God's government with man in his place as the head of God's creatures on God's behalf.

The words of Psa. 8 concerning the excellency of Jehovah's name acknowledged in all the earth, His glory set above the heavens, strength brought by Him out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, and the enemy stilled by Him are not yet fulfilled. That day is yet to dawn. It will come!

When the sons of God enter into the liberty of the glory (Rom. 8), then shall the groans of creation be hushed. Man shall rule for God in subjection to God on this earth.

"But now we see not yet all things put under Him." No, on this earth are disorder and suffering; neither is it in man, nor for man to put the crooked straight. Nor is it for the Christian to dwell with a broken heart on the power and misery of sins, as though he should remedy this world's condition.

God has other purposes in view for His people. In order to enter into His purposes, we need to gaze on the beautiful sight to which the sentence following that which speaks of the disorder on earth readdresses our hearts. "But"—as if for the moment turning the eye away from the present unruly scene of earth—"we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Order and honor prevail in the glory on high.

There sits the same Jesus who became a man on man's behalf, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death! It is not simply death, but its suffering also, for such was His precious will and love for us. Today we do not see on earth what the people of God will behold. The Father's kingdom is not yet come; His will is not yet done as in heaven, so on earth. But we see the comforting, invigorating sight: Jesus in heaven crowned with glory and honor.

Occupation with the sin and misery of earth distresses and burdens the heart. Looking to Jesus and where He is causes freshness and joy to the soul, calms the spirit, and restores its heavenly balance. We cannot set the world right. We are not even called to the effort, but we are called to care for the sorrowful and tried who are around us. In order to effectively do this, that is, to do it in the power of the Spirit of God, we need to be able to say truly from our hearts, "But we see Jesus," where He is!

The Young Christian

Bible Challenger-03-March V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words telling what some servants do from the heart rather than from ulterior motives, which might please men or satisfy the eyes. [3]
The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 59.)

1. Something personal that is able to silence the ignorance of foolish men. [2]
2. Something the heart-searcher ever makes on behalf of the saints. [1]
3. A descriptive word attesting to the fervor of the praying habits of an early Christian worker. [1]
4. A common worldly motive which a sincere Christian should seek to avoid as he contemplates the rest of his time. [3]
5. Something first given to the Lord by the faithful in Macedonia, and then unexpectedly to an apostle and his workers. [2]
6. Those also addressed in an apostle's epistle which includes believers throughout the world in this our day. [1]
7. A specific item of responsibility concerning every Christian in every situation. [2]
8. That which confirmed the immutability of an abundant provision for the heirs of promise. [1]
9. That which a unique gift will do to all who are held captive in this present evil world. [2]

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

Bible Challenger-02-February Answers V.08

1. Righteousness Psa. 45:4

2. I shall not be moved Psa. 16:8

3. Gentleness Psa. 18:35

4. Hand after Psa. 63:8

5. Trouble Psa. 138:7

6. His holy heaven Psa. 20:6

7. Arm Psa. 89:13

8. New song Psa. 98:1

9. Delivered Psa. 60:5

"The RIGHT HAND of the Lord is exalted: the RIGHT HAND of the Lord doeth valiantly." Psa. 118:16.

A New Creation

God is the Creator of two creations. In the beginning He created the heavens and the earth first, and man last. In the new creation the order is reversed; God is now creating men anew in Christ Jesus, and hereafter will fashion a new heavens and a new earth. (2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:1.)

To lay hold by faith, the truth of the new creation is an immense blessing. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or, there is a new creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17.

Adam, created in innocence, was tempted and sinned. The Christian, created anew in Christ, has a new nature which cannot sin. The old, Adam nature in the believer is not one whit improved, but everyone who is in Christ is a new creation. Thus God sees him forever.

Those who are in Christ are also spoken of as created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

"God... hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 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. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2:4-10.

"And that ye [having] put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24. The new creation is God's own perfect handiwork. And "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Eccl. 3:14. Are you a new creation in Christ? Young Christian

Submission

The following heart-stirring words are ascribed to the French Huguenots in the days of their bitter persecution: "If perish we must under Thy justice, we shall perish adoring Thee. Thy wrath, would it extinguish us? Then we shall flee to Thy heart. Is extermination Thy design for us? We shall make that new cause to fear Thee. In spite of life, in spite of death, we shall bless the stroke Thy hand applies. They are the blows of a tempest, but they bring us into port."

Surely this is verification of the concluding verses of Rom. 8 "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Editorial: The Eternal Spring

Spring! How delightful it is. God's Word presents it this way: "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle [dove] is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." (Sol. 2:11-13).

Grapevines and thousands of flowers put forth their sweet fragrance in the spring, and everyone welcomes the warmth of the sun. Life springs out of the earth, and a kind of visible resurrection takes place, which we enjoy very much after months of winter when plant-life is dormant or dead. Birds that have migrated elsewhere return and songbirds fill the air with their music as though they are praising their Creator.

Solomon seems to connect all this with the coming of Christ for His bride. When He comes for His Church, will He say, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away"? In Spanish there is a hymn that speaks of "the eternal spring." It is a poetic reference to that glory into which believers will be ushered by our bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It will be eternal and infinitely better than any spring we have experienced here on the earth.

Does that make you homesick for heaven? Paul, who had been caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2), longingly desired to "win Christ, and be found in Him." Phil. 3:8,9. In verses 10 and 11 he further says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection... if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul indeed seemed to be homesick for heaven. Heaven is where Christ, our Lord and Savior, is, and soon He will call us away. His last promise is, "Surely I come quickly." Our hearty response is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20. Ed.

Independence

The pretension to competence in everyone who takes it into his head to judge for himself, independently of what God has instituted, is, taken in its most favorable aspect—not an individual pretension which is its real character—the well-known and unscriptural system which has been known since Cromwell's time, that is, independency—one body of Christians being independent of every other as a voluntary association. This is a simple denial of the unity of the body, and the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in it.

J. N. Darby

The Runaway Slave

Of all the converts which the Lord gave to the Apostle in his bonds, none of them seem to have so entirely won his heart as the poor runaway slave, Onesimus. His story in the book of Philemon is a beautiful picture of the strength, the humility, and the tenderness of divine love in the heart, which works by the Spirit, and sweetly shines in all the details of individual life!

The Apostle's success in the imperial palace does not weaken his interest in a young disciple from the lowest condition of society. No portion of the community was more depraved than the slaves, and with whom must a fugitive slave have associated in that profligate city? Yet, from these lowest depths, Onesimus is drawn forth by the unseen hand of eternal love. He crosses the path of the Apostle and is converted.

Onesimus devotes himself at once to the Lord and to His service. He finds in Paul a friend and brother, as well as a master and teacher. And now shine forth the virtues and the value of Christianity, and the sweetest applications of the grace of God to a poor, friendless, destitute, fugitive slave.

What is Christianity? Where did it come from, in the view of its being such a new thing in Rome—in the world? Was it at the feet of Gamaliel that Paul so learned to love? No, but at the feet of Jesus.

Think for a moment of the Apostle's labors at this time, of his age, of his infirmities, of his circumstances, to say nothing of the lofty subjects and the immense foundation truths that were then occupying his mind. If we think of this, we may well admire the grace that could enter into every detail of the relationships of master and slave, and that with such delicate consideration of every claim.

The letter he sent with Onesimus to his injured master Philemon is one of the most touching ever written. Looking at it simply as such, we are at a loss whether most to admire the warmth and earnestness of his affections, the delicacy and justness of his thoughts, or the sublime dignity which pervades the whole epistle. Things New and Old

We welcome still Thy faithful word—

"The cross shall meet its sure reward;"

For soon must pass the "little while,"

Then joy shall crown Thy servants' toil:

And we shall hear Thee, Savior, say,

"Arise, my love, and come away;

Look up, for thou shalt weep no more,

But rest on heaven's eternal shore."

Emmaus

Luke 24LUK 24

The Lord cannot allow the condition of saints to be different from His doctrine. What is the truth that He is calling us to? Himself—around His Person. As we go through Luke 24 we shall see the hindrances of the soul, and the Lord's remedy for them.

In Luke 9 the two men in the glory were with the Lord. They were talking of His decease. It is not merely coming to the breaking of bread, but a living state of connection with Christ, like Moses and Elias enjoyed, that must characterize us.

Now, in Luke 24, there is not a word of anyone seeing Christ, but there were two souls leaving Jerusalem, and these two were sad, but were talking of His decease. Something drew them away from Jerusalem, although with sorrow, and the Lord came and talked to them, asking them why they were sad. There never had been a more wonderful day for the earth than this—He had been crucified and buried, had risen, and angels were adoring at the resurrection—and yet the souls of these two were sad.

We learn from this the state, often, of our own souls. Why was there this slowness of heart? Their reply is given in verse 21. It was what the natural man looked for—a kingdom on earth. They tell Him that the One whom they looked for is crucified, is dead, and they have no hope.

When the soul is out of communion we seek temporal deliverances. How does the Lord deal with them? As far as these two go away from Jerusalem, He goes with them. What grace! There was no communion nor intelligence with them, but He goes with them to the end, and then He shows them that He has no business at Emmaus. He reveals Himself. Depend on it, if we are looking for some outside temporal removal of difficulties, we have got outside of our right place.

Was it the Spirit that was leading these two toward Emmaus? No, for the Spirit had been leading others to gather together in Jerusalem. The two had to go to Emmaus (though they little knew it) to know Himself. Then when He had revealed Himself to them, they feel that they, like Him, have no place there. So they return to Jerusalem, in spite of the distance and their fatigue, and find the disciples gathered together!

Was it a matter of indifference to Him whether or not these two were going to Emmaus? Was He careful only of the number gathered in the little room? Oh, no; not till these two were brought back to Jerusalem, to those who were already gathered there, does He reveal Himself among them. How precious to know the Lord is just like this!

We all have our Emmauses. What a comfort to know that if we do wander there, He will never rest, but go after us and reveal Himself, as He did to these two, and bring us back! It is the wandering ones the Shepherd's heart is ever longing after. Nothing satisfies that heart but the taking of the sheep on His shoulder, and bringing it home rejoicing.

W. J. L.

A Door Opened in Heaven

Words of Truth

Revelation 4 and 5 REV 4 REV 5

The connection of the first verse of Rev. 4 with the addresses to the seven churches is most significant. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."

A door is opened in heaven to John, and he sees the throne of God in government, when everything is according to God's mind. John's spirit had been troubled by the display of the utter failure in testimony just witnessed in the churches. He had seen the Lord walking amidst the golden candlesticks, investigating their condition, and all is failure. So their end is such that Christ will spew them out of His mouth.

What grace, at a moment like this, to open to the tried heart of the prophet a door into heaven. He then shows the poor saint of God—tempest-tossed amid the ruin of all which God has set up in the hands of man—a scene in preparation for the coming day of glory, where no failure can come.

Such is the comfort of the child of God who walks in communion with God. He is shown the purpose of God in heaven, and though he may scarcely know how to steer his course amid the waves and storms as they grow more and more tempestuous around him, the Spirit of God carries his heart into a scene where no evil or failure can come.

Whatever the Church may be now, God will set a throne in heaven, and One will sit thereon, displaying the glory of God's government where not even the spray of the storm can reach! This is the stay of the heart. If the Church is all in confusion and disorder, God shows His saints, for their comfort, that even now the government is in the hands of One who sits upon the throne. The display of glory here is dispensational and governmental, Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai, in connection with creation, as the One for whose pleasure all things are and were created.

Grace

I am sure that a heart touched by sovereign grace will not fail to discern Jesus in the scene as the One by whom all things are upheld. Though verse 11 is still not fulfilled, for creation is anything but an answer to God's pleasure as being under the permitted rule of Satan except as by Providence, all things are overruled. Yet Jesus is the sustainer of what was created for the Divine pleasure. And He will, in a new heaven and a new earth, bring all things into subjection to Him who sits upon the throne.

There is wonderful grace in not only comforting the poor saints of God by His own individual portion, but also in revealing to such God's mind and purpose about everything in heaven and earth.

Redemption

Chapter 5 unfolds redemption. It is not the question then who Jesus is, but what He is! And for the comfort of the saints, the heavenly drama is shown. John in a mortal body is a picture of the weakness of the present condition of the saints in communion with God. Though in heaven, John displays his foolishness and weeps much. The saints, carrying about with them a body of sin and death, always display their foolishness in God's presence. But be it so, all the grace of God is shown forth in this scene for the comfort of John's heart.

Why should John weep at what man is? Had he forgotten there was a Man who was worthy? He shows his bewilderment in God's presence and weeps much, because he had forgotten the Lamb who was worthy to take the book and to open the seven seals thereof. And notice, it is not only His personal worthiness, but the redeemed worship Him in a new song, and declare His worthiness because He was slain and had redeemed them to God by His blood. This is His worthiness. He has glorified God in shedding His blood for us. He has not been content to abide alone. He has redeemed us unto God by His blood, and we shall reign with Him.

Angels

Lower down in the chapter, the countless multitude of angels celebrate His praise, but they are lower down in another sense too. An angel cannot speak of Him as the One "who loved me, and gave Himself for me." They praise Him for what He is to the saints. Like the servants at the welcome of the prodigal son, the angels praise the Master for what they learn Him to be as a father in His welcome of His long-lost son. But this does not change their position; they are still the servants.

Then John hears every creature in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, taking up the praise. This is anticipative, but it was given to John to know it beforehand for the comfort of our hearts.

Peter, who had been with the Lord in the holy mountain, could say that he had seen the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But in point of fact that day is future, though for his special comfort he had a vision of it. And so it was with John. It is the grand result before his eye, as sample and pledge of what it will be when the blessed Lord shall have risen up from His Father's throne to banish the adversary from the wide universe. No place will be left for Satan in the scene that God had created for His glory.

What grace of our God to show us this glorious future, when all the mind in heaven and earth shall be one in worshipping Him who sits upon the throne and in adoring the Lamb.

A Practical Word

Do you know this mind of heaven, the mind of God? Yes, for as Christians you have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Whether you are displaying it in your everyday life is quite another thing. If I look around on professing Christians, and ask whether they are displaying the mind of heaven, sad to say, it is anything but that. I see professing Christians seeking their own good things, laying up for themselves treasures on earth, and in no sense waiting for God's Son from heaven.

Is the Lamb the center of your heart? This is the mind of heaven. If so, you will not seek your joys now. You will say that you wait for the Son of God from heaven for your portion. As for trouble, you will not be striving to get out of it. You will take it as a pilgrim does the rough roads on his journey home.

Neither joy nor trouble will engage the heart that is centered on Christ. Such, in spirit, wait for the scene of Rev. 5 to end their sorrows and bring in their joy.

Bible Challenger Clues-03-March V.08

1. Acts; 2. 2 Chronicles; 3. 2 Samuel; 4. Nehemiah; 5. Daniel; 6. Acts; 7. Mark; 8. Acts.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: In Matt. 22:24 Moses said if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. In Matt. 1:5 it says that Boaz begat Obed of Ruth. Boaz said he was taking Ruth to be his wife to raise up the name of the dead, Mahlon, upon his inheritance (Ruth 4:10). It seems Mahlon's name was lost and the name of Boaz is the only one remembered.

ANSWER: Boaz purchased all that his kinsman had sold, and took Ruth, and she became his wife. He fulfilled the intent of the Scriptures by raising up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

QUESTION: It is said of the Lord: "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation?"

ANSWER: "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1:3, 4.

As Obed was born to Naomi, so was Jesus born to the remnant in Judah. Shepherds abiding in the field at night were the first to hear the joyful news. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Thus the son of Boaz and Ruth is accounted as the son of Naomi: that is, Judah's child and son. Although a son, yet he bore the relationship of redeemer to Naomi. Did not the women say, "He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age"? As each year rolls by, this has been fulfilled a thousand times.

W. Bothwell

Affliction

Affliction quickens the spirit of prayer; Jonah was asleep in the ship, but in prayer in the whale's belly.

Perhaps in a time of health and prosperity we pray in a cold and formal manner putting no coals to the incense; we are careless about our own prayers, and how could we expect God to answer them? Then God sends some trial or other, to make us take hold of Him. "They poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them." Isa. 26:16. Now their prayer pierced the heavens.

In times of trouble we pray feelingly, and we never pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly. When God puts His children in the school of affliction, He deals with them tenderly, because He does not leave them without a promise. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted

above that ye are able." 1 Cor. 10:13.

He will not lay a giant's burden upon a child's back, nor will He stretch the strings of the instrument too much, lest they should break. If God sees it good to strike with one hand, He will support with the other. Either He will make the faith stronger, or make the yoke lighter.

Thanksgiving

The Young Christian

We can give thanks that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Rom. 8:29, 30.

We can thus look back into eternity, and give thanks that our salvation is according to eternal purpose. Yes, we give thanks to Him "who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9. What a theme for thanksgiving!

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Gal. 4:4, 5. For this again we can surely give thanks. And what God purposed in eternity, Jesus accomplished in the fullness of time, or in the appointed time.

Redeemed and Justified

And further, for the believer's thanksgiving, redemption is not only accomplished, but we have it. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph. 1:7. Again, we do not have to pray for redemption or the forgiveness of sins when we have both; we only need to give thanks.

If we believe God we have justification and peace. Believing God we are justified. It is written, "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." Acts 13:39. We are reckoned righteous, believing God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. All this is distinct cause for thanksgiving.

Our Shepherd

But now as to the present journey through a world where everything is against Christ, and therefore against us as believers, and we, like sheep, always ready to turn aside, how can we and for what can we now give thanks? We can each one give thanks because "the Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." We do not have to pray for a Shepherd, but to give thanks. Oh, to know Him and trust Him more. Think of what He does for us: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," etc. Is not every verse in Psa. 23 a wondrous theme for thanksgiving?

In the midst of so much temptation, and needing someone to sustain, succor, and help us so that we do not fail, can we now give thanks? Yes, we can give thanks for our great High Priest. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2:18.

Our Great High Priest

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. But if we fail, can we, besides confessing our sins, also give thanks? Yes, we can give thanks because "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 2:1, 2. Oh, what marvelous themes for thanksgiving!

Present With the Lord

If we are about to die, as to the body, can we give thanks, or is all uncertain in that solemn moment? We can surely give thanks, for we well know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Concerning this the Christian alone can say, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5:8.

In the immediate prospect of the coming of the Lord, that which will so terrify the world, can we look forward to His coming and give thanks? Yes, with fullest joy, for come what may, Jesus has given this divine assurance, saying, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2,3.

If you are a Christian, you can give thanks for every one of these things; if not, you cannot give thanks for any one of them. We might go on and add greatly to the list of matters for "thanksgiving." "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.

Unnumbered comforts to my soul

Thy tender care bestowed,

Before my infant heart conceived

From whom those comforts flowed.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts

My daily thanks employ;

Nor is the least a cheerful heart

To taste those gifts with joy.

Through every period of my life

Thy goodness I'll pursue;

The desert past, in glory bright,

The precious theme renew.

Through all eternity to Thee

A joyful song I'll raise;

But, oh! eternity's too short

To utter all Thy praise.

Ministry of Peter, Paul, and John

by J. N. Darby

We have scriptural authority for regarding Peter and Paul as the apostles, respectively, of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision. Peter and the twelve remained at Jerusalem when the disciples were scattered, and, continuing the work of Christ in the remnant of Israel, gathered into an assembly on earth the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Paul having received the ministry of the assembly, as of the gospel to every creature under heaven (Col. 1), as a wise master-builder lays the foundation. Peter sets us off as pilgrims on our journey to follow a risen Christ towards the inheritance above. Paul, in the full development of his doctrine, shows us the saints sitting in heavenly places in Christ, heirs of all of which He is heir. All this was dispensational, and it is full of instruction.

John holds a different place. He does not enter into dispensations, though once or twice stating the fact as in John 13:1; 14:1; 17:24; 20:17, nor does he take the saint or even the Lord Himself up to heaven. For him Jesus is a divine Person, the Word made flesh manifesting God and His Father, eternal life come down to earth. The Epistle of John treats the question of our partaking of this life and its characters.

God's Dealings With the Earth But at the close of the Gospel, after stating the sending of the Comforter at His going away, Christ opens to the disciples (though in a mysterious way) the continuation of God's dealings with the earth, of which John ministerially is the representative. He links the manifestation of Christ on earth at His first coming with His manifestation at His second. Christ's Person, and eternal life in Him, is the abiding security and living seed of God, when dispensationally all was corrupted and in confusion and decay. If all were in disorder outwardly, eternal life was the same.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

The destruction of Jerusalem formed a momentous epoch as to these things, because the Jewish assembly, formed as such at Pentecost, had ceased. The judicial act was then accomplished.

Paul; As a Wise Master-BUILDER, Laid the Foundation of the Assembly

Christians had been warned to leave the camp. The breach of Christianity with Judaism was consummated. Christ could no longer take up the assembly, established in the remnant of the Jews, as His own seat of earthly authority.

The assembly, as Paul had established it, too, had already fallen from its first estate and could in no sense take up the fallen inheritance of Israel. All seek their own, says Paul, not the things of Jesus Christ. All they of Asia—Ephesus, the beloved scene where all Asia had heard the Word of God—had forsaken him. Those who had been specially brought with full intelligence into the assembly's place could not hold it in the power of faith. Indeed, the mystery of iniquity was at work before this, and was to go on and grow until the hindrance to the final apostasy was removed.

Universal Declension and Ruin

Here, in this state of universal declension and ruin, John's ministry comes in. Stability was in the Person of Christ, for eternal life first, but for the ways of God upon earth too. If the assembly was spewed out of His mouth, He was the faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Let us trace the links of this in his Gospel. In John 20 we have a picture of God's ways from the resurrection of Christ till we come to the remnant of Israel in the latter days, represented by Thomas's look on the pierced One and believing by seeing.

In John 21 we have, besides the remnant, the full millennial gathering. Then at the close of the chapter the special ministry of Peter and John is pointed out, though mysteriously. The sheep of Jesus of the circumcision are confided to Peter, but this ministry was to close like Christ's. The assembly would not be established on this ground any more than Israel. There was no tarrying here till Christ came.

Peter's ministry in fact was closed, and the circumcision assembly left shepherdless, before the destruction of Jerusalem put an end to all such connection forever. Peter then asks as to John. The Lord answers, confessedly mysteriously, but putting off as that which did not concern Peter who was to follow Him, the closing of John's ministry, prolonging it in possibility till Christ came. Now, in fact, the Bridegroom tarried, but the service and ministry of John by the Word (which was all that was to remain, and no apostle in personal care) did go on to the return of Christ.

John's Special Ministry

John was no master-builder like Paul—had no dispensation committed to him. He was connected with the assembly in its earthly structure like Peter, not in the Ephesus or heavenly one. He was not the minister of the circumcision, but carried on the earthly system among the Gentiles, only holding fast the Person of Christ. His special place was testimony to the Person of Christ come to earth with divine title over it—power over all flesh.

This did not break the links with Israel, as Paul's ministry did, but raised the power which held all together in the Person of Christ to a height which carried it through any hidden time, or hidden power, on to its establishment over the world at the end. It did not exclude Israel as such, but enlarged the scene of the exercise of Christ's power so as to set it over the world. It did not establish it in Israel as its source, though it might establish Israel itself in its own place from a heavenly source of power.

The Assembly and the Revelation

What place does the assembly then hold in this ministry of John found as it is in the Revelation? None in its Pauline character, except in one phrase coming in after the Revelation is closed, where its true place in Christ's absence is indicated (Rev. 22:17). We have the saints at the time, in their own conscious relationship to Christ, in reference, too, to the royal and priestly place to His God and Father, in which they are associated with Himself. But John's ministerial testimony, as to the assembly, views it as the outward assembly on earth in its state of decay—Christ judging this—and the true assembly, the capital city and seat of God's government over the world, at the end, but in glory and grace. It is an abode, and where God dwells and the Lamb.

All this facilitates our intelligence of the objects and bearing of the book. The assembly has failed; the Gentiles, grafted in by faith, have not continued in God's goodness. The Ephesian assembly, the intelligent vessel and expression of what the assembly of God was, had left its first estate. Unless it repented, the candlestick was to be removed.

The Ephesus of Paul becomes the witness on earth of decay and of removal out of God's sight, even as Israel had been removed. God's patience would be shown towards the assembly as it had been towards Israel. But the assembly would not maintain God's testimony in the world any more than Israel had. John does maintain this testimony, ministerially judging the assemblies by Christ's Word, then the world from the throne, till Christ comes and takes to Himself His great power and reigns. During this transition-dealing of the throne, the heavenly saints are seen on high. When Christ comes, they come with Him.

Links between John's Writings

The first part, then, of the Epistles of John are the continuation, so to speak, of John's Gospel before the last two dispensational chapters. The Revelation, that of these last two chapters (John 20, 21), where Christ being risen and no ascension given, the dispensational dealings of God are largely intimated in the circumstances which occur. It is shown at the same time that He could not personally set up the kingdom then. He must ascend first.

The two short epistles show us that truth (truth as to His Person) was the test of true love, and to be held fast when what was anti-Christian came in. The free liberty of the ministration of the truth was to be held fast against assumed ecclesiastical or clerical authority, as contrasted with the assembly. The Apostle had written to the assembly. Diotrephes rejected free ministry.

Bible Challenger-04-April V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word describing what should characterize our service to the Lord as a fitting accompaniment to singing in His presence. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 98.)

1. Something Rhoda failed to open at a time of prayer. [1]
2. The musical accompaniment of certain priests who sang at Hezekiah's revival service. [2]
3. That which David brought to Jerusalem after a three-month hiatus in the house of a Gittite. [3]
4. A special ceremony to commemorate the conclusion of a building project in Nehemiah's day. [4]
5. That which was found on a faithful man of God, after a night of fasting, by a great king and his private menagerie. [4]
6. Something early Christians did from house to house with singleness of heart. [3]
7. A type of soil, in the parable, that typifies those who immediately respond to the hearing of the Word. [2]
8. Something fruitful enjoyed by saint and sinner, because the rain from heaven witnesses to the goodness of God. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-03-March Answers V.08

1. Well doing 1 Peter 2:15
2. Intercession Rom. 8:27
3. Laboring Col. 4:12
4. Lusters of men 1 Peter 4:2
5. Own selves 2 Cor. 8:5
6. Faithful Eph. 1:1
7. Give thanks 1 Thess. 5:18
8. Oath Heb. 6:17
9. Deliver us Gal. 1:4

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the WILL OF GOD FROM the heart." Eph. 6:6.

Joy

Joy, or gladness, is what man craves and is intent on finding; he does find it when he finds God, and only then. He retains it, too, in proportion as he grows in the knowledge of God. God is the author of true joy as of every good and perfect gift. Being Himself perfectly good and above all evil, He is even represented as finding His own joy in the repentance of the sinner who returns to seek Him.

Sin having come in, and man being thus alienated from God, man's idea of joy is to be as happy as he can make himself without God and away from Him. (See the prodigal in Luke 15.) But disappointment and bitterness here and eternal sorrow hereafter alone can result from such a course as that. When however, on the contrary, the light of God's love revealed in the gift and the death of His Son breaks upon the heart, it is filled at once "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The fruit, too, of the Spirit is love, joy and peace, with other beautiful traits. This is produced in the believer's heart by the Spirit for God's glory.

The Apostle desired for the Romans that the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace in believing (Rom. 15:13). The Thessalonians, too, had received the word in "much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Many more passages might be cited to show how joy is one of the leading characteristics of those who have been brought to know God.

The only Man who never had to be so brought—because His delight was ever in God, as God's was in Him: He who is called a "man of sorrows"—this perfect and blessed One had His own deep joy in communion with and in dependence upon God. He desires for His own in the world that this, His joy, might be theirs.

True joy is unknown in the world in its present state, but there is a day coming when sorrow, suffering, death, and all the gloomy fruits of sin will be done away. God Himself shall wipe away all tears and fill the universe with joy unclouded and eternal. That day is depicted in Rev. 21.

Bible Dictionary

Now the God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace in believing,
that ye may abound in hope,
through the power of
the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:13

EDITORIAL: Light for the Conscience

"To know good and evil" is a statement found in Gen. 3. In the first 4000 years of man's history, it seems that men had nearly lost that knowledge. In Mal. 3:18 it says, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not."

We ask now, has an additional 2000 years helped the human race in their intelligence as to the knowledge of good and evil? Do men now discern more clearly between the righteous and the wicked? Can we better discern between him that serves God and him that serves Him not?

In our history we have shown that we have not the power to do the good nor to resist the evil. These 6000 years have not changed this. Time has not improved the human race, but, rather, do you not agree that it is worse?

Conscience—the knowledge of good and evil—is like good eyesight. But good eyes are not enough. Light is needed for the eye and also for the conscience. Light has been given. God is light. It is available, but men do not want it. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

The development of evil is described this way in 2 Tim. 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Prophetically, through Jeremiah, the Lord says, "My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish [foolish] children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Jer 4:22.

Instead of being discouraged by this state of things around us, the Christian has guidance and instruction to meet the condition in a positive way. We are told, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12:21. Also in Gal. 6:9 it says, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Ed.

Yield yourselves unto God,
as those that are
alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments
of righteousness unto God.

Romans 6:13

Eternal Life

What is it and do I have it?

Things New and Old

It is worthy of observation that we find only one mention of everlasting or eternal life in the Old Testament—Dan. 12:2, where it refers to those who "shall awake, some to everlasting life." We are indebted for the revelation of it to a later dispensation. It is a New Testament doctrine, and, blessed be God, a present fact.

Passing over Matthew, Mark and Luke, who rarely mention it and always connect it with the future, it is found in the writings of John. In the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John we find it revealed and unfolded fully. Paul speaks of it, as recorded in the Acts and in Romans, for example. Paul gives us some additional revelation in Timothy and Titus, as to its being the subject of promise before the world. But the Holy Spirit has evidently made John to be specially the exponent of this personal, heavenly, divine doctrine of our eternal life in Christ.

Turning to John's Gospel we find the Lord for the first time presenting the doctrine to Nicodemus in the most striking way. The lifting up of the brazen serpent by Moses had been the typical rehearsal of the gift of eternal life, the determinate purpose of God's heart, with a view to which, and for its fulfillment, He had given His Son in fullness of time to the world. It was the incontestable demonstration of a love which finds its only adequate expression in the bestowal of eternal life upon the dead, and its only just measure in what it cost His heart to entrust that blessed One to those who would hate Him without a cause!

At the close of the third chapter, John the Baptist, who had doubtless gathered the doctrine from Christ, is seen communicating it in the most definite way in connection with faith to his own disciples and certain of the Jews.

In chapter 4, to the woman at the well, the Lord presents it in connection with the Holy Spirit—the living water. And to His own disciples He presents it in relation to the ingathering of the fruit by those who toil for Him in the ripe fields that wait for harvesting.

In chapter 5, verse 24, the Lord emphatically and solemnly, as indicated by the words, "verily, verily," presents it as the immediate, present and necessary result of faith in Him.

The following chapter gives us the feeding of the five thousand. It also gives us the teaching of Christ as to the truth of His own Person being the true manna, the true bread: bread of God and bread of heaven. It shows the connection between feeding upon Him and everlasting life which He was giving. To feed upon Him was to have Him as the object of one's faith.

Verse 40 goes on to the personal act of Christ in raising up at the last day those who have the everlasting life, which here He pledges Himself to supplement with resurrection.

This same chapter deepens the subject to our souls in verses 53 and 54 in its manifest connection with the redemption work of Christ, the only basis for God's wondrous purpose of grace, so blessedly laid in the death of His Son. The lesson taught us is evidently that the possession of eternal life synchronizes with our personal association with Christ in the knowledge of Him in redemption who is the Son of the living God. He has the words of eternal life. We have none other to which to go, as Peter confesses in verses 68 and 69.

In John 12:50, the Lord teaches us that in sending Christ, His Father had given Him a commandment, adding, "And I know that His commandment is life everlasting." What a blessed picture of grace this is. The Father gives His command to the Son, whom He is sending into the world. And what is it? It is not the exaction of His rights from ruined debtors. It is not the execution of His sentence on rebels against His authority. It is not reproach, reproof, denunciation, threatening of judgment and wrath. No! It is one statement, one commandment, and that is the same for all. God's command to Christ concerning a lost world, God's commandment concerning those who are dead in trespasses and sins is summed up in this one blessed statement—"life everlasting." Christ adds, "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

When in communion with His Father in chapter 17, He speaks of the power given Him over all flesh, "that He should give eternal life" to as many as had been given Him, more fully spoken of in the next verse—"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." This shows the connection between the eternal life as the abundance of divine power and as the revelation of the Father and the Son.

Full of the same thought, in 1 John 1:2 he says, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." But a marked advance is seen here. The eternal life is being identified with Himself who, in the Gospel, is seen as the revealer of it only.

In the last chapter, verses 10 and 11, he sums up the record that God gave of His Son "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." This affirms, too, that he had written these things to believers in the name of the Son of God, that they might know that they had eternal life. Then he closes the Epistle as he began it by identifying that life with the Son Himself. Thus, "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5:20.

This is life eternal, that they might
know Thee the only true God,
and Jesus Christ,
whom Thou hast sent.

John 17:3

Great Faith

by W. Brockmeier

A Canaanite Woman and a Certain Centurion

In His public ministry, the Lord Jesus twice commended individuals for having "great faith." These acknowledgments were not directed to His own disciples, but to a Canaanite woman and a Roman centurion. Their personal faith shines even more brilliantly when we contrast it with the dark and widespread unbelief of the Jews.

To His beloved but often fearful disciples, the blessed Lord was constrained to attribute "little faith" with regards to their concern about material necessities (Matt. 6:30), their fear of perishing in a storm (Matt. 14:31), and for reasoning about His words instead of being instructed by them (Matt. 16:8).

The names of the two individuals whom God has singled out as having great faith are not mentioned, for it is their faith to which God would direct our thoughts. Their faith, which so delighted the heart of Christ, should be of special interest to us and prompt us to inquire as to what constitutes great faith. May the consideration of these two individuals encourage the hearts of those of us who are more characterized by having little faith.

A Canaanite Woman

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tire and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. 15:21-28.

This Canaanite woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation (Mark 7:26). Her readiness to accept whatever the Lord said to her and of her is a beautiful example of great faith.

As with each of us, it was her felt need that moved her to beseech the Lord for mercy. In so doing, she addressed Him as Son of David. That was true enough, but it was not suitable for a Gentile to approach the Jews' Messiah on that ground nor in those terms. It was not to the Gentiles that the Christ was sent. Her desperate plea for her afflicted daughter was met by silence from the Lord and earnest pleas from His disciples for Him to send her away.

The disciples may have known prohibitions of the law, but had not yet learned the grace and truth that come by Jesus Christ.

While the Lord's silence gave opportunity for the sad state of the disciples' hearts to be manifested, it also served to further the exercise in this woman's soul. When the Lord stated His mission of being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, she dropped His title as Son of David and addressed Him alone as Lord. Her simple prayer is sublime in its directness: "Lord, help me." She did not waste words.

For this woman's great faith to be clearly witnessed, the Lord again seemingly rebuffed her. Well she knew what He meant by the children (the Jews) and the dogs (the Gentiles). Their bread was not hers. With unhesitating acceptance she owns His judgment as true, and in profound boldness claims the uneaten crumbs of bread for herself. It was in this same spirit that Ruth, the Moabitess, claimed redemption from Boaz. Compare Ruth chapter 2, verse 10, with chapter 3, verse 9.

How the Lord delights in faith that will not be turned aside from receiving blessing at His hand. To take our true place unreservedly before Him as those who are unworthy and who have no claim upon Him, and still to insist upon His blessing from having learned His character, is great faith indeed.

Faith is connected with grace, as works are with law. All blessing must be on the principle of grace. When the heart is established in grace, boldness of faith is realized.

A Certain Centurion

"Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick." Luke 7:1-10.

The centurion, unlike the Syrophenician woman, made no attempt to approach the Lord as Son of David. His request was channeled through the Jewish elders. As they carried this message to Jesus, they also gave this admirable man a remarkable commendation. "He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." True love for God's people transcends human sentiment, is governed by the Word of God, and is exhibited in intensely practical ways. (Matt. 25:35-40; Heb. 6:10; 1 John 3:18; 5:2.)

According to the Jews' estimation, this centurion was proclaimed worthy, but in his own eyes he judged himself unworthy. (Prov. 27:2.) Faith differs from presumption in that faith is marked by humility and confidence in God. Presumption attempts to exalt the one who boasts about himself.

Besides being marked by humility and love for the people of God, the centurion recognized that the Lord Jesus was a Man set under authority. Additionally, he recognized that his own authority over the soldiers, commanding them to obedience, was the result of his place of subjection to a higher authority. It was to the authority he represented that the soldiers ultimately rendered compliance.

By faith the centurion saw that the Lord Jesus in perfect manhood had taken a place of subjection to God. He knew the Lord Jesus need only say a word and his servant would be healed, for with Him was all the power of God and authority even over sickness.

How precious it is to contemplate the Lord Jesus in this setting. Truly He is the everlasting Word, the Mighty God, the Prince of the kings of the earth and Head over all things, yet how blessed to think of Him as a Man set under authority. Is not the place of subjection elevated before us, as we view the One who willingly took that place in lowly grace?

As we consider the Lord Jesus as a Man set under authority, we may well challenge our own hearts as to what measure we have practically demonstrated that we, too, are persons set under authority. Do we "go," "come" and "do" as He bids us?

Christendom boasts of numbers, talent, political influence, grandiose buildings and outward show, only to grieve the Lord's heart and give evidence how far she has fallen. In happy contrast, here was a man who could say of himself, as well as of Jesus, that he was a man set under authority. It was this declaration accompanied with the expressed confidence in the Lord's ability to heal that brought from the Lord's lips those memorable words, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." To appreciate the Lord Jesus as a Man set under authority and to accept that place for ourselves is another testimony of great faith.

Never is the believer exhorted to disobey any subordinate authority, but rather always to obey God, the supreme authority. When one must go contrary to the demands of a subordinate authority, it is only in order to render obedience to the highest authority. Disobedience is never countenanced in Scripture. If there is true subjection to God and Christ, who has been exalted to the preeminent place in Manhood while never relinquishing His Deity, there will be manifest and consistent subjection to all other authority established by God.

The government, employers, assembly, parents and husbands are each invested with authority from God. Our subjection to Him will be readily discerned if we honor and submit to these delegated authorities. For one to claim obedience and subjection to God while manifestly flaunting, taunting, and otherwise despising God's established authority is mockery and rebellion. Compare 2 Peter 2:10 and Jude 8, 9.

Those who occupy positions of authority are to be prayed for, honored and obeyed, not resisted, spoken evil of, or railed against. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 6:1-8; Col. 3:18-25; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:17,18.) The manner in which they use or abuse that authority is a matter for which they must give account to God.

As God found immeasurable delight in His Son who in obedience fulfilled all His will, so, too, He will find pleasure in us as we bow to His faithful Word and give evidence that we are persons set under authority.

Features of great faith are:

1. Accepting Christ's Word to us and of us.
2. Taking the place of meriting no blessing because of what we are, yet claiming it because of who He is.
3. Loving and humbly serving the people of God.
4. Valuing the place of subjection the Lord Jesus assumed.
5. Following in the same path as the Lord Jesus.

Such may appear to be weakness by the world's standards, but it is, in fact, the fruit of great faith in which God finds delight.

Bible Challenger-05-May V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the name of a city of Judah that came into great renown for reasons other than the extent of its borders. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 140.)

1. An identifying physical feature of a great prophet referred to by certain youths in an unkind manner. [2]
2. Something not normally thought of as planted, thereby attesting to the greatness of the planter. [1]
3. That which superabounded on the feet of a certain man of great stature. [1]
4. That which is more deceitful and wicked than the human mind can fathom. [1]
5. Those parts of a man in which the Lord taketh not pleasure. [1]
6. The place where a sorely tried man thought the shadow of death lay upon him. [1]
7. That which a virtuous woman lays to the spindle and distaff. [2]
8. That which the preacher identified as vanity since it is not satisfied with riches. [1]
9. Something out of which proceeds blessing and cursing, which things ought not so to be. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-04-April Answers V.08

1. Gate Acts 12:14

2. Loud instruments 2 Chron. 30:21

3. Ark of God 2 Sam. 6:12

4. Dedication of the wall Neh. 12:27

5. No manner of hurt Dan. 6:23

6. Eat their meat Acts 2:46

7. Stony ground Mark 4:16

8. Seasons Acts 14:17

"Serve the Lord with GLADNESS: come before His presence with singing." Psa. 100:2.

General Law

People talk about general laws, but I do not admit any general law without constant power exercised. God has blown on general laws in connection with Christian faith, for resurrection is certainly no general law. Christianity is based on resurrection, yet certainly resurrection is not the natural consequence of death. The general way in nature is all well, but Christianity is not nature. So science can neither explain nor contradict Christianity.

Dispensations

The word "dispensation" means literally "administration of a house," or an "economy." Hence it is an ordered dealing with men by God in the varied administration of His ways at different times. In reviewing God's administrations with man, we may notice the state of innocence in Eden, though it hardly partook of the character of a dispensation. One commandment was given to Adam and Eve, and obedience was required, the penalty being announced if they failed.

This was followed by the lengthy period of nearly 1600 years till the flood—a time of no ordered dealing of God with men, during which men corrupted their way, and the earth was filled with violence.

Then the world was spoken to by God in the person of Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness. Their repentance was waited for in long-suffering mercy while the ark was being prepared. (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.) They did not repent and the old world was destroyed.

In the world after the flood, government of man by his fellow was established by God. A knowledge of God, as a God who judged evil, was spread abroad by the descendants of Noah. Traditions of the flood are found all over the earth. This was an additional testimony for God. Then followed the division of the earth into various nations and tribes, according to their families and tongues. Among these, ignorance of God prevailed in spite of the testimony of God's power and divinity, and the admonition of conscience spoken of in Rom. 1 and 2.

About 360 years after the deluge, the Patriarchal Age was begun by the call of Abraham, a new and sovereign dealing of God; but this was confined to Abraham and his descendants.

Dispensation of the Law

The Dispensation of the Law followed, strictly the first publicly ordered system of God's dealing with men, and administered by angels. The oracles of God were given to a nation, the only nation in all the earth that God had known in this way (Amos 3:2). It was the dispensation of "Do this and live and be blessed; disobey and be cursed." This dispensation had three phases:

1. About 400 years under the Judges, when God would have been their king, but during which time everyone did that which was right in his own eyes 500 years as a kingdom under royalty.
2. 600 years from the captivity to the coming of Christ. Connected with this was prophetic testimony; the law and the prophets were until John (Luke 16:16).
3. During this Dispensation of Law, the Times of the Gentiles commenced in the political supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold and king of kings (Dan. 2:37, 38). They still run their course, and will continue until the Lord Jesus commences His reign.

Dispensation of Grace and Truth

The Dispensation of Grace and Truth commenced after the preaching of John by the advent of Christ. During this economy the gospel is preached to every creature under heaven. The calling out of the Church takes place, extending as a parenthesis from the day of Pentecost to the rapture of the saints. (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.) Paul had a special "dispensation" committed to him by God, both as to the gospel and to fulfill the Word of God by the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2, 3; Col. 1:25, 26.)

Dispensation of the Reign of Christ

The Dispensation of the Reign of Christ is over the earth during the millennium. It is also called "the dispensation of the fullness of times." (Eph. 1:10; Rev. 20:1-6.)

Under these varied administrations the goodness and faithfulness of God shine out, and the failure of man is everywhere made manifest.

The LORD thy God led thee...

in the wilderness, to humble thee,

and to prove thee, to know

what was in thine heart.

Deuteronomy 8:2

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will you explain the difference between suffering with Christ, and suffering for Christ?

ANSWER: Suffering with Christ is what is necessarily involved in our being Christians. Every believer suffers with Christ simply because he is Christ's. Possessing Christ as his life and having His Spirit in him, he cannot evade the suffering that belongs to the Christian position. Christ suffered for being a righteous man in an unrighteous world. So do those who follow Him. It is what is spoken of in Rom. 8:17, where the suffering and being glorified with Him go together. The one depends on the other, and cannot be separated from it.

Suffering for Christ is what comes upon us in connection with devotedness to Christ. Hence, the more devoted any are to Christ and His interests, the more they have to suffer for Him. This is privilege and not necessity being given to us. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Phil. 1:29. It is the kind of thing we read of in Acts 5:41, where Peter and those with him "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

“Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged”

Matthew 7:1MAT 7:1

These words are often applied to hinder a sound judgment as to the plain paths of right and wrong. If a person is walking in that which I know by the Word of God to be wrong, I must judge that he is walking wrong, or give up my judgment of right and wrong. I may trust that he may be misled, or that difficulties and temptations may have overcome him, and consider myself lest I also be tempted—think the best I can of him—but I cannot put evil for good, and good for evil.

There can be no right motive to do what is wrong, or to do what is contrary to God's will. There may be ignorance, lack of light in the conscience, and I may and ought to take all this into account, but I cannot say that the person is not doing wrong.

Woe be to me if for any personal consideration I weaken my own sense that a wrong path is a wrong one. The Christian must be very careful not to allow any reasoning to modify any submission of heart and conscience to God's judgment of good and evil. As regards the Church of God, the Scriptures plainly declare we are to judge them that are within; them that are without, God judges.

The imputation of motives to persons and the habit of forming an opinion on the conduct of others is wrong. This is what the Lord guards us against in Matt. 7:1. But concerning the duty of not allowing evil in the house of God—it is positively commanded to us not to allow it.

Some people use this verse to teach that we should not judge whether a person is a Christian. This is a misapplication of this verse and is founded on a fundamental mistake—that a person is a Christian unless proved to the contrary. We know that a person is a Christian because we can see by their life the evidence of their faith in Christ. It is "by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7:20.

It is a most horrible principle that we cannot know who are God's children and Christ's disciples. It destroys all godly affections. If the children of a family were told that they could not know, and ought not to judge, who are their brothers and sisters, what would become of family affections? The Lord has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

How can this be if I do not know who are disciples, and towards whom their love is to be exercised? We must know each other as children of God to love as brethren. He who objects to judging that such and such are God's children objects to the love of the brethren. He is rejecting the spiritual affections on which the Lord and Scripture so much insist.

There is a wrong spirit of judgment if I occupy myself needlessly in thinking of others, and expressing an opinion of them. If in questionable cases I ascribe, even in my mind, wrong motives—if I do not hope in such cases that a right motive is at the bottom—I am in the spirit of judgment and away from God. If severity of judgment with a person, when I am bound to judge he is faulty, possesses my soul, this is not the Spirit of God. But to weaken the plain, unequivocal and

avowed estimate of right and wrong under pretense of not judging—to deny the knowledge of one another and mutual love among the saints, under pretense that we have not a right to judge, is of the enemy. It is a mere cover to a man's conscience to avoid the conscious pressure of that judgment on himself.

If saints maintain a divine standard of right and wrong, I must judge them who do wrong to be doing so. I am not always called to occupy myself about their actions, but if so occupied, I must judge according to the Word of God. If I am to love the disciples of Jesus, the saints of God, "the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2), I must know who they are. If there is a disposition to distrust or to impute motives, then the spirit of judgment is at work which is not the Spirit of God. Words of Truth

Weakness Is No Hindrance

God takes up the weakest instruments to accomplish His mightiest ends:

A rod Ex. 4:2

A ram's horn Josh. 6:4

A shepherd's sling 1 Sam. 17:40

A cake of barley bread Judg. 7:13

An earthen pitcher Judg. 7:20

The jawbone of an ass Judg. 15:15

Anything, in short, when used of God, will do the appointed work; He can use a crawling worm as well as a scorching sun, a gourd as well as a vehement east wind (Jonah 4:7, 8).

Even the feeblest expression or exhibition of Christ, in the life or worship of a saint, is an odor of a sweet smell, in which God is well-pleased.

Entire confidence in the Lord's love gives courage to do the Lord's will.

It is not what I am to do, but what He will do with me.

O Lord, Thou art our Father;

we are the clay, and Thou our potter;

and we all are the work of Thy hand.

Isa. 64:8

Self-Occupation

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

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

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

Bible Challenger Clues-05-May V.08

1. 2 Kings; 2. Psalms; 3. 2 Samuel; 4. Jeremiah; 5. Psalms; 6. Job; 7. Proverbs; 8. Ecclesiastes; 9. James.

The Dependent One

Psalms 16:2, 3; 34:2-3

Psa. 16 expresses the perfectness of Messiah's dependence on Jehovah, shown in His humiliation here on earth (Heb. 2), and His vindication in resurrection (Acts 2). So, while a divine person, yet taking the place of a servant, His soul said to Jehovah, "Thou art My Lord: My goodness extendeth not to Thee." It is the expression of His self-renunciation as man, which was in truth His moral glory. (Compare Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18, 19.)

On the other hand, He said, "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all My delight." This He expressed in His baptism, when He thus fulfilled all righteousness and identified Himself in grace with the godly in Israel. As man, He did not exalt Himself, but gave the entire glory to God. This was not in austere distance from the despised remnant who bowed to the testimony of John the Baptist, but graciously entering into and sympathizing with their true place before God. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Bible Witness and Review

EDITORIAL: A Time of Many Nations

In Psa. 83 a confederacy of ten nations of the enemies of God joins together seeking to blot out the name of Israel from being a nation. The last one mentioned is Assur, or Assyria. Assyria is an old enemy of Israel. About 700 B.C. God allowed Assyria to carry the ten tribes into captivity when they became idolatrous. Assyria is on the north of Israel, and even now those lands to the north of Israel are some of the strongest and most violent of Israel's enemies.

In these last two or three decades, we have seen many nations arise. First it was in Africa that different tribes asserted their rights and power for independence, and now Russia has broken up into numerous independent nations. The struggle is on in southeastern Europe forming many more nations.

What does the Bible have to say about these things? Should we be surprised, or should we have been expecting these things to take place? Psa. 83 mentioned above is prophetic. In fact, all the Psalms are prophetic. There will be a confederacy of nations against Israel, but Israel first had to be again in the land. She has been recognized as a nation for more than 40 years, and her enemies are many.

The Lord Jesus spoke this in a parable in Luke 21:29. "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees." The fig tree is the well-known symbol of Israel as a nation. Since Israel is symbolized as a nation by a tree, "all the trees" would mean other nations. Not only has Israel become a recognized nation, but now many other nations have come into existence. It is a time of many nations.

Sometimes people want independence; then they want to get together. Independence has certain advantages, but power is in numbers. Weakness forces nations to associate or form a confederacy. The recent war in the Persian Gulf area proved the need for an alliance of nations. How long has it lasted? National treaties always break down.

Since the Persian Gulf War, both Israel and the United States have had a change in the administration, while Syria, Iraq and Cuba still have the same leaders in control. Do we know and rest in the fact that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"?

The unrest and the uncertainty of either an independent nation or a confederacy of nations is just what we can expect to happen. The Lord has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Ezek. 21:27. His coming to reign draws near. Ed.

Psalm 101 and the World

Eight verses to consider in Psalm 101 about worldly influences such as television.

1. "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing."

Does it deaden our responses to the Word of God?

2. "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

Does the amusement format lower our resistance to evil?

3. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."

Do we tolerate evil for a little good?

4. "A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person."

Do we relate to evil people we would not allow in our homes?

5. "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer."

Does it provide access to the world's system in its attitude toward God?

6. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve Me."

Does it rob us of our God-given allotment of time?

7. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within My house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in My sight."

Does it identify us in practice with the wicked?

8. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord."

Is there a deadening effect, bringing to mind new lows of immorality?

L. LaBenne

"finally, brethren,

whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure,
whatsoever things are lovely,
whatsoever things are of good report;
if there be any virtue,
and if there be any praise,
think on these things."

Phil. 4:8

God's Grand Plan

Some Prophetic Hints

by D. Rule

It is so easy to open up the Word of God to find verses or subjects that have to do with ourselves— how we can enjoy our blessings, how the Lord can solve some particular problem or guide us in a decision we must make. And yet, if we really want to know the heart of God, it is extremely important for us to enjoy, with God, His Word—not bits and pieces, but all of it.

A tremendous amount of the Word of God has a prophetic character to it. We are going to look at a few things to help us in studying prophecy. There is much to enjoy and to profit from the prophetic character of the Word of God.

When was the last time you read through the prophetic books starting with Isaiah to the end of the Old Testament? Your answer will tell you whether or not you are enjoying a large portion of the Word that God has given you for your profit.

Three Destinies

All men face one of three eternal destinies: heaven, earth, or hell. Your destiny is heaven with Christ or hell with Satan. God is now preparing a heavenly people for His Son. If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, your destiny is heaven, and if you have refused Him it is hell. But there are people whose destiny is neither heaven or hell, for God is concerned also with preparing for Himself an earthly people. Prophecy concerns the earth and God's dealings with His earthly people, that is, Israel and all other nations who will populate the earth in a coming day.

When we go back to the Old Testament and follow Israel's history, we learn from it tremendous insights about what is still going to take place in the future. What do I mean by that? Jehovah put before His people certain promises and He said that if they were obedient, He would take care of them, and if they did not obey, then certain things were going to happen. And they did happen. God's moral ways never change. So the lessons not learned in the past by His earthly people must be learned in the future. And God's promises not yet fulfilled will be fulfilled.

Two Enemies

In the history of God's earthly people we learn that they had two mighty enemies. The first enemy was called the Assyrian. The second enemy was the Babylonian. To distinguish the two enemies is very important in understanding God's ways in the future. When the Assyrian was the enemy of God's people, God was in relationship to them and He owned them as His own people. I want to repeat that: when the Assyrian was the enemy of the people of God, Jehovah God recognized them as His people. He could call them His servant and use the Assyrian to chastise them, to punish them for being unfaithful to Him. But He still owned them as His people and Judah could never be taken over by the Assyrian.

But then there came a time when the Lord had to say, I can't recognize them as My people anymore. So He wrote over them the word, Lo-ammi, which means: not My people. After He wrote those words over Israel they had a new enemy, the Babylonian. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came and he was able to conquer the land of Israel totally and take the people out of the land into captivity. That is important to the understanding of God's ways, because God is going to deal again with His earthly people and when He does, He is going to deal with the same two enemies.

First the enemy is going to be the descendants of the Babylonian empire and the empires that followed it. During this time, Israel still has written over it, Lo-ammi: not My people. The enemy will have power over the professed people of God when He is not recognizing them as such.

Later God will recognize Israel again as His people, but He will in the future, as in the past, again use the Assyrian to chastise them. Yet He will say that they are His people and the Assyrian cannot do as he wishes. God will use him to punish and teach the people of Israel through chastisement, but the enemy is not going to take over the people of God.

The Split in Israel

What else do we see in the history of God's people? He brought them into a wonderful land and told them that they were His people; He loved them and He would take care of them. But then we find that those same people, in their unfaithfulness, split into two groups. They split into two parts and became the ten tribes that are called Israel, and the two other tribes that are called Judah. In the midst of that collection of ten and two, there was also a small number out of all twelve tribes that were looked at as faithful to the Lord. They were looked at as a remnant of the people. As in Israel's past, so in Israel's future we see a faithful few—a remnant of the people. As we read and enjoy the prophetic word we see the remnant who follow the Lord taken up and dealt with in a special way by the Lord.

God's Orderly Way

In God's ways with man He is very orderly. God deals with different companies at different times. As we read our Bibles, we need to notice carefully who He is talking to or talking about.

In His ways with His earthly people, God deals first with the remnant, then the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, then the ten tribes, and finally He makes them to be again one united nation of twelve tribes.

God distinguishes between the earth and the world. Isa. 26:9 says: "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The earth includes Israel, the Roman Empire and the other nations that had to do with Israel at the time our Lord Jesus was here. The world includes all the rest of the people on the planet earth. In prophecy we see God judging the earth while the rest of the world looks on and learns righteousness. In the Revelation "a fourth part of the earth" means Israel and "a third part of the earth" means the Roman Empire.

In God's ways of judgment it's as if He says to a nation, It's your turn; you come. He brings them into His land and deals with them there. Then He calls another group of nations and says, Now it's your turn, and He deals with them there. He deals with the whole of the earth in this way.

God's ways in blessing are like a stone dropped in a pond. It starts at a point and then includes increasing circles. It begins at Mount Zion, and then spreads to the beloved city of the Lord, Jerusalem. Then He has a little larger circle called Judah, the two tribes and where they lived, then the whole land of Israel, then the earth, and finally the whole world comes into blessing. As we read the prophetic word and seek to enter into God's thoughts and heart about it, it is extremely important, and enjoyable too, for us to see which circle God is dealing with.

Isaiah and Revelation

The most comprehensive book of prophecy is Isaiah. Revelation, on the other hand, is rather special as a prophetic book. It completes the prophetic word by taking up subjects that could not be known until Christ came and the Church was formed. The Old Testament prophets give us prophecy viewed from the earth, while John in the Revelation is taken, in spirit, into heaven so that we may view prophecy as seen from heaven.

Prophecy and Christianity

God introduced Christianity into the earth; it was something unknown in Old Testament times. The prophets had nothing to say about it, so God, to complete His prophetic word, gives us an extra book in the New Testament. It shows us how God deals with the professing Church and how it fits in with other dealings with the earth. In the seven churches of Rev. 2 and 3 we see the moral history of the Church on earth. But after the Lord Jesus calls us and all the believers home to heaven, there will still be a large body of people on earth which professes to be the Church. So God takes up that group and shows us what is going to happen to them. We read about a false prophet and we read about Babylon the great, things that the Church had become on the earth, and about various leaders that interact with it. It shows us how God deals with it in judgment to bring it to its end.

Revelation

You can divide the book of Revelation right in the middle. There are twenty-two chapters. Take the first eleven and you will find that they are in chronological order; that is, the Spirit of God takes events one after another right through His dealings with the earth. From the twelfth chapter to the end He takes up things by topics, not chronologically. Sometimes the topic is a person or a nation, and sometimes it is a subject, such as the coming of the Lord and what the consequences of that coming are going to be for the earth, or a description of what the future states of Jerusalem and Israel are going to look like.

Isaiah

Let us look at Isa. 1:1: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." We have a key right here. God says that He is going to tell them what His purposes are with respect to Judah and Jerusalem. "In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me." God tells us that He has taken Jerusalem, Judah and His people and has nourished them and cared for them and looked after them, and yet they have rebelled against Him. So then He takes up their case as a rebellious people.

The End of the Story

Have you ever started to read a book and partway through you have said, "I can't wait; I have to see how it's going to end"? So you go to the last chapter to see how it ends and then you can finish reading the book. We don't have time to read all of Isaiah, but let's find out how it ends. Turn to the last chapter of Isaiah, verse 10, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.... For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river.... And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem."

We see that it will end well for Israel but also notice those words, "For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." That's the character of what is coming for the earth and that's how Isaiah presents it to us. As you read through it you will see how He takes different groups of nations and people and shows them to us, telling us He is going to test this people and see what they are. It is the test of fire and judgment in the earth. Our works are going to be tested by the fire of God, to see what kind of works they are, whether they are gold, silver and precious stones, or wood, hay and stubble. So the nations of the earth are going to be brought under the fire of God's hand and He's going to test them to see of what sort those people are. It says that many shall be slain of the Lord—that is, many shall not stand the test of what is brought before them.

Daniel

Daniel's prophecy covers the period of time when God says to Israel, Lo-ammi (not My people). When He says that, the Babylonian and the three other world empires which followed it are brought before us. For this period of time called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), He removes Israel from being the center of His earthly government and allows the Gentile powers to have the reign over the earth. The three powers which followed the Babylonian are the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman. Alexander the Great only reigned a few years, and when he died his Greek empire was broken up into four parts. Two parts, the northern part and the southern part, continued on in history and prophecy. From Daniel's prophecy we learn that they, the king of the north and the king of the south, will rise again before God and man.

When our Lord Jesus was here, the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, was in power. What's God going to do? God is going to put the earth back as it was before His eyes at the time His Son was crucified.

And so He revives the Roman Empire and establishes its power in the land. Also, His people were in the land when His Son was crucified but they were apostate; they rejected Him. So these people are brought back and put on the stage. But they are people who will have nothing to do with Him just as when the Lord Jesus was here.

A Remnant

In the midst of this people is a small group that has faith in Him. It isn't very large. I'm always impressed when I read about Anna in Luke's gospel. She was a woman over one hundred years old, yet it says of her that she spoke to all in Jerusalem that were looking for the Lord. If a woman of that age could speak to all looking for the Messiah, there must not have been very many. But there were a few, and the Lord so desired and valued them that some of them are spoken of by name. The Lord will have a few faithful ones to be a witness for Him at the time when He resets the stage to have His dealings with the earth.

Judgment Before Blessing

First the Lord must cleanse the land of all its defilement and remove from it in judgment all those who have rejected Him and followed a false Christ. He sends a desolator through the land and scrubs the land clean. He has to take out of His land all that defiles. He can't bring His people into blessing and He can't bring Jerusalem into blessing with all the pollution and abominations in the land.

When the Lord was cast out we know Pilate was there; we know Herod was there; we know the Jewish leaders were there, but they were all against Christ. Men of like character are going to be there again, but what is He going to do? He takes before His eye the ones that we know of as the beast and the false prophet and says: I'm going to remove them in judgment from My land first. And He does that.

We see some of these events in Daniel, but remember Daniel couldn't see all the way to the end. If you go to the last chapter of Daniel, you find that there was much yet to be done, beyond what Daniel could see, beyond what we call the seventieth week of Daniel. Daniel's vision ends with, "Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," and, "Blessed is he that waiteth." We must look to other prophets to see how the people are delivered from their final enemies and made the center of blessing for the whole earth.

The Psalms

Many of us read the Psalms, finding verses here and there which we enjoy and apply to ourselves. That is fine. But at the same time I hope we learn to read it as the thoughts and feelings of God's people when God, in that future day, is dealing with His land and His people in judgment. The Psalms express their hopes, their feelings, their insecurity, and their praise as they pass through and then look back on the Lord's ways with them in chastisement and then blessing.

You don't get true Christian thoughts out of the Psalms because they do not express the Christian's position in Christ. You and I can and should enjoy a settled peace now that they won't enjoy in those future days of agony and uncertainty as the Lord is dealing with them.

Teaching Confidence

God takes His people and says, I know how you feel. Yet they are brought to have confidence in the Lord. So He takes a few of His own and the Lord Jesus comes back to His own and reveals Himself to them secretly and says, I'm going to be with you now. You're going to be My people and I'm going to be with you; yet, you have to learn some things first.

So He again brings onto the stage, as it were, the Assyrian and says, This is the rod of My anger. This is the one that I used to chastise you before and I'm still going to use him. He brings him back on the scene, for they must feel the hand of the chastisement of the Lord.

Jacob's Trouble

Jer. 30:4: "These are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah." Again notice that it concerns Israel and Judah. It isn't the city of Jerusalem that's before Him, but it's Israel and Judah. "For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace." He wants us to understand how they are feeling. His people are now in the land, and the Lord is having His work of judgment with their land and all the nations of the earth about it. They are trembling. There is fear and turmoil. Some of these feelings are expressed in the Psalms. Then we read: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

To understand this chapter, we need to recall what Jacob's trouble was. He was a man who wanted the blessing of God, wasn't he? But what was the problem in his life? Jacob wanted the blessing of God, but he thought he could get it by his own efforts. He even resorted to deceitful means to try to get it. Maybe you have had Jacob's trouble too. Maybe you feel like you can earn or that you deserve the blessing of God, so you strive after it and seek it with all the energy of your nature. Jacob schemed to get the blessing, but God had to teach Jacob that he could never get the blessing by striving for it. He had to learn that God was the Blessor according to His own heart of loving-kindness. Man only gets into trouble when he strives for himself.

God's earthly people haven't learned that lesson yet. They are now trying to secure their land and their blessing by their own efforts. But all twelve tribes will be brought into the land and then shall come a time of fear, great trembling and paleness in anticipation of all these enemies that are coming down upon their land. They are there and the Lord is there and they learn that the Lord is with them. He says to them in Jer. 30:10, "Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee."

Fellow Christians, have we learned the lessons Israel will learn through Jacob's trouble? Israel has to go through it, and as we read the Word of God, we can apply these things to our own lives. Prophecy is not a dry, unintelligible thing. From it we learn the moral ways of God with His people and with us.

Here He says, "I will save thee." They have to learn to trust Him to save them. Maybe you need to learn that; maybe I need to learn that in my life. When they learn to trust in the Lord and not in themselves, then, in spite of their apparent helpless position of the enemy coming and they with unwallled villages, we read: "Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." Why? "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."

The dispensational dealings and covenants of God with man change with time, but His moral ways are always constant. As you study prophecy you learn His ways with man, including yourself.

Bible Challenger Clues-05-May V.08

1. Judges; 2. Proverbs; 3. Leviticus; 4. Genesis; 5. Proverbs; 6. Proverbs; 7. Psalms; 8. Song of Solomon; 9. Numbers.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What does it mean to "grieve" and to "quench" the Spirit of God?

ANSWER: The allowance of flesh in the least degree in a Christian is to grieve the Spirit of God by which he has been sealed until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). He may grieve Him in many ways. The rejection of the light which God has given and worldliness grieve Him. In fact, everything that has not Christ for its motive and object must grieve God's Spirit and hinder our growth and communion.

To quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19) is to hinder His free action in the members of Christ in the assembly. While there are special permanent gifts in the Church (Eph. 4:11), there are also the "joints and bands" which work effectually in the measure of every part, and by which the body of Christ increases. If they are hindered in true spiritual service, the Spirit of God is quenched.

There are dangers to be avoided on both sides. On one side, the danger is that because there is liberty "that all may learn, and all may be comforted," there may be the undervaluing of special gifts, which the ascended Christ has provided for His body, the Church. On the other side, there is the danger of quenching the Spirit in the various helps, joints and bands by which nourishment is ministered in the body of Christ, by putting special ministry in the place of the free action of the Holy Spirit in the members of Christ. Both are to be cherished, and the most spiritual are those who will value all that God gives.

In 1 Thess. 5:20, 21, the Apostle shows it is ministry he has in mind, while in verse 12 he exhorts them to own those who labor among them and esteem them highly in love for their work's sake. In verses 19-21 they were not to quench the Spirit in any, but at the same time to "prove all things" which were said and "hold fast that which is good."

Prophecy

The scriptural use of the term "prophecy" is in no way confined to foretelling events, nor is that its primary significance. It includes any communication which God saw fit to make either to His own people or to any of the nations.

God said to Abimelech concerning Abraham, "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee." Gen. 20:7. Aaron was called the prophet of Moses (Ex. 7:1). God's power came at times upon individuals who were not recognized as prophets, and they prophesied, as, for instance, Saul in 1 Sam. 10:10, 11.

Prophecy in Israel became the means, through mercy, of God's communication to the people when the priesthood with Urim and Thummim had utterly broken down. It came in by Samuel. Elijah and Elisha prophesied in the midst of apostate Israel.

Nathan and John the Baptist were also prophets. Of some of the prophets no prophecies are recorded, while others are only known to us by what they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament we read that Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied. Agabus foretold that Paul would be bound at Jerusalem and be delivered to the Gentiles (Acts 21:9-11).

In the New Testament prophesying is also used in a different sense. The word is from a Greek word meaning "to speak forth." A prophet may therefore be described as a spokesman of God. Prophecy of this kind is a gift in the Church for the edifying of the saints, bringing God's Word with power upon their consciences and hearts. It is the gift of most importance in the Church (1 Cor. 14:24, 31, 39, 1-5; 1 Thess. 5:20).

In Rom. 16:26, the writings of the New Testament are spoken of as prophetic scriptures, and the assembly is built on the foundation laid by the apostles and New Testament prophets (Eph. 2:20), that is, the truth taught by them. Bible Dictionary

God's Inspired Word

"Every scripture is divinely inspired [God-breathed], and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 JND.

As Jehovah magnified His Word above all His name, so did our Lord take His stand on the written Word, the Scriptures, as the most authoritative of all testimonies. All Scripture—every part of it—is God-inspired for permanence, and the true end of controversy for those that believe. But those who do not believe must learn their sin and folly in the judgment.

The question is in no way whether the writers knew or did not know what they wrote, but whether they were inspired of God to write it. "Every scripture" is God-breathed. This alone makes it God's Word, not its known truth or usefulness, but His inspiring it, and this we have in every scripture.

Some writers may be elevated and others simple, some may be pathetic and others severe, but all are God-inspired. The plain evidence is that they are part of the Scriptures. In the New Testament we have differences with as wide a range as the Epistle of James from those of Paul, and the Gospel of Mark from that of John. But they are as equally inspired, as their writings are part of the Scriptures. Inspiration of God is a fact, and does not admit of varying degrees.

It is quite within the power of the Holy Spirit in giving God's Word to adopt the style of each individual writer. But no effort on a writer's part could make his words to be God's. Even before an adversary, the Lord told the twelve to have no anxiety how or what to speak, for in the hour of need it should be given. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matt. 10:20.

How much more was that divine energy needed and given, when it was not their exoneration in question, but the communication of God's mind and will for His own and forever! Indeed, it is no more than a certain fact, for every scripture is God-inspired.

Speculation into the "how" of inspiration is a prying into what is not revealed and therefore unwise and unbecoming. We are not told how God inspired the writers of the Scriptures. It is probable that none could know except those who were so energized. Theories "mechanical" or "dynamical" are out of place and explain nothing. As 1 Cor. 2 maintains the principle, the necessity, and the fact of Spirit-taught words, so 2 Tim. 3:16 speaks, not of the revelation before the mind only, but of "Scripture" and declares it as inspired of God. This is the all-important truth conveyed.

It is God Himself in Scripture that removes all doubt about Scripture and every part of it. One can conceive no other communication more distinct or conclusive. The language is as plain as its aim is spiritually momentous, and its intimation is of the utmost practical interest and value.

Young Christian

Bible Challenger-06-June V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the name of a city beyond Jordan where many people were baptized. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 160.)

1. A multitude of these was once found in a strange place, prompting the putting forth of a riddle. [1]
2. The way of one of these airborne creatures was an astonishment to an observer of many things. [1]
3. One of several creeping things that were to be reckoned unclean to the Israelites. [1]
4. A father likened one of his sons to this animal because of the giving of goodly words. [1]
5. A creature that sluggards ought well to emulate. [1]
6. An animal robbed of her whelps that is deemed less ferocious than a fool in his folly. [1]
7. A creature that stops her ear and hears not the voice of charmers. [1]
8. A creature whose natural color has become the standard for blackness. [1]
9. The mouth of this creature was opened to complain of a threefold beating. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-05-May Answers V.08

1. Bald head 2 Kings 2:23
2. Ear Psa. 94:9
3. Toes 2 Sam. 21:20
4. Heart Jer. 17:9
5. Legs Psa. 147:10
6. Eyelids Job 16:16
7. Her hands Prov. 31:19
8. Eye Eccl. 4:8
9. Mouth James 3:10

"But thou, BETHLEHEM Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2.

The Study of the Word

I am daily more convinced that the study of the Word is the only sure way to growth and strength. The true way to get interested in the Word is to feel you need its counsel to guide and help you. The Word is the only thing for faith to cling to, and it is in depending on God's Word, because it is God's Word, that the soul is strengthened in God, and not from the blessings, merely, which flow from keeping the Word. If we felt it more a journey of faith, we should be more unceasing in seeking for the Word, as the trelliswork on which our faith might climb.

Settled Peace

A dead and risen Christ is the groundwork of salvation. He "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25.

To see Jesus, by the eye of faith, nailed to the cross and seated on the throne, must give solid peace to the conscience and perfect liberty to the heart. We can look into the tomb and see it empty; we can look up to the throne and see it occupied, and go on our way rejoicing.

The Lord Jesus settled everything on the cross in behalf of His people, and the proof of this settlement is that He is now at the right hand of God. A risen Christ is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption, and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality.

We did not make peace, and never could make it. Indeed, any effort on our part could only tend more fully to manifest us as peace breakers. But Christ having made peace by the blood of His cross, has taken His seat on high, triumphant over every enemy. By Him God preaches peace.

The word of the gospel conveys this peace, and the soul that believes the gospel has peace—settled peace before God, for Christ is his peace. (Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20.)

In this way God has not only satisfied His own claims, but in so doing He has found out a divinely righteous way through which His boundless affections may flow down to the guiltiest of Adam's guilty progeny.

EDITORIAL: the Center of the Earth

Twelve countries whose names are found in the Bible still exist today. There may be more. How many of them can you name? Three are in Africa and three in Europe, and the other six that we have found are in Asia.

India is the country that is farthest east, and Spain the one most westward. Approximately the most central country is Israel. This is just as it should be, for that land is the center of God's purposes and counsels for the earth.

It is in that land that God has determined to place His Son upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2). When Christ came the first time, He was born in that land and He lived, died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven from that land.

When the Lord comes to this earth the next time, where will He be seen? The last book in the Old Testament says, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 3:1. Also Zechariah writes, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh... and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." (Chapter 14.)

These scriptures clearly tell us where the Lord Jesus Christ will be seen when He comes in power and glory to take possession of the earth. Meanwhile, the nations continue in restlessness and struggle in terrorism and warfare. Only the Lord can bring peace to this troubled earth. In writing of this, Isa. 32:1,17 say, "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment... and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

A brother writing from Australia in a letter received just a few days ago says, "Nobody is safe here." Egypt, Libya, Syria, Persia, and the Arab countries are suspect in any terrorism that breaks out. These nations named in the Bible have continued for a long time, as well as others now on the earth that are even called Super Powers. Is our hope, our expectation for peace and assurance in them? No! What then? "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13. Ed.

Proverbs 22:6:

"Train up a child in the way he should go.

" Satan does not wait till children grow up—

why should you?

Two Glories

The exaltation of Christ and the baptism of the Spirit are two facts which distinguish Christianity and which outshine all others on the day of its birth.

It was reserved, however, for the Apostle Paul to unfold, in its fullness, "the glorious gospel of Christ." (2 Cor. 4:4.) The melody of the glad tidings, which Paul is pleased to call "my gospel," was the proclamation of a Man in the glory.

The Man in the glory is the chief element of "the mystery" which, presented fully in Ephesians and Colossians, completes the Word of God. It filled up the whole circle of Scripture subjects. If he published His humiliation and His passion, he was not content until he presented Jesus as the Man in glory. The Old Testament might speak of His exaltation to the Hill of Zion, but He who as Man could satisfy and glorify God about sin, He would exalt to the highest, brightest place in His universe. Zion's Hill was not high enough for that blessed One who "humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross." He must have a place far above all heavens (Eph. 1:4).

First you have Him presented in Scripture in His divine glory as Son of God among men, a deeply blessed truth holding the heart with delight. Then when the cross is past, the grave left and the victory won, the Spirit of God is pleased to dwell on a truth never before named in Scripture—truth which is the outstanding characteristic of Christianity. It is a Man in the glory of God, consequent upon the finished work of the cross where our sins were borne and God glorified.

The Man of Sycar is the center of this bright and blessed scene. How much hangs upon this for His own. The work, in virtue of which He is there, was for us, so we are to be His companions in that glory. Draw the veil and hear Him speaking to His Father, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." (See also Heb. 2:10; Rom. 5:2; Rev. 21:9-27.)

Who can read the Acts (a supplement to the gospels, an introduction to the epistles, and a history of the Church in the beginning) without recognizing the presence, indwelling, operation and guidance of the Holy Spirit? That the Spirit wrought in creation and in all dispensations is true as numerous scriptures in the Old and New Testaments witness, but not until a glorified Christ sent Him, had the Spirit come to indwell believers.

It is John, however, who records for us, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:39. In this we see the intimate relation between Jesus being glorified and the Spirit coming. They cannot be separated. We see that at this time the gift of the Spirit was yet future and dependent upon His having His place in glory. Immediately Jesus is up there, the Spirit is down here (Acts 2:33) with and in believers. He had spoken anticipatively in John 14:16,17 saying, "But ye know Him [the Spirit]; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Acts 2 gives us the fulfillment of this. As "with" them, He fills all the house where they are sitting. As "in" them, they are all filled with the Holy Spirit. Would to God it could be said of all who profess His name: "Ye know Him."

F. C. Blount

Spirit— Soul— Body

The Apostle Paul in 1 Thess. 5:23 prays that the saints would be preserved spirit, soul and body until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is a tripartite being, a composite of spirit, soul and body. We read that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

The spirit of man differentiates him from animals, because it is God-conscious and communicates with God, which animals cannot do. (Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27.) Man, therefore, is responsible to God for his whole life. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccl. 12:1. When a man dies, the body shall "return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccl. 12:7. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10.

God has created all men and He has redeemed some. We, as believers in Christ, are not only to recognize God's claim on us as our Creator, but to recognize His claim on us as our Redeemer too. He has a double claim on us. Therefore we do well to seek God's direction in each decision of our life, and ask ourselves if it pleases and honors God, or does it please self? If our will is at work, God cannot bless our actions and, though it may seem to work at the time, we will definitely be the losers in the end. "He cannot deny Himself." 2 Tim. 2:13.

The next consideration is the second part of man, the soul. It is the seat of affections, desires, emotions and the will (in man). God is a God of variety and makes no duplicates. Each of us has a personality that is unique and has a special place in God's creation. We cannot all be farmers, or salesmen, or teachers, or doctors. We cannot all live in the same place nor can we all marry the same person. We all have different tastes and abilities, and God does not expect us to do something we do not have the ability to do, but to use our ability for Him in whatever capacity we are able.

The Lord Jesus Christ, of course, is our primary example. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." 1 Peter 2:21. He had feelings and emotions too: He wept, He rejoiced, He hungered, and He was thirsty, to name a few. See Matt. 11:29 (meekness and lowliness), Matthew 26:38 (sorrowful), and John 12:27 (troubled). His whole life was to the glory of God, and God declared Him as His own Son in whom He was well pleased.

The body is the vehicle that carries the spirit and the soul. The present body is strictly for the earth and is subject to decay as referred to earlier. It gives expression to what is in the heart (Mark 7:21-23). The Spirit of God in Rom. 12:1 beseeches us by the mercies of God to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

In 2 Cor. 5 we read that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

In summary, the spirit always is to have the first consideration, because our ultimate end is to stand before Him. The soul ought to follow in conformity, not to please ourselves, but to please Him who died for us and rose again. This, of course, will be displayed in the body in a happy countenance, a godly walk, selflessness, a love for all saints, and a concern for the lost.

These are things for which we are to aim. May "the very God of peace sanctify you [us] wholly; and I pray God your [our] whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23.

R. Klassen

Bible Challenger Clues-06-June V.08

1. 2 Kings; 2. Numbers; 3. Luke; 4. Ezra; 5. 1 Kings; 6. Proverbs; 7. Jeremiah; 8. Numbers.

Truth for the Times

2 Timothy

J. N. Darby

It is worthy of remark that the moment you get out of the epistles to the churches, you get general epistles and others which treat the Church as in the "last days." In John, there were "many antichrists." In 1 Peter, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." In 1 Timothy, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith." In 2 Timothy, "In the last days perilous times shall come." In Jude, "Certain men are crept in unawares." In 2 Peter, "There shall be false teachers among you."

It is at such a time that God specially commends us to His Word, and He has taken care that we should have in Scripture what would guide us in the last days, when He commends us to it. After Paul's departure grievous wolves would come in, not sparing the flock. He commends us to God and the word of His grace. (Acts 20. See also 2 Tim. 3:14-17.) We need the grace of endurance in such a day. And when one goes through the trial with God beforehand, he meets the enemy and the actual trial when it comes, and the distressing effect upon the heart is gone. God helps and sustains us in it and through it.

One is struck in reading 2 Timothy by the way in which Paul goes back from dispensational glory (as in Ephesians, etc.) down to natural and Jewish relationships of a private and personal character: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience," and, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice."

There is nothing he insists on more than not to lose personal courage in a time of ruin, no matter how great the ruin may be: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." It is always thus. "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord [i.e., the gospel and the testimony generally], nor of me His prisoner." Satan is to be met with confidence as a beaten enemy. This gives steady firmness to the soul. One has the truth, and knows one has it, which gives quiet consciousness, and keeps one in the midst of the attacks of the enemy in an evil day. He is to be thoroughly courageous when all the evil was coming in and was there; he was to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and to "endure hardness." It was when the power of evil had come in that he expects courage.

This is not the tide of blessing which carries on others, but the ebb had come, and individuals were standing and stemming it, and carrying on the testimony of the truth. It was not like the tide of the gospel at the first when "a great door and effectual... opened," but, rather, "be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." It is then we require the power of God and personal courage more than ever. All this is truth for the times in which we live. (There is truth for eternity as well.)

2 Timothy 12ti 1

Chapter 1:9, 10: "Not according to our works," or responsibility. The history of the responsible man ended with the cross. There atonement was made, and God's eternal purposes came out. The cross maintained the responsibility of man and the authority of God. Through it we get out by redemption into the state where it was His purpose and grace to put us before the world began. The Church has nothing to do with this earth except to go through it.

The tide of the gospel had gathered a crowd of people into this wonderful calling, but the tide began to ebb, and all were going back again (ch. 1:15). Positive power is needed in such a time, as well as having the truth. There are two things that are worthy of notice: first, that we now have only the power of good in the midst of evil, but the evil is never set to rights till the Lord comes. The instant the power of good is not there, you get away down the stream. Second, how the good that God set up failed so fast. But this has always been so. The counsels of God as to what He set up were made known, and the power of evil came in at once to frustrate the counsels.

Verse 12: "For the which cause," etc. He was a prisoner for having carried the testimony to the Gentiles. He had entrusted his happiness to Christ, and He would keep it for him against that day.

In verses 13 and 14, he passes on the testimony to Timothy who would commit "the truth" to faithful men who could teach it to others. The Church had ceased to be a guarantee for "the truth," or the doctrines of Christianity and of Christ.

2 Timothy 22ti 2

Defection was the order of the day (see ch. 1:15). In view of such, as of the general state of things, Timothy was to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The Apostle now takes up the case of a soldier, an athlete, and a husbandman. He must not be entangled with the affairs of this life, but be entirely at the disposal of Him who had called him to be a soldier. Striving in the games, he must do so lawfully, and laboring first, be a partaker of the fruits of it.

Paul's gospel and Paul's doctrine are positive things for the last days. We are walking and laboring in the midst of an immense network of systems in which Paul's ministry is totally unknown. For it he suffered as an evildoer unto bonds. How like to Christ's own words are those of the Apostle Paul in verse 10 of chapter 2! "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

We now get corruption of doctrine (ch. 2:16, etc.). There had been falling away. Thus individual responsibility (coupled with God's faithful knowledge of His own) was to depart from iniquity (v. 19). In verse 20 we have ecclesiastical apprehension.

Supposing a person says, "I do not see that so and so is wrong," when Scripture forbids it, those walking in the truth cannot allow this. You cannot take the conscience of the individual for the rule of the Church. Scripture is its guide. Thus we have to walk with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. At the beginning of Christianity we did not find this expression. It was more general then: "All that... call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Now it is "all that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." The Church should have been the witness for the glory of Christ on high, but is now mixed up with all that witnesses against Him here below.

In chapter 2:24, "patient" should be "bearing evil" (JND). "In meekness instructing those that oppose," that they might be recovered to God's will from the snare of the devil.

2 Timothy 32ti 3

The profession of Christianity has become the reproduction, under the name of Christ, of all the horrors and wickedness of heathenism. (Compare ch. 3:1-4 with Rom. 1:29-31.) We are never able to judge rightly as to what we have to do and to meet in the last days, unless we are conscious that we have to do with Satan's power actually. The "Jannes and Jambres" referred to were mere instruments of Satan. But their folly will be shown up, perhaps now, perhaps by and by.

The expression "silly women" is applicable to men of effeminate mind as well as to women. It is the turn and bent of the mind of the persons who are thus beguiled.

We here get Paul's doctrine (v. 10) and the manner of life which flowed from it. "Thou hast fully known [had perfect understanding of it]." It is a like expression to that in Luke 1:3, "Having had perfect understanding." He had fully followed up his teaching, as having learned it thoroughly. The manner of life goes with it.

In verse 12, the emphasis is on "godly"; they will suffer. Things would get worse and worse. It was the old story with the world—either deceiving itself, or being deceived.

He now casts us upon Scripture specially. In verse 15, it is the Old Testament Scriptures which Timothy had known. In verse 16 he embraces "all Scripture." Scripture is the point—that which was written. Peter stamps Paul's writings with the authority of the other Scriptures. He says they are Scripture (2 Peter 3:16). The man who can do this was conscious he was writing Scripture himself.

One may say, "How do you know that Scripture is the Word of God?" I reply, "How do you know that the sun shines?" If you say, "It does not," you manifest the ground you are on, as denying it. If you say "It does," you admit it. God has spoken so as to make Himself known, and to make people know He is speaking.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit comes down and vitalizes all the circumstances through which the new man has to pass. He takes up the little things of everyday Christian life. It is a mistake to suppose the Holy Spirit only engages Himself with great ecclesiastical things. As there is nothing too great for God to give us, so there is nothing too little for God to interest Himself for us.

There is nothing so common as eating and drinking and dress. These things are here taken up most strongly. Even these things become an opportunity for the glory of God. God would never have us to act as a man, but always, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to act as a Christian. Thus the Holy Spirit enters upon the circumstances of daily Christian life, and vitalizes them. When the Apostle writes of these things therefore, the words in which he wrote are the words of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), as much as when the prophet of old uttered his magnificent strains with "Thus saith the Lord," and then sat down to study his own prophecies, to see what they meant and of whom they spoke. (See 1 Peter 1:11.)

2 Timothy 4:21

The man of God is prepared unto every good work, in his having departed from iniquity and purged himself from the vessels of dishonor. In chapter 2 he is equipped, in chapter 3 furnished unto every good work, and in chapter 4 he goes to war. He is to "reprove, rebuke, exhort." This shows the signs of failure which the wisdom of the Spirit foresaw. It was not so much evangelizing as preaching "the word" among professing Christians who would not endure sound doctrine. All was to be done in view of His appearing and His kingdom. Then faithfulness would be manifested.

We should be more earnest than ever in living for Christ, as we are now in the shaking of all things, and the Lord may come at any time now. Worldliness among us is a sign and a source of weakness. It must be "with all long-suffering and doctrine." These are the elements that must give character to our service. If men were left to their own responsibility they would never come in.

So he concludes, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (v. 6). In Philippians 2 it had been, "If I be offered." Things have gone further here. "My release" is the thought, because he had been in the combat as an athlete. He can say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." It was the finishing of his race and wrestling of 1 Cor. 9:24-27. The Lord would preserve him to His heavenly kingdom, if he was not to be preserved on earth (v. 18). Earlier his desire was that he might finish his course with joy (Acts 20). Here he had done it: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." May we covet the same grace!

A boy received a number of parcels from his father to carry. His brother said, "You have too many." "Never mind," he replied. "Father knows how many I can carry."

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Would you say that the wilderness journey dates from the new birth?

ANSWER: New birth, in the Epistle of John goes a very long way. That is the basis of everything with John—the new birth. Typically, it begins with what we know of the new birth rather than "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." Ex. 15:13. A proper Christian experience begins with the knowledge of redemption, and that God has brought us to Himself. Do not say, just the new birth, because you do not know when you were born again. You know when you got peace with God.

The blessedness of John in his epistle is the blessedness of being born of Him. But then he not only looks at it in his epistle as the mere implanting of a new life, as in chapter 3 of the Gospel of John, but he looks at it as the way that new life—that new nature—brings us into relationship with God: "born of God."

We cannot systematize divine things; we would like to make a system and have everything A, B, C, and so on, but we cannot do it. We will either go too far, or stop too soon. It is all linked up as a whole. Divine truths refuse to be bound by a systematic code, and if we remember that, it will help

us a good deal.

Then a little farther down He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." But He sees it is necessary to have this experience in the wilderness. He does not ask that they be taken out of the world, but to keep them from evil.

Look Right to Walk Right

Before we are consciously in the glory, we are never on a level with the position we hold here below, while we have only this position to sustain us. We must look above our path to be able to walk in it. A Jew, who had the secret of the Lord, and who waited for the Messiah, was pious and faithful according to the law. A Jew, who had only the law, assuredly did not keep it. A Christian, who has heaven before him, and a Savior in glory, as the object of his affection, will walk well upon earth; he who has only the earthly path for his rule, will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it. He will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently, will glorify Him and make Him known in the world. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive about our path to be able to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing also, for our path, the fear of the Lord, to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

The Yoke

"True yoke-fellow!" So did the Apostle Paul describe one who was a co-worker with him. A higher recommendation is hardly possible to conceive, for Paul was a worker for God of the most earnest and self-sacrificing order. He stands before us in the New Testament as a pattern for us to follow. A true yoke-fellow, with such a servant of the Master as Paul was, must have had a spirit and an obedience to Christ like the Apostle had.

The yoke makes it necessary that one will and one spirit should govern the two who are under it. There would be no effective work performed by the oxen if one were to pull one way and the other another! In the case of the oxen, the mind and will of the man who guides enforces obedience, but in our case we know full well that our own will too often asserts itself so that our labor goes for nothing.

Our Lord says to us, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." What is His yoke? Obedience to His Father, we may surely say. All His course on earth was perfect submission to, and perfect carrying out of, the Father's will. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. And in this obedience our Lord, as a Man, found rest and peace. And now He bids us take His yoke upon us, and to learn of Him. He tells us that in so doing we shall find rest to our souls. Rest to the soul, then, follows taking Christ's yoke upon us and learning of Him, even as rest from the burden of sin follows coming to Him, heavy laden as we are, when needing pardon and peace.

Everyone who has really come to Jesus has been received by Him, and all such may have rest of soul. But there is a condition attached to the obtaining of rest of soul, and that is taking the yoke upon us. This rest is consequent on our obedience to the Lord and His Father.

If Christ's yoke is on us, we shall walk where He would have us, and do the things which please Him. Our will and our mind will be under His.

When we see the oxen under the yoke we know they are there by constraint, but the Lord says to us, "Take My yoke upon you." We are called to surrender ourselves to the position of subjection to Him. When this surrendering of ourselves to Him is not made, rest of soul is lacking.

"My yoke is easy," says the Lord. It is gentle and it is good, as all who wear it prove, for the more truly a Christian is subject to Christ, the more truly peaceful and happy he is. And what is a greater blessing on this earth for a Christian than having rest to his soul? A calm and holy peace, a satisfied and restful state is a treasure indeed, beyond all price.

"My burden is light," adds our Lord. Heavy was the burden of our sins which He took away; light is the burden of obedience His love lays on us. He bore our burden on the cross, and when so doing was forsaken of God. He bids us take His burden on us to find in so doing His most gracious presence and companionship.

Perhaps we should have spoken of the true yoke-fellow of the Apostle after speaking of the taking upon us of Christ's yoke, for this is at the foundation of all our practical life. Working for God should

follow rest of soul. Indeed, our work at the best will only be mistaken service if our souls are not at rest.

The yoke implies walking together and working together. What force, then, lies in the solemn exhortation, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Such a condition is utterly false to Christianity. In the old days God would not allow an ox and an ass to be yoked together in the plow. He regarded it as unseemly. How unseemly is the sight of Christians and the world walking together! The end always is that the strong world drags over the weak Christian to its side! So it is in working together, the world will gain its way and the simplicity of Christian purpose will be pushed out. We see the effect of the unequal yoke on every side in Christendom, for in various parts of the field the world has it all its own way. The name of Christian is kept, but the spirit of the Christian is not to be seen. The unequal yoke is one great cause of the worldliness of Christian communities.

If we desire to walk with Christ and to work for Christ, let us remember that two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. Christ will never agree with the world, and if we would take His yoke upon us, we must not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Young Christian

Bible Challenger-07-July V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word used to describe what a sheep-shearer's wife brought to a future king, thereby averting a deadly confrontation. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 178.)

1. Something which sold at the rate of two measures for a shekel even in the time of a severe famine. [1]
2. One of six things which a complaining people remembered, with tears, of their former dietary delights. [1]
3. Something the disciples ate after rubbing them in their hands. [3]
4. Something Ezra was authorized to receive without limit for the restoration of the house of his God and its services. [1]
5. The daily provision for the table of a great king, among other things, was one hundred of these. [1]
6. A certain kind of bread which a virtuous woman refused to eat in deference to her devotion to her household. [1]
7. A somewhat surprising word used to describe some figs that were so bad they could not be eaten. [1]
8. A single cluster of these required two men to carry it, thereby attesting to the fertility of the land. [1]

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

R. Erisman

God's Counsels and Man's Responsibility

The counsel and foreknowledge of God in no way lessen the responsibility of men, though superficial minds may be disposed to think so. For example, long even before Isaac was born, God told Abraham that his seed should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and they would be held down and oppressed 400 years. Their stay in Egypt, therefore, was foreseen.

Now God can, if He please, make the devices of evil men work out His ways. In saying this we do not mean that He originates them, for that would make Him the author of evil, which could never be. In process of time the brethren of Joseph conspired against him, and he was sold as a slave and carried down to Egypt, whither Jacob and the rest subsequently followed. Thus, by their hateful devices, they helped to fulfill that which had been foreseen and foretold. But did that excuse their evil deed? Not at all. God's hand was not in their wickedness, though He made it serve His ends—a very different thing.

So it was with the putting to death of the Lord Jesus. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, but this did not make those who crucified Him less responsible. God certainly did not move their hearts to do this; the devil did, but He made Satan's malice and man's hatred to work out His counsel, thus showing His wisdom, and leaving them wholly responsible for their deeds.

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 cast by turning. His face is ever towards us.

Bible Challenger-06-June Answers V.08

1. Bees Judg. 14:8
2. Eagle Prov. 30:19
3. Tortoise Lev. 11:29
4. Hind Gen. 49:21
5. Ant Prov. 6:6
6. Bear Prov. 17:12
7. Adder Psa. 58:4
8. Raven Sol. 5:11
9. Ass Num. 22:28

"These things were done in BETHABARA beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." John 1:28.

The World

At the creation there was no such thing as "the world"—as the Lord spoke of it in the Gospel of John, and as John speaks of it in his writings. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" is what we read. But "the world" is a vast system in which every man is bent upon doing the best he can for himself, and God is really unknown, a system which Satan uses to ruin man, and to destroy the power of God.

The presence of the Son of God in it brought out the fact that all that was of the world was not of the Father, whom He revealed. He overcame the world, and Satan, who led it against Him, for the first time received definitely the title, "The prince of this world." The judgment of the world was on the rejection of the Son of God—not yet executed, it is true, but sure. The presence of the Holy Spirit now convinces the world of sin in one common lump. It is the evidence that the world did not believe on the Son of God, but cast Him out, and He has no more to say to it, and never will till He judges it.

The man, therefore, who believes that "Jesus is the Son of God" overcomes the world (1 John 5), not merely that He is the Son of David, or the Christ. The world is that in which the flesh finds its place when the soul is not with God. We find it more than seventy times mentioned in the writings of John. It is that system which comes to light between the first coming of Christ and His appearing, and is only then used in this moral sense.

Faith

Faith counts on God, not simply in spite of difficulty, but in spite of impossibility.

Faith is not concerned about means, but it counts on the promise of God. To the natural man, the believer may seem to lack prudence. Nevertheless, from the moment it becomes a question of means which render the thing easy to man, it is no longer God acting. It is no longer His work where means are looked to.

When, with man, there is impossibility, God must come in. Faith has reference to His will and to that only, thus it consults neither about means nor circumstances; in other words, it consults not with flesh and blood.

When faith is weak, external means are beforehand reckoned on in the work of God. Let us remember that when things are feasible to man, there is no longer need of the energy of the Spirit.

"Without faith it is impossible to please

Him: for he that cometh to God must believe

that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them

that diligently seek Him."

Heb. 11:6

Editorial: Perhaps Today!

The Lord's coming, that blessed hope, the present expectation of His return at any moment, is the brightest thing with which our minds can be occupied. The Bible is so wonderfully written that saints living at any time during these last 1900 years could have enjoyed this blessed hope.

Surely I come quickly. Amen.

Even so, come, Lord

Rev. 22:20

The second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for His bride, the Church, has been known and taught clearly, especially in the last 160 years. The fact that we believers are still here only lets us know that we are that much nearer to the time of His coming for us. Not only are we waiting for His coming, but Christ is waiting, and He is waiting more truly and earnestly than we are. Those at Philadelphia were commended for keeping His Word, and not denying His name, and then given a promise because they had kept the word of His patience. Notice that it is not their patience, but His patience. Realizing His side of this makes it easier to wait patiently for Him.

The little book of James puts it clearly with these words, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8.

We ought to be able to discern the times, for the Lord inquires, "How is it that ye do not discern this time?" Luke 12:56. There are moral elements at this time that a spiritual mind can discern, but the fixing of dates is a mistake. The Father has kept that in His own power.

Sometimes as we begin another year, the remark will be made that this is surely the year the Lord will come. In this past century more than once certain ones have set a date for the Lord's coming, and it did not happen. The result is a mocking and scorning by professors, of Christ and of His coming. Let us not set a date, but earnestly look for Him for whom we wait, knowing His last promise is, "Surely I come quickly." Rev. 22:20.

Why should I say, "Surely the Lord will come this year, or this month, or this week, or even tomorrow?" Why put it off at all in my thoughts? Why not say, "Perhaps today!" Ed.

Bible Challenger Clues-07-July V.08

1. Luke; 2. Leviticus; 3. 1 Chronicles; 4. 2 Chronicles; 5. 2 Samuel; 6. 2 Samuel; 7. Judges; 8. 1 Kings.

Ye Seek Jesus

"Ye seek Jesus," not as Savior, but as the Center. This describes a state of soul which we rarely meet in these days of much confusion in Christendom. Such is our indifference to His presence "in the midst." It is usually after many presentations that results come in this way, and it seems the truth must have a kind of cumulative effect. His response to this desire is, "There shall they see Me." Those who have gone, how sweetly true they have found it. Conforming to Jesus' appointment "they saw Him," and "they worshipped Him." Then they received that soul-sustaining word that, notwithstanding the difficulties and the darkness that would ensue, they should have Him "in the midst," and how long? Even unto the end of the age. Nothing can lose to us this unspeakable privilege. It holds good "to the end," for those who answer to His appointment (Matt. 28). Compare Matt. 1:23; 18:20.

Perhaps we should inquire, with deep heart searchings before the Lord: How far are we up to this privilege in the state of our souls? How much have we the subduing sense of His presence so that we, as worshippers, can say with deep and solemn joy, "Surely the Lord is in this place."

One to whom the meeting is dry and disappointing may belong to the class of whom it is said, "Some doubted." May the Lord maintain in us a vigorous faith, and the ravishing sense of His presence. Does this not antedate heaven, which that blessed One is pleased to define as, "Where I am"?

F. C. Blount

The Visits of the Glory of God to This World

And Later What?

The first visit of the Glory of God to this world was when GOD chose a family to become a people, to become a nation—the nation of Israel. With this nation God personally dwelled. To this people He displayed Himself in Power (Deut. 4:37).

He took them out of Egypt by Power.

He led them and fed them for forty years through a great wilderness, and brought them into a promised land by Power (Psa. 105:39-45).

The Glory of God appeared in the most magnificent temple ever to grace this earth, in the days of the great King Solomon (2 Chron. 7:1).

But through indifference to God's Presence in Power and Glory among them, through disobedience to His personally written laws, through despising the pleasant land (Psa. 106:24), and through turning away from God to heathen idols (Hos. 1:6), the Glory of God reluctantly, haltingly returned to heaven (Ezek. 1:28, 1-25).

This departure was not forced, but because it could find no rest on this polluted earth, the Glory returned to heaven. An interval of about 500 years followed. But the Glory returned to this earth in the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself. This was a visitation of Grace! This Glory and Grace were in lowly gentleness and love. The world's only hope lay in the Son of God becoming a Man (Isa. 4:5, 6; 7:14). And He did!

Alas, that Glory in Christ was also rejected. But this time forcibly put out of this world in the shame, rejection, and violence of the cross. Once more God took His leave and returned to heaven.

The mysteriously silent heaven has continued now for 1900 years. (But more later!)

Then there will be a third return of the Glory, formally in the Person of the Lord Jesus. This time it will return to reign over this earth in all judgmental power, prosperity, and peace—the 1000-year millennial age. Heaven and earth will be attached, as it were, by a ladder and righteousness will reign (Hos. 2:19-23). Please read it.

But, wonder of wonders, a great mystery exists between the second and third visits to this earth; an unseen, secret, and personal arrival of that Glory, the Person of the Holy Spirit into the heart and body, today, of each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through the death, shed blood, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God, the way has been opened for the redeemed body of believers today to enjoy to the full the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, individually and collectively.

But more! At any moment now, we believers in Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, will be raptured, translated to that Glory itself, with and like the beloved Son of God, to bask in that unstained, eternal Glory forever (1 Chron. 29:10-13).

N. Berry

The Manner of Some”

“Not forsaking 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.”

Heb. 10:25.

“The manner of some” is to stay away

From the Table spread on the Lord's own day;

A dinner hot, or an hour in bed

Such are the things they prefer instead.

“I met a friend, and he hindered me:”

Can any friend such as Jesus be?

He said, “This do,” and can they forego

Thus giving Him joy, who loves them so?

By “the manner of some” when the gospel's told

You would think their hearts must be very cold;

It has no music to charm their ear,

Or sure they would come its message to hear!

And yet by the gospel their souls were saved,

Unless, as I fear, they were self-deceived;

To have no care for the tidings glad

And yet to believe them—is terribly sad!

“The manner of some” is never to see

The place where prayer is wont to be;

Where saints together approach the Throne

Is where, alas, they are never known.

Yet, where in petition the saints agree.

“I am in the midst of the two or three,”

Are the Savior's words, and the promise is plain;

But those who don't ask, what can they obtain?
"The manner of some" when the Word is read
Is to do some other business instead;
When truth is ministered by the Lord
Through His servants, they never hear a word.
Too busy, too careless, they come not nigh,
So the streams of blessing pass them by.
What wonder they weary are and lean?
Yet many such too often are seen.
"As the manner of some is, forsake not," saith He,
"Assembling together" though but "two or three"
His presence is promised: His promise is true;
The joy of His presence is rapturous and new.
Then prove it, my brother! dear sister, be there!
Assemble together for praise and for prayer;
The blessing will follow, and glad shall we be
All waiting together our Savior to see!

“Great”

Our blessed God has put the adjective "great" all throughout the Holy Scriptures. He uses it as a prefix to some of the grand truths He has given us in His Word concerning who He is, what He has done, and how we are blessed in Him!

As to who He is, Moses said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." Ex. 3:3. Here we see God revealing Himself as the eternal, self-existing, omnipresent One, as we learn later in verse 14, "I AM that I AM."

In Titus 2:13 God has made Himself known as our "great God and our Savior." Our hope is a glorious and blessed hope and the glory is before us.

God in His "great love" (Eph. 2:4) has shown His riches in mercy in providing a ransom for our souls.

We are encouraged to come boldly before the "throne of grace," seeing that we have "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Heb. 4:14, 16.

Paul (Saul), on his way to Damascus, was struck down by "a great light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun." Acts 22:6; 26:13.

We can trust God who does "all things well," for "great is Thy faithfulness." Lam. 3:23.

As to man's responsibility in accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, the Lord speaks in the Gospel of Luke: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." If man refuses the gospel, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3.

The incident in Luke 7:9 would exhort us to exercise such as the Lord could say of the centurion, whose servant was sick and ready to die, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

In the early days of the Church, there was great power in witnessing for the Lord Jesus. In the same verse we read, "Great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33. It has been said, "Little is much when God is in it."

In knowing the Lord Jesus as the good Shepherd, we are privileged to enjoy our Savior as the "great Shepherd of the sheep," and the admonishment for us is to continue on (Heb. 13:20, 21).

As we do continue, the Lord's promise to those who serve Him, though going through trial, is, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5:12.

The believer has been given "exceeding great and precious promises." 2 Peter 1:4.

At times there are circumstances that try us—in our employment, with friends and relatives, and even with our brothers and sisters in Christ. James tells us: "For in many things we offend all." James 3:2. May the Lord help us to be in the good of Psa. 119:165, "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

L. J. Totems

Aquila and Priscilla

C. H. Brown

We are introduced for the first time in Acts 18 to these people, a man called Aquila with his wife Priscilla. Paul was on his second missionary journey when he found this Jewish couple in Corinth. How did they come to be there? Because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. God can make the wrath of man to praise Him. He did that in the taxing that forced Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, and they got there at the right time. God allowed this persecution to break out which sent Aquila and Priscilla to Corinth at the right time. He had need of them there.

This couple and Paul were attracted to each other from the very start, it seemed, for they both were tentmakers. Paul was a servant of God and his journeys led him to different places. Aquila and Priscilla were on the Lord's side wherever we find them. So here they take Paul into their home. I presume that they were Christians when Paul met them. They were not thinking about tents; their thoughts were with Christ. What wonderful communications they must have had together. Those with whom you live know you better than anyone else.

The time came for Paul to depart, and he talked things over with them. He felt he must leave the brethren there, and he asked Priscilla and Aquila to go with him; so when Paul left, they did go with him.

Notice in verses 18 and 19 the two names are transposed. They are mentioned six times in the New Testament, and out of the six, Priscilla is mentioned first three times. No author in the New Testament had a higher opinion of women than Paul did. He speaks of Priscilla first, and it is not accidental that it got into the Word of God that way. Priscilla walked right along with him. As far as the record goes, she never got out of her place. There is nothing sweeter than to see two going along in this way.

Young folks, you had better weigh what we have before us here. There is no greater or heavier weight in this life than an unsaved companion. If you would take a godly man or woman and set them anywhere they would be a gain. Aquila and Priscilla had the same common truths, and they went on in their quiet way speaking of the things of Jesus. They were like a faithful tool ready for use.

When Apollos began to speak boldly in the synagogue, and "when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." (v. 26.) This Jew came from Alexandria and was an eloquent man. Aquila did not give a public address of which we know. Apollos needed to be instructed. We can be helped by our brethren if we are willing to be helped.

Aquila and Priscilla listened to Apollos and detected that something was missing. What he said was all right, but he did not go far enough. They might have stood up and said with considerable authority that Apollos needed teaching, but when the meeting was over they took him to their own

home and gave him instruction. He had stopped with the baptism of John, but they told him about the Lord Jesus and how He was crucified. They laid out the marvelous truth that they had learned when they were making tents.

When Apollos got ready to leave Ephesus, he was a different Apollos. It was not left to Aquila to do it all; the account does not say that it was left to Aquila alone. In verse 26 it would seem that Priscilla was able to add her word at the right time. The result was that when Apollos left, he was commended by the saints. He did not go out as an independent man.

Apollos had received much from Aquila and Priscilla, but all truth finds its origin in God. When a brother gets up to minister, regardless of who he is, he cannot minister anything unless he has received it. "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." (v. 28.)

Now go to 1 Cor. 16:19: "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." There was something different in their greeting. They had a personal investment there at Corinth. We do become attached to the little assemblies where we grow up and where we live. They form a very special treasure in our memories. When they were in Corinth they had opened up their home to Paul. Now they have the Church in their home. When you read about the Church in somebody's house, if you have been taught by the Word of God, you will have no difficulty at all to understand it. If you have been taught that the church is a great building, it is hard to appreciate a thought like this. A building does not mean a thing to God. He does not dwell in buildings made with hands. Perhaps it was not an opulent home. Nevertheless, it was a place where the Church of God met. What a privilege it is to be hosts to the Church of God.

Paul was back in Corinth in Rom. 16. Aquila and Priscilla used to live in Rome, but they had fled from Rome at one time. Now they are permitted to return to Rome (Rom. 16:3-5). The Apostle is writing a letter to them. First, it was Paul in their home, then it was the Church in their home, and now it is the Church in their home again. Again and again they had hazarded their lives for Paul. Perhaps many times they had been his companions when he was roughly treated. "Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." (v. 3.) They confessed that they were companions of Paul.

"Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." (v. 4.) Should not there be a deep desire that we might so live that we are counted as an asset, rather than that our brethren hang their heads in sorrow when our names are spoken? A certain servant of God who missed the path caused much confusion. He was a gifted man, but he was not an asset to the Church of God. The government of God caught up with him. There are hearts that are burdened for that man today.

The last line from the aged Apostle is in 2 Timothy 4. He had fought the good fight. He was going to be offered up, and he knew he was going to die. He had some things to say that were encouraging and he had some things to say that were very sad (v. 14). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works."

In verse 19 Priscilla is mentioned first. They had moved back to Ephesus, and this is Paul's last contact with them. He says to salute them, for they were loyal right down to the end. He sends his loving greetings to them as he leaves this world. We are all going to leave this scene. We are

going to end our story down here, and when it is ended will it be that the saints of God miss us as those who sought to be helpful? Or will we leave behind us disappointments and heartaches, because of our selfishness? In view of eternity would it not pay to look things over? Are we contributing to the peace of the saints?

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The first letter of each of the following responses will form the name of a tree which served as an observation post for someone who was chief. [2] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 200.)

1. An obedient tree in response to the smallest measure of faith. [1]
2. The promised response of the trees of the field for an obedient people in a promised land. [3]
3. A specific tree gathered in abundance by a father providing for his son's great work. [1]
4. A certain tree Solomon used in making terraces as well as musical instruments. [1]
5. Certain trees in which the sound of "a going" became the signal to initiate a military victory. [1]
6. A great tree which caused a rebellious son to be separated from his beast of conveyance. [1]
7. What the trees of the forest, in an Old Testament proverb, said to the olive tree. [4]
8. The name of a disheartened prophet who sat under a juniper tree. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-07-July Answers V.08

1. Barley 2 Kings 7:18
2. Leeks Num. 11:5
3. Ears of corn Luke 6:1
4. Salt Ezra 7:22
5. Sheep 1 Kings 4:23
6. Idleness Prov. 31:27
7. Naughty Jer. 24:2
8. Grapes Num. 13:23

"And now this BLESSING which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord." 1 Sam. 25:27.

The Righteousness of God

Love brought Christ down and righteousness raised Him up. The term "the righteousness of God" means that God is just in justifying by the faith of Christ. It has no reference to what He was under law here below. Christ suffered once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. One part, consequently, of divine righteousness is that Christ is raised up from the dead. Another part is that we who believe become the righteousness of God in Him. The "righteousness of God" is the obligation, as it were, to bless me in Christ if I look to Him for salvation. Doubtless, Christ did fulfill all righteousness. It was indeed what He owed to God as an obedient, faithful man on the earth, but the "righteousness of God" is what He owed to Christ.

When the idolatrous Gentiles were ready to acquit the Messiah, the Jews cried out so much the more, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and so both joined together in the fatal deed. It was the end of the trial of man. After all were proved ungodly and unrighteous, a new kind of righteousness—even the righteousness of God who justifies freely of His grace without law—is manifested. He raises Christ up from the grave, after redemption. He does not set Him on the throne of David (that would be far too low an estimate of His work), but He sets Him as the glorified Man on His own right hand in the heavenly places. Then He communicates to the joint-heirs the knowledge, not only of free and full pardon through His atoning work, but of their acceptance in the Beloved according to the power of His resurrection.

Wait, Watch, Work

Luke 12LUK 12

"Like unto men that wait for their Lord."

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing [working]."

To be waiting indicates readiness.

To be watching shows expectation.

To be working is a sign of faithfulness to a charge.

And the servants of the Lord are to be ready, expectant and faithful in view of His coming again.

The Ministry of John, Paul, and Peter

There is a great difference, carefully marked out in the Scriptures, between the ministry of John and that of Paul and Peter. The ministry of Paul is stated in Col. 1, and had a twofold character, corresponding with the two Headships of Christ. It was first that of the gospel which was preached in the whole creation under heaven, flowing from Christ's preeminence in creation, and second that of the Church, the body of Christ, as connected with Him as its Head.

The ministry of Peter, on the other hand, was confined to the circumcision. While he touches on the Church as a spiritual house, which was being built up of believers as living stones on Christ as the Living Stone, and as guided by the Holy Spirit, he yet views believers in the character of pilgrims on their way, with Christ risen as their living hope "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:4, 5.

John holds a different place. He does not enter on dispensations (though once or twice stating the fact as John 13:1; 14:1-3; 17:24; 20:17); nor does he take the saint, nor even the Lord Himself, up to heaven. Jesus for him is a divine Person, the Word made flesh manifesting God and His Father, eternal life come down to earth.

In addition to this, another kind of ministry was committed to him by the Lord after His resurrection, though at the moment mysteriously, in the words addressed to Peter concerning John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John 21:22. There can scarcely be a question that the book of Revelation is the fulfillment of the mission for which he was thus designated.

It may be said, moreover, that a closer examination reveals an intimate connection between the last two chapters of the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation. In chapter 20, in addition to the setting forth of the assembly as gathered with Christ Himself in the midst, there is the conversion of the Jewish remnant of a later day. This is typified by Thomas who believed when he saw. (See also Zech. 12:10-13.)

John 21 gives the gathering in of the nations in the millennium, shown in figure by the disciples letting down their net on the right side of the ship at the command of the risen Christ, and not being able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. There are therefore three epochs in these chapters:

1. The Church;
2. The conversion of the Jewish remnant which will take place at the Lord's appearing;
3. The ingathering of the nations after the kingdom has been established in power.

The book of Revelation contains these three epochs, presented in a special way after the vision of the Son of man recorded in chapter 1, together with the events in heaven and the judgments upon earth. These are connected with and precede the appearing of Christ as the rightful Heir to take His power, to make good in government all that God is as revealed in relation to the earth, and to

reign until all enemies are put under His feet. The eternal state, in all its beauty and perfection, closes the subject of the book—that wondrous scene wherein God is all in all.

The reader will be the better prepared to study the book intelligently if the special aspect in which the Church is presented in it is considered. It was Paul's mission to unfold the truth of the Church as the body of Christ, and as the habitation of God through the Spirit. (See, for example, Eph. 2 and 3 in addition to Col. 1 already cited.)

John's ministerial testimony as to the assembly views it as the outward assembly on earth in its state of decay—Christ judging this—and the true assembly, the capital city and seat of God's government over the world at the end, but in glory and grace. It is an abode, and is where God dwells and the Lamb. In a word, the Church as seen by John (Rev. 1-3) occupies a candlestick position, and is thus regarded as God's light-bearer, His responsible witness in the world. It is in this character that the Church is subject to judgment and rejection, as recorded in chapters 2 and 3.

E. Dennett

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is the feast mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:8? "Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

ANSWER: The Passover and the Feast are really two distinct things, and the feast is founded on the Passover—on the sacrifice. But they cannot be separated, though they are distinct. The Passover was on one day; the Feast of the Passover was on the next day, and lasted seven days. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast." 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. The Church of God is now keeping two feasts, according to our calling. For example, she is keeping the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Pentecost, and she is waiting to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. We get those three feasts brought together in the Old Testament.

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God.... They shall not appear before the Lord empty" Deut. 16:16. There were three feasts which all were expected to attend: the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. The day of Pentecost has fully come. What is before us is the Feast of Tabernacles—the ingathering. In short, it is the rest of God when He has gathered in the fruit of all His ways, and when the saints enter into the fruits of all God's ways with them.

Access to God and Soul Restoration

It is blessedly true that the believer's position is always inside the veil where Jesus has gone by His own blood. It is his sweet privilege to have access with confidence at all times, and it is where divine grace has set him. Other scriptures show that he is made nigh in Christ and through His blood.

It is true, moreover, that as a matter of experience, many souls un-established in these precious truths have no apprehension or enjoyment of this unchanging position of nearness. So when trouble, failure, entanglement with Jewish things, or defilement come between them and God, they lose the sense of His presence, and become greatly distressed and groan and struggle to get near. Such surely are not excluded from "the holiest of all," neither have they lost their position there. (How could they? They have no other place before God.) But through ignorance or unbelief, their souls have no consciousness of it.

Like the Hebrew believers, they have to learn by divine teaching what "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" has done for them. And they always have title to be there, because Christ has gone into heaven itself by His own blood, and now appears before the face of God for them. It is well when they apprehend these precious realities, and are moved by the encouraging words, "Let us draw near." It is a time of wonderful blessing when such learn the true way of approach to God, and surely there is no other way of access to God for any of His people at any time.

We must look, however, to other scriptures for instruction as to the way of soul-restoration from sin, because that opens the question, not of our position before God, nor of our everlasting security, nor of liberty to be inside the veil, but of communion with the Father. It is another line of divine truth to what we have in Hebrews.

Strictly speaking, we do not have restoration from sin in Hebrews, but from the danger of going back to Judaism. We find this in John's first epistle where the precious subjects of our relationship and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ are taken up. There advocacy comes in, not priesthood, and "the Father," because it is the sin of His child having interrupted communion which is the question. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. This precious advocacy is founded on "propitiation" having been made for our sins. The Advocate is "the righteous" One; it is the Father with whom He is the Advocate, and the children of God for whom He is the Advocate.

Blessed be His name, He is our Advocate whether we know it or not. He faithfully maintains His own gracious office according as our state requires. The effect on us is, no doubt, to produce self-judgment and confession.

It is not a fresh application of the blood, as some say, which is needed to restore the soul to communion, for it has already perfected the conscience and put him in the light as God is in the light. But it is the washing of water by the Word, as set forth in Christ's washing the disciples' feet

with water, and by the ashes of the red heifer mixed with water and sprinkled upon the unclean.

"The word" is brought home to the heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit with such personal application. This makes us feel the sin before God, and assures those who have humbled themselves and confessed their sins that He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Thus the washing of water by the Word exposes and removes the defilement, and so ministers Christ to the soul so that it finds fellowship restored, and perhaps its joy deepened.

In Hebrews we have God, the High Priest, the holiest, and worshippers. In John we have the Father, the Advocate, children, and communion. In Hebrews we have access to God, and believers enjoined to draw near. In John we have the way of soul-restoration for "children" who have sinned. But whether the question for our souls be as to worship or communion, both are founded on the death of the cross, and secured for us by Him who went into heaven itself by His own blood. The blood of Jesus is our abiding title to be in the presence of God. We have no other and want no other. It is where the righteousness of God has set us. To Him be everlasting praise!

H. H. Snell

The Last Adam

In the days of the kingdom the last Adam will be there. In His own perfect, stainless manhood, He came and stood among the ruins of a lost world, and was confronted by Satan, who had obtained his power over it, through the lusts of the first Adam when fallen (Luke 4). He stood in His inheritance, and found the "kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" in the hands of Satan, sin-defiled and in ruins. He took it thus, with its load of sin and defilement, and died to redeem it. He foiled and vanquished Satan in the place of his power. He bound the strong man, and then proceeded to spoil him of his goods. The prince of this world came, but had nothing in Him. He went down into the domain of "him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2) and through death He destroyed his power. In due time He will cast him out of the heavenlies with his angel (Rev. 12) and when he has for a short period consummated his stupendous wickedness, in the revived Roman Empire, and the Antichrist, He will bind him and cast him into the bottomless pit till the thousand years of the kingdom are ended, and then He will cast him into the lake of fire. When Christ was here, He exhibited the "powers of the world to come," or of the kingdom, casting out evil spirits, miraculously feeding and healing man. When that day shall be here, Satan shall be in the bottomless pit, and "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb [shall] sing." Isa. 35.

The Book of God

In the various and fruitful light of Scripture, fresh wonders cast themselves forth before the eye of the soul. Its seed is in itself like the trees of Eden. Its witness is in itself like all the works of God. Its honors and its virtues are all its own—made ours, indeed, only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Its worth and its excellency proceed from itself, and we want only the faith that walks in the light of it, apprehending and enjoying Him whose wisdom and grace it reveals to us.

That each of the four gospels has its own character and purpose under the Spirit of God is sufficiently familiar to us. This was a judgment among the people of God from the earliest days of Christianity. They perceived then, as we do now, variety in unity, so that some of them said, "It is not so properly four gospels that we have, as a four-sided gospel." The one life is seen in different relations—the same Jesus passes through the same scenes and circumstances in different characters.

This is variety in unity. And this leads me to suggest that in like manner the Book of God has also unity in variety. We see our world in all the parts of it, and ourselves in all the persons of it. We listen, for instance, to the grace which addresses us as sinners, and learn ruin and redemption now as Adam learned them in the day of Gen. 3. When putting on the righteousness of God by faith we find ourselves in the family and fellowship of Abraham (Gen. 15). At the table of the Lord spread in the midst of the redeemed every resurrection-day, we sit in one spirit with the congregation of God (Ex. 12). In the conflict of flesh and spirit we not only see what manner of people the saints in Paul's day were, but we read our own well-known and everyday experience.

Thus we are at home throughout the whole volume, tracing our own world in all the scenes of it, and ourselves in the actors. This is unity in variety. Such is the wondrous character of the Book.

Thousands of years are but one and the same day. The Book is one, though Moses and John, the earliest and the latest writers in it, were separated by centuries and centuries, and though kings and fishermen, scribes and herdsmen, prophets and publicans, separated by all the habits of human life and human circumstances, were called to put their hand to it.

It is a book of wonders, but the Book itself is a principal wonder, as this may show us. Its naturalness and its beauty are admirable beyond expression. This quality of the Book of God once reminded another of a striking analogy in the kingdom of nature. "It is," he said, "as a noble tree of which the inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign vital power, produces a variety of forms in which the details of human order may appear to be wanting, but in which there is a beauty which no human art can imitate."

True indeed, and true also is what he adds after contemplating the materials which form and furnish this Book. "All combine to crown with divine glory the demonstration of the origin and authorship of the Book which contains these things."

May meditation on it be mixed with faith, that the soul may be profited while the heart is charmed!

J. G. Bellett

Editorial: Happiness

True happiness is to be found only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and feeding upon Him through the Word. A Christian is the only one who has the right to be happy and surely he should be happy. Then why do we find so many Christians with sad faces? It is because Christ is not the object of their hearts, and they are not casting all their care upon Him, relying on the assurance that He cares for them.

There are some people who think that Christians must be very somber, that what they call being religious is to be always associated with gloom, so they go about looking sad—as if they had not a friend. But Jesus is their Friend. He has shown such wonderful love in giving His life for them, and He is concerned about the smallest trials and will carry all for them if they will let Him.

By word and action we are called upon to make known the good news of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord to weary, sin-burdened hearts. By feeding in our own souls upon the love of God, the beauties and glories of Christ and the wonderful blessings which have been bestowed upon us, our faces will not look sad, but a deep peace, a calm joy will possess our souls. We shall not be self-occupied, but our shining countenances will show that which will be to His glory, and we shall think of the good and needs of others. We shall visit the sick and poor to inquire into their needs and minister to them, and seek out the desolate and oppressed to tell them of the consolations of Christ. We can show that precious sympathy for others which the blessed Lord Jesus so delights in and so deeply proved when He was here upon earth among men.

Fellow believers, you may be very sure that those who are most like Him in this, as well as in other respects, do more to commend the gospel of the grace of God than those who speak of it and yet act as if there was no happiness connected with accepting Christ as Savior.

The last words of Moses in Deut. 33:29 are, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, o people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!" It is really only saved people who can be truly happy. A shield protects and a sword is for offense. Saved ones are protected and they have the Word of the Lord to use both inwardly and outwardly. It is a two-edged sword.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4. Ed.

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1. Genesis; 2. Joshua; 3. Exodus; 4. Psalms; 5. Acts; 6. Ezra; 7. Daniel.

The Hand and Heart of God

Do we trace things only to the hand of God and go no further? He who rightly takes to Himself the title of "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" comforts those that are in tribulation, not only that they may be comforted themselves, but that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God.

I trust I may never forget one lesson I learned of God some years ago which I will just jot down hoping that it may be used to help and comfort others.

Many years ago and not long before being called to pass through a very heavy trial and sorrow, I went up to London. While there I went one evening to where I knew a Bible reading was to be held. During the meeting the old brother in whose house the meeting was held made the following remark: "We often speak of tracing things up to the Lord's hand, but do we give His heart credit for moving His hand?" I was much struck by the remark at the time, little knowing what was before me. My mind reverted to it occasionally, and I saw that the hand was but the servant of the heart, even in ordinary things. For instance, if a thief steals anything, the heart has first coveted it, and the hand is merely the agent that appropriates what the heart longs for.

I returned to my home and about six weeks later one very, very dear to me passed away rather suddenly. In my very deep sorrow the mentioned remark came before me. Others spoke about so and so having been the means of bringing the infection, etc. But to me, thanking God for the grace given, there were no second causes to be looked at. No, to God Himself I must trace it, and not to His hand only, but to His heart.

What, His heart? Yes, the same heart that gave Jesus. Oh, the exquisite sweetness and infinite preciousness of the thought were inexpressible! I knew what it was to have God Himself wiping away the tears from my eyes.

Another incident comes before me which I will mention as being in every way in keeping with what has gone before. A young sister in the Lord had just lost her baby, her firstborn, and was in deep grief, as might be supposed. An old brother who knew her well wrote to her and in the letter was the following: "May you know the joy of having Jesus wipe away the tears from your eyes, and know that it is more blessed to have Him wipe away your tears than to have no tears to wipe away."

In conclusion I would add that I have found in my own experience the truth of what I once heard another say, "There is no bitterness, even in the deepest sorrow, unless the will is at work. It is the working of the will that brings the bitterness."

A. Trigge

What Hath God Wrought!

Num. 23:23NUM 23:23

R. Erisman

The words "What hath God wrought!" were spoken by Balaam, a prophet in the land of Midian. He had been offered a reward by Balak, the king of Moab, if he would curse the people of Israel. Now Balaam was quite intrigued by this proposition, for we read in 2 Peter 2:15 that he loved the wages of unrighteousness. Balaam soon discovered, however, that cursing a people who enjoyed a favored-nation status with the God of the entire universe, the only true God, was no light matter. After being thwarted on several attempts to find some basis for pronouncing a curse, he exclaims out of frustration, or perhaps with a hint of admiration, "What hath God wrought!" And with these words, he confesses to Balak that a heathen prophet is not a match when the power of almighty God is at work.

These same words were used in a dramatic way in the United States about 150 years ago. Samuel Morse was working at that time on his invention which would enable communications to be established between distant points along a single electric wire. In order to demonstrate the potential of such a device, he invited several business dignitaries and government officials to observe firsthand its operation. He stationed these men some 40 miles distant from his laboratory, and at a prearranged time he transmitted the first telegraphic message. The message Samuel Morse chose for this occasion was not the familiar typing class exercise which proclaims: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." No, Samuel Morse's message on that historic day of May 25, 1844 was, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!"

By choosing this message, it would seem Samuel Morse gave evidence to his personal conviction that the Creator of the world, with all of its attendant physical laws, was worthy of more honor than someone who merely discovered one of those laws and how it could be applied for the benefit of mankind.

We do not find any other scriptural reference where the exact words of Balaam's exclamation were used, but we do find several individuals who acknowledged that the power of God had worked in a remarkable way.

Job

Perhaps the first one to consider is the testimony of Job as mentioned in chapter 12 of the book bearing his name. "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath WROUGHT this?" Job 12:7-9.

It is well to remember that Job lived within the time frame of the book of Genesis, sometime after the flood of Noah's day. In this discourse of Job, he states that it was common knowledge that the earth itself, and the various forms of life on it, were the result of the power of God acting in creation.

Now we know from the first chapter of Romans that man polluted this fundamental truth, and began to supplant God and to worship the creature more than the Creator. And then that chapter goes on to show the degradation of man as a result of not wanting to retain God in his knowledge.

In our day, creation truths have largely been replaced by the theories of evolution, under the influence of most of the institutions of learning. In Job's day, however, creation under the hand of God was commonly accepted.

David

Moving across the pages of history about 500 years, we come to the days of the nation of Israel in its ascendancy. David is the central figure in those early days and, as we know, became their much-loved king. We learn quite a bit about David's thoughts, his desires, and his motives from his prolific writing in the book of the Psalms. Notice Psa. 31, "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast WROUGHT for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." vv. 19, 20.

David knew very well that the earth and the heavens were created by God. He says so in Psa. 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." v. 1. He knew, too, that God made the inhabitants, for in Psa. 100 he says: "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." v. 3.

What sets David apart is that he discovered that the Creator God delights in communion with His creatures. He learned to confide in God in times of trouble and in times of rejoicing. David discovered that there is a communication line stretching from earth to heaven, that is not subject to equipment breakdowns, as was Mr. Morse's. Besides this, David discovered that there was a secret pavilion to which he could draw aside for these times of communion, completely separate from all outside distractions.

David was not so much impressed with God's greatness—how the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him—but rather with His goodness in wanting to dwell within the limited confines of his heart. And so he exclaims in admiration, "How great is Thy goodness."

Paul

If we traverse a 1000-year period, we come to the early days of the Church. The apostles are still alive. They are preaching the gospel to the salvation of souls. They are teaching and instructing their converts. They are leaving a written testimony that will convey the truth of God to many succeeding generations after they have long left this scene.

It is through these writings that we learn that the power of God was displayed in many remarkable ways in the days of the early Church in order to establish it in a hostile environment. There was a power to unloose the tongues of unlearned and ignorant men to reach out and touch the surrounding nations. There was power to heal the sick with a simple touch of the hand, and the power of an embrace to raise the dead. The Apostle Paul seemed to excel in all these acts of power. It is no small wonder that he is the one to tell of the power of God unto salvation. He certainly felt that power as he lay in the dust on the Damascus road.

What captivated the heart of Paul, however, was the power of God in resurrection. In the first chapter of Ephesians we read: "And 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.

Paul knew that the power that raised the Lord Jesus was going to be displayed again in the Church's resurrection day. Paul knew all of the details connected with that grand event. He taught them to the Thessalonian saints and to the Corinthian saints. He knew every minute detail. He even had a personal preview when he was caught up to the third heaven, but he was careful to state that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. So vivid was this experience, however, that the whole direction of his life seemed to be in anticipation of that moment when he would again enter into those heavenly courts. That seems to be a fair evaluation in view of what we read in Phil. 3:10, 11: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Paul understood very well the spiritual transformation that is to take place at that time, when mortal bodies shall put on immortality, when corruptible must put on incorruption. We might wonder whether Paul ever contemplated the physical significance of this event, whether he understood the engineering principles involved. His use of the word "power" seems to suggest that he did.

Consider for a moment that the power to raise a man's weight to the height of a typical cloud formation in the time of an eye blink is something like 50,000 H. P. And if we multiply this by the number of raptured saints making this journey, we are talking about trillions of H. P. Even the space age engines of our day pale into insignificance in comparison to this grand display of power. No wonder the Apostle was enthralled with the prospect of his participation in this event. But even the great Apostle had to learn that he must wait, just like the rest of us, to personally experience this mighty surge of power.

Nebuchadnezzar

And now for a final reference, we turn to Dan. 4 where we read about a remarkable experience in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar. He was truly a great man. He was a great military general, having conquered the then-known world. He was a great engineer, having masterminded the building of Babylon with its huge protecting walls towering to a height of 300 feet and having a breadth of 75 feet. He was a great architect, having designed the hanging gardens which were to become known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. He had one problem, however. It was "I" trouble. We read of it in Dan. 4:30. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Nebuchadnezzar did not know that there was a God who could discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. He did not know that He was a jealous God, not taking lightly anyone who exalted himself to the heavens. As the story unfolds, we find Nebuchadnezzar becomes an unwilling student in God's school. God is the instructor and the lesson is found in verse 32, "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

So Nebuchadnezzar became as the wild beasts, his hair became like eagle feathers, his nails like animal claws, and every morning his body was wet with the dew of heaven. Nebuchadnezzar learned well and the last verse tells of the great change that came into his life. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." v. 37. Notice especially verse 2 of this same chapter, "I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath WROUGHT toward me."

So, whereas the old Nebuchadnezzar liked nothing better than to promenade on the balcony of his palace and contemplate the greatness of what he had wrought, the new Nebuchadnezzar delighted in what God had wrought in him.

These four references to four individuals have highlighted four aspects which should be a part of the Christian experience.

First: There is the outward look which recognizes the physical environment, of which we are a part, as the result of God's power in creation.

Second: There is the inward look which recognizes that the power of God is still acting to change men's lives.

Third: There is the present appreciation and enjoyment of God's fellowship and communion in the secret pavilion of His providing.

Fourth: There is the anticipation of a personal participation in the events of the Church's resurrection, God's grand display of His mighty power.

It is interesting to notice that each of these four aspects can be punctuated, as it were, by those four words which Balaam, a heathen prophet, uttered so long ago: "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!"

The Father and the Holy Spirit

The Lord Jesus in His farewell address uses the word Father more times than it occurs elsewhere in the whole of the gospels. If you begin at John 13 and underline the word Father on to the end of chapter 17, you will be surprised to find how very frequently the word occurs.

When the earth passes through a part of her journey around the sun, she comes into a sphere bright with the constant darting of spots of light—the region of the shooting stars. They are there in great abundance, and not clustered together in any other part of its course. So this portion of John's Gospel is especially bright with the clustered frequency of the word "Father."

The Lord is introducing "His own" to the Father who has given them to Him, and in chapter 17, He addresses the Father about them, committing them to the Father's care, since He cannot remain with them to shield them beneath His sheltering wing.

When it is the Son and the Father He simply says, "Father." When He commits the disciples to Him in the midst of evil, He says, "Holy Father," and when He casts a glance at the world that has refused Him, hated both Him and His Father, He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee."

Why not say "heavenly Father" here? Because in John's Gospel He is "the only begotten Son, [who] is in the bosom of the Father." Consequently He could say as incarnate, "The Son of man [who] is in heaven." It is the Son and the Father in John.

In Matthew it is Jehovah and Jesus. He presents Himself as Messiah according to the Old Testament prophecies. He was born King of the Jews in Bethlehem. So among the people in the land of Israel He says, "My Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32, 33), and "My heavenly Father." "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. 15:13. Here we have distance and earth as His sphere—"the land of Israel"—all so different from "the Son of man [who] is in heaven" in John's Gospel.

In the latter we are not standing in the Jewish position of servant—at a distance, but, as believers in the Son, we are in Christ Jesus made nigh through the blood of Christ, for "through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." We have now the same position, as we have the same nature, as the glorified Son of man, and He has ascended to His God and Father, and by grace we who believe in Him are brought to God our Father in Christ where He is in the heavenlies. So, being in conscious relationship to the Father, the Spirit of adoption giving us a sense of His love, and our nearness to Him, being in the light, as God is in the light, in fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, we do not say "heavenly Father," but simply, "Abba, Father."

Being in the enjoyment of the filial relationship and being in the Spirit, to faith "in heavenly places in Christ," we are where the Father is. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the [children] of God." "Beloved, now are we the [children] of God." In the presence of our God and the Father in Christ we could not say heavenly Father, as if

there were all the distance from earth to heaven between us.

My children do not address me as at a distance, but simply say "Father," for they are with me under the same roof in this city. But if they were in a foreign land it would not be improper for one of them to write and use the name of the place in connection with the word "father." We have the "Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is never the object of prayer, but is always spoken of in the Word as the medium and power of prayer, praise and fellowship, as also of suffering and service. If this be right to address the Spirit in prayer in the Christian dispensation, why is there no instance of it in the Christian Scriptures? Because He is here on earth and in the saint. "The Spirit is life." He identifies Himself with the saints, and is the divine source, energy, power and originator of their spiritual thoughts, affections, feelings and emotions.

The "praying in the Holy Ghost" is "according to the Scriptures," not praying to the Holy Spirit. Adoringly do I own the Holy Spirit as one of the Persons in the Godhead, and when I pray to God, of course it is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but then this is in regard to Godhead. But when it is the several Persons in the Godhead in connection with the work of redemption and the Church, we never find any example of prayer to the Holy Spirit, nor any injunction to pray to the Holy Spirit. He is in us.

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost... which ye have of God." And again, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, He causes Christ to dwell in the heart by faith, and seeing that He now characterizes the new life which He imparts, we never find that He in us is the object of address in praise, prayer or worship, for this would lead us to pray to a power in ourselves, and to be occupied with His work in us, instead of with Christ, who is the object of faith and whom the Holy Spirit delights to glorify.

In Rom. 8, the Holy Spirit is the power of life in the Christian, though also clearly seen as distinct from the believer. He is not only a living force within us, but the living God as well. Hence there is a moral propriety in not praying to the Holy Spirit. What commands our faith and practice is that in the Scriptures there is neither precept nor example for praying to the Holy Spirit, as we sometimes hear in prayers and hymns. But Scripture is wiser than our hymn-writers, and it never tells us to invoke the Holy Spirit.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Jude 20, 21.

The Deliverance of the Jews

The Christian has the privilege of knowing beforehand the things that are coming on the earth, although they do not concern him directly. His hope is a heavenly one where judgments cannot come. Those judgments happen preparatory to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. The Christian awaits the coming of the "Morning Star," before the darkness which now shrouds the world is dispelled by the rising of the "Sun of Righteousness," which fills the world with blessing—he will then shine forth as the sun with Christ in the Father's kingdom.

Isa. 18, in just 7 verses, gives us a complete history of the events which take place at the time the Jews return to their land in a state of apostasy. The Lord does not interfere, but allows things to go on apparently prospering, and Israel even having the appearance of fruit-bearing in the land of their fathers. The nations who had favored this return then recommence the old hostility to the Jews who become their prey. The Lord then interferes with His mighty arm, and brings a remnant of them as a present to Himself to the place of His name—the Mount Zion which He loved.

Verses 1-3: The prophet pronounces "woe" upon some great unnamed nation which lies outside the rivers of Ethiopia, or Cush (the descendants of Cush, we are told, made a settlement on both these rivers), the Euphrates and the Nile. We read in Genesis 15:18, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." First, he pronounces woe upon this nation, which is evidently a great maritime power, and which is engaged in favoring and helping the return of the people of Israel, "scattered and peeled," wonderful from their beginning hitherto. Then he calls all the inhabitants of the world and dwellers upon the earth to see and to hear.

Verse 4: The Lord then tells the prophet that He will take His rest, and consider in His dwelling place all that goes on—yet He does not interfere. He allows man to run on to the height of his madness and folly, that He may show him his powerlessness.

Verses 5, 6: Before the harvest: this is a figure of separating and gathering for the vintage of judgment (both figures are used in many places of Scripture, e.g. Rev. 14:14-20), when the returned Jews seem to be spreading out as a vine in the land. There will even be the appearance of fruit-bearing putting itself forth, "the sour grape is ripening in the flower." The vine is an old figure of the nation (Isa. 5; Psa. 80:8-16, etc.). All is then destroyed. The old hatred of the nations is turned against Israel. They are cut down and destroyed.

The emissaries of Satan shall summer upon them, and the nations shall winter upon them. All that appeared so promising is dashed to the ground. The time of the "great tribulation" has come, but a remnant shall be saved out of it. In the language of Deut. 28:26, "Thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away." Or, as the Lord Jesus talking of this time of trouble says, "For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (See Matt. 24:28-44.)

Verse 7: "In that time"—in such a state of things as will then be—"shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts." They are a remnant of the people scattered and peeled, a people terrible, or wonderful, from their beginning hitherto. The Lord brings to Himself a present—spared remnant of the residue of His people to the place of the Lord of hosts, the Mount Zion, which He loved. That little spot is His rest forever! "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Psa. 132:13, 14. Having refused nationally to receive the gospel of God's grace, they are saved through the judgments of the Lord which introduce the kingdom.

As to the Christian's hope, it is but one: the coming of the Lord Jesus to take His people out of the world before these judgments take place. He has promised this. He has said to them, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10.

The hour of temptation is detailed in Isa. 24, and takes place before the Lord of hosts reigns gloriously in Mount Zion and before His ancients. Isa. 25 tells us of the deliverance of the remnant of the Jews who say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 26 gives us the song of the delivered remnant and some details. Chapter 27 gives the completing of the work and the gathering of the 10 tribes to worship, with their brethren of Judah, the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem in the glorious days of the millennial age.

The Lord's coming is the hope of the Church. His appearing in glory with her after this tribulation, which happens between these events, is the deliverance of the Jews, and the introduction of the kingdom.

F. G. Patterson

The Assembly

The needs of an assembly are only opportunities to Christ to exercise His love-He nourishes it; as the object of His tender love-He cherishes it. The assembly is to learn this love NOW where she needs it-with Satan and the world to hinder. She will enjoy it fully when NEED has passed away forever, when she has Christ HIMSELF-His love in all its fullness-face to face.

Bible Challenger-09-September V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the name of a river in Damascus whose waters were reported to be better than all the waters of Israel. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 229.)

1. The name of a river that compasses Havilah where gold was to be found. [1]
2. The time of year when the Jordan River overflows all his banks. [1]
3. The way in which certain midwives were charged to "save" the daughters that were being born while casting the sons to a watery grave. [1]
4. Something that opened so the waters gushed out, as told in the recounting of the deeds of the Lord for His ancient people. [1]
5. Something that was wont to be made at a certain place in Macedonia where women often resorted. [1]
6. The addressee of a letter written by certain adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, seeking authority to cause a cessation of a building program. [1]
7. An animal Daniel saw in a vision having horns dissimilar in size. [1]

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

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-08-August Answers V.08

1. Sycamine Luke 17:6
2. Yield their fruit Lev. 26:4
3. Cedar 1 Chron. 22:4
4. Algum 2 Chron. 9:11
5. Mulberry 2 Sam. 5:24
6. Oak 2 Sam. 18:9
7. Reign thou over us Judg. 9:8
8. Elijah 1 Kings 19:2, 4

"And he ran before, and climbed up into a SYCAMORE tree to see Him; for He was to pass that way." Luke 19:4.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Is the bride the body of Christ? Some say Israel is the bride, and believers now are the body.

ANSWER: Israel is earthly, called to an earthly inheritance. The Church is heavenly, called to share with Christ in heavenly glory. The purposes of God for Israel and the nations are from the beginning of the world; the purposes of God for the Church are before the foundation of the world. It is the mystery of Christ and the Church which was hid in God, kept secret since the world began, till it was given to Paul to communicate, and was revealed then to His holy apostles and prophets. (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-27.)

Israel rejected and crucified their King. God raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, then the Holy Spirit came down to dwell in the Church, and every believer became in this way a member of the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:12, 13.)

In Eph. 5:22-33, the wife pictures the Church, and the husband pictures Christ. This mystic union is seen here in both ways, as His body and His bride.

In 2 Cor. 11:2, 3, the saints, or members of His body, are espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, and warned not to be like Eve, who hearkened to Satan's wiles.

Following out Rom. 16:26, we go back to the prophetic scriptures (Gen. 1:26). There in figure is Christ and the Church reigning. (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; 2 Tim. 2:12.)

In Gen. 2 we have Adam, the figure of Him that was to come (Rom. 5:14), set over all things, but no companion is found for him, and it is not good for him to be alone. The Lord God caused Adam

to fall into a deep sleep, and from his side took one of his ribs and made a woman out of it. When Adam saw her he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." He recognized her as part of himself, and this was needed to make the complete man (Gen. 5:2). What a picture this is of Christ and the Church. It could not be Israel, for Christ must die before He could have His heavenly bride. She is taken out of His side, made for Him and made from Him, and she is His fullness or complement. (Eph. 1:19-23.)

In Gen. 22 the figurative death and resurrection of Isaac pictures the Father and Son in the work of atonement. Then in chapter 24 the Father sends His Servant to call a bride for His Son, and He meets her at the well. He, the Servant, adorns her, and fits her to be the bride of Christ with jewels of silver (redemption), jewels of gold, and raiment suited for her heavenly calling. Then the journey follows, led by the Holy Spirit (the Servant) who takes care of her all the way till she meets her Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit is leading home to the Lamb His bride.

We might speak of Joseph as type of the risen Christ and His bride, and of Moses and his bride. Joseph's bride answers to Eph. 1:3, and Moses' bride answers to Phil. 1:29, for Moses was at that time a type of the rejected Christ (Ex. 2).

Then John in Revelation tells us of the marriage of the Lamb, and His wife who has made herself ready.

But that is in heaven, and Israel could not be there. Then in chapter 21:1-8, we get eternity, and there we see the Church, the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, that is, in all her fresh virgin beauty (Eph. 3:21). Think of it, transformed out of such sinners as you and I had been. Wonderful grace! And she is the dwelling place of God at the same time.

From Rev. 21:9 to 22:5, we see her as the bride, the Lamb's wife, displaying His glory to the world in the millennium. (John 17:23; Eph. 1:12; 2:7 'Thess. 1:10.) There Israel is at her gates, and angels also are under her, because she is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Israel is compared to a divorced woman now, who shall be restored, but always earthly. The Song of Solomon is about this earthly One. Jerusalem is the spouse, and the cities of Judah her companions, spoken of in this way as the object of her King's affections. We must remember it when we use that language in speaking of the Church.

John the Baptist in John 3:29, spoke of the Bridegroom. Israel's King was there, and he, a friend of the Bridegroom, rejoiced that He had come. But He, the King, was rejected, and John was beheaded, that God's great purpose concerning Christ and the Church should be fulfilled.

Here Am I; Send Me

Isaiah 6ISA 6

In the prophet Isaiah we have a beautiful and touching instance of the way in which the renewed heart responds to God's desires concerning others. All questions between the renewed heart and God are settled, not merely according to man's sense of need, but according to the claims of God's holiness.

Servant and prophet of Jehovah as Isaiah was, the revelation of His glory according to the claims of His holiness paralyzed all action in him, and left him with nothing but the sense of his own uncleanness, as well as that of the people of God among whom he served and prophesied. Until the "live coal" from off the altar that stood before the holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts touched his lips, he had not properly realized the relation in which Jehovah stood to His people, and to himself as one of them.

That relation was one of sovereign grace founded upon the sacrifice that was always under the eye of Jehovah, a sacrifice that would once for all meet every claim of God against His people. The efficacy of that sacrifice had now reached the prophet's conscience, and it set his heart free to serve the One whose perfect grace he tasted.

We must come as sinners to the cross to get peace, and start as saints from the cross to serve. When fully ready in conscience for the glory, we are then truly ready in heart for service.

C. Wolston

EDITORIAL: Judgment of the Living Nations

In a recent issue we wrote about "A Time of Many Nations." This month we add a few comments from C. E. Lunden on this subject.

When the tribulation begins, the Lord will judge providentially through such means as civil war, famine and economic collapse. Later He will deal directly with the apostates of the earth, including Israel and the revived Roman Empire who dare, under the leadership of the beast and the false prophet, to make war with Him and fall under His wrath as God the Almighty. Christendom, too, falls under His righteous vengeance.

Then the Son of man shall come, sit upon the throne of His glory, gather the nations before Him and judge them. This is the sessional judgment of the living nations. Psa. 83, Joel 3 and Matt. 25 refer to these nations and their judgment.

"They [a confederacy of ten nations] have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." Psa. 83:4.

"Let the heathen [the nations] be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." Joel 3:12.

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. 25:31-33.

This judgment of the living will be final like the great white throne judgment when the dead are raised and judged.

The ten nations led by Edom (see Obadiah) will be the nations who will lay siege to Israel just before Gog the Assyrian enters the land (Zech. 12:2).

Gog with the ten nations, Israel's neighbors, will attack Jerusalem, but Gog's army will be slain on the mountains of Israel.

Those of Gog and the ten nations who are goats will be judged at that time and cast into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:46; Isa. 30:31-33). The sheep, of course, will enter into the kingdom. Ed.

Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord,

and not a God afar off?

Can any hide himself in secret places

that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.

Do not I fill heaven and earth?

saith the Lord.

" Jer. 23:23, 24

Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?

J. Armet

Zech. 4:10 ZEC 4:10

The World's Great Things

In the world this is the day of great things. In matters of warfare men were once satisfied to number their armies in thousands, but now thousands are despised—nations must have their millions. In matters of finance, where once fortunes were rated in columns of five figures, now some have fortunes of ten figures or eleven figures, to single inheritances. The fabled Croesus would be only a small capitalist in today's rating. In rural life where once the patient husbandman tilled his dozen acres, now great machines upturn miles of earth that yield millions of bushels of grain from single farms. In matters of education, universities, colleges, seminaries and lesser institutes multiply without end, and multitudes pursue their eager search for knowledge and degrees. Metropolises thrive where cities once stood; great cities have replaced villages. Bands of steel rails and super highways encircle the continents, and pulsations of power throb in every industrial center. In short—the world has ceased to care for the small or the insignificant.

The Effect on Christendom

If this were all, the Christian need not be concerned, for why should he care for the poor world's boastings or accomplishments? He knows its end—that it is doomed to judgment. He realizes, too, that he is not of it—that he belongs to another world.

But this is not all. The world is not alone in its boasting. Professing Christians have become infected with this same vaunting spirit, with the sad result that they glory in their shame. (Phil. 3:19.) The resulting condition is that no Christian activity is recognized as possessing any merit unless it can be flourished before the world as worthy of comparison with the world's great achievements. So the lust for great memberships, "Five-year Programs," "Men and Millions" movements, and "Evangelization of the World in this Generation" are phrases mouthed with pride by professed Christians on every side. Evangelists who cannot number their converts by hundreds and thousands are not wanted. Evangelism has become capitalized, and numbers are made the measure of success in God's work.

God's Little Things

The Christian should not use the world's ways to do God's work. Will he then be dismayed that he can do so little? God forbid! Apply the sharp sword of God's Word to these inflated bubbles of man's pride and see how much abides the test. What do I read in God's Word of all these modern schemes in connection with the work of God? The Word speaks of a narrow way and the few there be that find it, and of a little flock to whom the Father gives the kingdom. It is those who have a little strength who meet the Lord's commendation (Rev. 3:8). "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Luke 19:17. Wood, hay and stubble appear huge before the fire (1 Cor. 3:12), while gold, silver and precious stones seem small. God's reward is after, not before the fire. There is no reward for ashes.

God's Examples

If I take, for example, the prophets, the Lord and the apostles, what do I learn of their activity for God? I see Jonathan and his armor-bearer, with God, accomplishing more in one night than Israel with their hosts in forty days of human endeavor (1 Sam. 14:1-16), and David with God's help using his sling to defeat Goliath. The Lord Himself was content to linger at Sychar's well that He might quench the soul-thirst of one poor outcast woman, or to sacrifice His hours of sleep to enlighten one honest Pharisee. He was content to spend a day with a despised tax collector, or to be satisfied at the close of His life's ministry to have a mere one hundred and twenty waiting for His promise at Jerusalem (Acts 1:15).

Philip could leave his work in Samaria to minister Christ to a lone man in the desert. Peter could walk a matter of 25 miles to preach the gospel to one family (Acts 10). The great Apostle Paul could minister to a handful of women at the seaside, or declare the way of salvation to a solitary sinner at midnight. At the close of Paul's life, many of the little assemblies which were the result of his life's work could be comfortably housed in private homes, and yet he never apologized for his lack of numbers. (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 1:2.)

Your Day of Small Things

Now as Christians, in the light of Scripture, shall you and I despise the day of small things? No! Let us obey the word of Jeremiah, when he said, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." Jer. 45:5. God counts it no little thing to be faithful to His Word, and to do His will in a day when His Word is deliberately ignored and flatly disobeyed for the sake of great numbers and religious show.

Count it well worth your while to speak of Jesus to that fellow classmate or your co-worker. Give a little gospel tract to your grocery clerk, the salesman at the door, your seat-mate on the bus. Prize highly your little class in the Sunday school. It is better to lead one soul as a lost sinner to the feet of Jesus to receive salvation than to deceive a thousand into an empty profession. How much better it is to have our blessed Lord's "well done" for a little done right than His censure and the world's applause for great things which His Word unsparingly condemns. (Rev. 3:15-18.)

Bible Challenger Clues-09-September V.08

1. 2 Timothy; 2. 1 Samuel; 3. Mark; 4. Judges; 5. Daniel; 6. Luke; 7. 1 Kings; 8. Acts.

The Life

A. H. Rule

We are told in 1 John 5:19 that "the whole world lieth in wickedness [the wicked one]," and that we "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all [Jews as well as Gentiles] had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh... and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. 2:2, 3. What a solemn statement as to the condition of man in the world! The whole world lying in the wicked one. Children of disobedience who are energized by the prince of this world, and by nature are the children of wrath! How terrible, and how absolutely hopeless the condition!

Yet this is the condition of the "first man" as described by the Spirit of God, and that too, after four thousand years of testing, with every appliance for his recovery. But there was no recovery for the first man. The ruin was complete and irretrievable. He had fallen under the power of Satan, and his life was blighted and utterly corrupted by sin. Without law, he was lawless; under law, a transgressor. In the presence of grace, in God come down to earth—revealed in the Son—he was a God-hater. Such was the terrible condition of man in whom the fountain of life was corrupted and ruined.

Blessed be God, another life has been manifested in the very scene where the first was destroyed—a life that subsisted in the Son with the Father from all eternity, and was manifested in Him down here on earth before the eyes of men. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

This was a new beginning for man in grace, and the revelation of a new life for man. It was a life that was before all worlds and before all creatures, and a life that Satan could not touch, nor sin corrupt. This new beginning is life revealed in the Person of the eternal Son in manhood down here. And so the Apostle says, in his first epistle, "That which was from the beginning." It is not the same as "in the beginning" in John's gospel where the eternity of the Word is the subject. "In the beginning was the Word." The Word existed in the beginning; He did not begin to exist then, but existed, and moreover, spoke into existence everything that began to exist.

In John's epistle, "the beginning" is the beginning of the manifestation of eternal life on earth, in the Person of God's Son become man. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among men here below, and through the veil of flesh His glory shone out before their eyes. They saw Him as an only begotten with a Father, and the fullness of grace and truth was there for man. What a wonderful beginning! He was the "Word of life." "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." "Light" and "life," "grace and truth," shone out in Him amid "the darkness" of this world. It was a wonderful display! It was God Himself come down into all the misery and wretchedness of man—God manifested in the flesh. All that God is in light and love, truth and holiness, righteousness and grace, shone out.

"The life was manifested," and in this life there was the display of all that God could be in eternal blessing for His lost and guilty creatures. The life was manifested in the Person of the eternal Son become man, and dwelling among men. The light of life shone out amid the darkness and shone for every man, not for Jews only, but for Gentiles as well. It was the brightness of heaven itself let down into the darkness here and shining for all, just as the sun, the mighty orb of the day, shines for the whole world.

I repeat, it was in the Person of the Son, and when men saw Him, they saw the life. Faith saw the life and rejoiced in its light. The apostles were attracted to its glory, shining out in Him, and became the witnesses to others of that wondrous life. In every word He spoke, in every movement, in every act, they saw the life shining out in its divine nature and character. They heard it, they saw it, they gazed on it, they handled it with their hands. The Apostle who wrote this epistle could say, "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." 1 John 1:2.

Yes, they saw the life, and followed its pathway of light through this dark world. They witnessed its patient ministry of love and mercy in ten thousand ways relieving from the misery and wretchedness sin had brought in. Then last of all and greatest of all, they saw it meeting man's utmost need in that terrible cross where all that God is in majesty and lowliness shone out in the judgment of sin. All that He is in love and grace shone out in righteous blessing for man. The resurrection witnessed eternal victory over sin and over all the power of Satan.

The clouds of darkness were now broken. God had come out and the clear light was now shining out in all the glory of grace, witnessing unhindered and unlimited blessing for man. The apostles saw, believed, and possessed. They were made partakers of the life, and brought into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The revelation of this life was a revelation of blessing to them and all who receive their word, bringing into a fellowship which lifts the soul above the circumstances of misery and sorrow through which we pass in this world. They saw the life displayed, and not only were quickened with it, but also drank in its spirit and character as they beheld its outgoings in the blessed Son of God.

Partakers of the divine nature, they were also filled with common thoughts, desires, delights, and joys with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is an established and known relationship of which Christ is the measure and character. Who can estimate the blessedness of this?

Now the Apostle says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." v. 3.

The apostles saw, and have borne witness; we have believed, and enter into fellowship with them. What more could we ask, on this side of the glory, than to be brought into a fellowship like this? How unspeakably great the blessing! Surely this is enough to satisfy and fill the soul. It is by faith we enter into it now, but it is what we shall have in glory. We are not there yet, but it is all unfolded to us, and faith drinks it in. The heart and affections are molded by it, and find their home there.

Teach Them

"Thou shalt teach them diligently
unto thy children."

Deuteronomy 6:7

What should you teach them?

To love the Lord God with all their heart (Deut. 6:5).

Who should be taught?

Your children (v. 7), and the responsibility doesn't stop there. We are to teach our grandchildren also (Deut. 4:9). Timothy knew the blessing of learning of "the unfeigned faith" from both his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5).

When should it be taught?

When sitting at home, when walking by the way, when lying down and rising up—continually (Deut. 6:7).

Faith's Paradoxes

"Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing."

2 Cor. 6:10 2CO 6:10

I often weep, yet I am not sad;

Often in sorrow, I yet am glad;

Chastened sore, yet I shall not die;

Poor I am, yet how rich am I!

Naked, yet clothed in fairest dress;

Nothing I have, yet I all possess.

Losses and troubles upon me rain;

I count the losses my richest gain;

I am a fool in the world's esteem;

Folly and madness, my choice they deem;

Christ's reproach is my richest prize;

God's folly makes me divinely wise.

I pass through rivers, yet am not drowned;

I walk the waves as on solid ground;

The hottest fires cannot singe or burn;

The hosts of darkness cannot o'erturn;

While He that dwelt in the bush is near,

And God is with me, what should I fear?

Say, is the devil more strong than God?

Or Pharaoh's scepter than Moses's rod?

Lo! in the river and in the sea,

In the hot furnace, He's still with me;

In the dark valley, and in the grave,

Jehovah-Jesus is strong to save.

Soon shall the weary night be o'er,
The sun will rise to set no more;
Soon shall the winter's cold rain be past,
The turtle be heard in the land at last;
And soon shall the glorious Bridegroom say,
"Arise, My fair one, and come away."
Oh, what a moment the past will seem,
Vanished away like a troubled dream!
Not worth a sigh will its grief be thought,
When to His presence we're safely brought;
Praise our employment ceaseless be,
Chiefest among ten thousand He!

J. G. D.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Matthew 6:26

Waiting for Him

W. Scott

We are in great danger in the present day of losing sight of this most blessed truth of the primary hope of the saints. "We walk by faith, not by sight," says the apostle, but we reverse God's order, and alas! too often walk by sight, and not by faith. The doctrine of the "coming of the Lord" is accepted, but how many believers are living, and contented to live, in a state practically opposed to that which characterized the saints at Thessalonica. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." 1 Thess. 1:9, 10.

Before the Lord left the sorrowing disciples, He gave them the promise that He would come again: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. The disciples were sorrowful because their Lord was going to leave them, but what did the Lord Jesus give them to raise them above their sorrows? He gave them the hope that He would come again. He would not always leave them down here in the place of His rejection—in the world which had refused Him, their Lord and Master. They could not expect to be treated any better than their Lord. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Then again, "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." John 15:19.

If all their hopes and expectations as to the One for whom they had left all had ended here, then they might still have sorrowed, but the Lord revealed to them another thing. It was that He had not left them down here to get on the best way they could, in a scene where everything was against them, and the enemy of their souls opposing them at every step. Had this been the case, it would have been a very pitiful one. The Lord told them that it was necessary for them that He should leave them for a time. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7.

By the Lord's absence we are really gainers, for He has given us blessings that we could never have possessed had He Himself remained with His disciples down here. He is gone to prepare a place for us in the Father's house, and soon He is coming again to take us to be with Himself. How soon we know not, and His desire is that we should be waiting for Him. This is our hope—He is coming again. He has left us His word for it, "I will come again."

There is one thing that will give the soul a deeper longing for the Lord's return, and that is a deepening knowledge of the One that is coming. Who is the One that is coming? What has He done for us? It is the Son of God who left the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. He humbled Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, was seen walking down here as a man, the meek and lowly Jesus of whom it is recorded, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." His was a life of perfect, unswerving obedience to the will of God. He could say of Himself, and He was the only one that ever could say it, "I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. This very

obedience to His Father's will brought Him down even into the dust of death (Psa. 22:15).

He was a perfect man, the only perfect man that ever lived on this earth. He was just, but He suffered for us the unjust. He knew no sin, but He was made sin for us. On the cross He suffered for us when He offered Himself without spot to God, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

Now we can say, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1:7. We have liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We can find our deepest joy and delight in the presence of God, because His blood cleanseth us from all sin. And He has not only given all that He had—all that He possessed, but blessed be His name, He gave Himself. Could He give more? Impossible! By this He has not only met our need, but He has also glorified God, and brought us into the presence of God as perfect as He is Himself. We are "holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight."

He is now seated in glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and He is waiting there for the moment when He shall come and take us to be forever with Himself to share in His glory. He will not be fully satisfied till we are enjoying His presence, till we are with Him where He is. He is waiting there and we are waiting here till we hear that "shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Then the dead in Christ shall rise, and we shall be changed, when our bodies of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His own body of glory, and when we shall enjoy Himself and the fullness of His love forever.

By the Lord's grace may we keep this blessed hope ever and always fresh before our souls, and be in living association and communion with Himself while passing through this world, not as those of it, but as those separated to Him who gave Himself for us. May we be so occupied with Him that we are really and truly waiting for Him, looking for and expecting to hear His voice when "this mortal shall have put on immortality," and "death is swallowed up in victory."

May He preserve us and keep us from being in any degree in the condition of that "evil servant" who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." And may we be ever and always watching and waiting for Him.

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come

will come, and will not tarry."

Hebrews 10:37

Bible Challenger-10-October V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word denoting something soft, usually found in kings' houses. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 260.)

1. Something left at Troas which an apostle later desired because of his cool confinement. [1]
2. That which each of the 85 persons was wearing when slain by a certain Edomite, thus identifying them as priests of the Lord. [2]
3. That on which no man ever sews a piece of new cloth, thus precluding a worsened condition. [2]
4. The number of garment changes that was once offered for correctly answering a riddle within seven days. [1]
5. A head covering usually worn in cold climates, but also by three faithful men in an exceedingly hot environment. [1]
5. That which a two-coat owner was enjoined to do upon hearing of someone who had none. [3]
6. Something a certain Old Testament prophet was wearing which subsequently he rent in twelve pieces, foretelling the breakup of a great kingdom. [2]
7. Something with which a New Testament prophet bound himself to foretell how an apostle would be confined in Jerusalem. [1]
8. Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury.

R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-09-September Answers V.08

1. Pison Gen. 2:11
2. Harvest Josh. 3:15
3. Alive Ex. 1:22
4. Rock Psa. 105:41
5. Prayer Acts 16:13
6. Artaxerxes Ezra 4:11
7. Ram Dan. 8:3

"Are not Abana and PHARPAR, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." 2 Kings 5:12.

The Death of Christ and Our High Priest on High

In Heb. 2 there are four grounds for the death of Christ.

First, the majesty of God: "It became Him... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." That is, perfected in the glory is what is meant all through here by "perfect." If He took up our cause, He must go through what was needed for us.

Second, what is mentioned last, but what is foundation truth, "To make reconciliation [or propitiation] for the sins of the people." Sacrifice there must be, and He was that Himself.

Third, He suffers, for He must sympathize with us down here.

Fourth, to destroy the power of Satan.

For all this it was that He was made a little lower than the angels. Christ has gone through all that was needed to bring us to God. And thus He is available for all, for everything in fact.

Then follows the consideration of the shadow (not the very image) of good things to come; under the law, the priests stood in contrast with Christ, specially in respect of their own infirmity, and so of their competency to sympathize. They were in the same things at the same time, and they could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way, for that they also were compassed with infirmity.

That would not do for us, and still less so, because if they themselves were in the infirmity when they had the sympathy, they must always stay down here on earth, and thus through them the people could go no further than earth. If, therefore, that had been so with the priesthood of Christ, it would have ended where it was exercised. Indeed it does so now, for it is in heaven and cannot, of course, go further. The veil indicated that if the high priest only went in once a year, other priests could not go in at all.

But now that redemption is accomplished, the veil is rent; the holiest and the holy are both one, and we are made nigh to God Himself. And so all through this epistle you will find contrast. Thus it is not now priests dying one after another, but the power of an endless life.

Then sacrifices were repeated; now in Christianity we have one sacrifice once for all, never to be repeated. It is the groundwork on which priesthood is to be exercised forever, and it goes on until there is no more need of it. In the glory we shall not need it.

There is also this complete difference: namely, we go into the holiest itself, and our High Priest is not compassed with infirmity (for even in the sense in which He was so on earth, all that is over). And therein we find the connection between the trials and sorrows here, and the place into which we are taken where Christ has gone.

Before going up on high, our High Priest went through everything that was needed in order that He might sympathize with us, help us and lead us on. But now that He is exercising priesthood, all

that is over. We have perfect boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood, so much so that I want my heart to be in the place where everything is settled. I want to have done with the things that hinder my heart from being there (and there are plenty of them), dimming the perception of these heavenly things. The Lord, therefore, puts us through various temptations of heart and spirit that we may really know ourselves. We need, not simply the fact of being kept safe, though that is true all along the way, but also the sense we are being kept by the power of God, through faith. That is the way we are kept.

J. N. Darby

Rivers of Living Water

Life flows from the divine Center. "He that believeth on Me... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (See John 7:37, 38.) This has a dispensational aspect, but it applies in the assembly at any time, for the refreshment of all, taking in ministry to the saints, the young in Sunday school and those out in the work; all is related to the divine Center.

The Second Coming of the Lord

Watch after watch has passed, and our Lord has not yet come. However, "I come quickly" abides in all its eternal freshness and truth, and long ago the Spirit said, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." How soon, then, He may be here! In the first watch of the night the early days of the Church) there were some saved ones on earth who waited for Him, and as far as we can gather from the Spirit's record of their state, they were so deeply attached to the Lord Jesus as the hope of their hearts that they were ready to open to Him immediately. They "went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Matt. 25).

This blessed hope, however, soon declined; it did not last long. Worldly associations and circumstances took hold of their hearts, and so far displaced Christ that the appalling sentence could be truthfully written, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Yes, "all slumbered and slept," so that this bright and blessed hope for a long time was lost.

The time of the second watch arrived and passed away, and the Bridegroom did not come. But "at midnight," the closing moments of the second watch, instead of our Lord coming, He sent forth an awakening cry: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Then our Lord's prophetic words were fulfilled, for there was a general awakening, and hearts in different parts of the earth were stirred toward Him. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."

This was "at midnight" at the close of the second watch, a few centuries ago. We are told it was at midnight when this cry went forth, and then it was that the third watch began.

Although for many centuries the blessed hope of our Lord's coming was, generally speaking, lost, yet there was occasionally an individual who had something of the Lord's mind as to this. For example, a friend of the writer lately copied the following inscription from a monument: "Here lies, expecting the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the body of Henry Clifford, first earl of Cumberland, who died in Skipton Castle, April 22nd, 1541"

The third watch then had not only begun, but was far advanced. According to the Jewish mode of reckoning, it extended from midnight to three in the morning, when the fourth watch commenced. This was the "cock-crowing." We are therefore now some way into the fourth watch.

The fourth watch goes on to the beginning of the day. In Matt. 14, where we see our Lord alone in the mountain praying, and, leaving that, walking on the sea to comfort His disciples, and to bring them safely to their earthly rest and blessing (typical of the Jewish remnant to be brought into blessing after we are raptured), it was in the fourth watch of the night.

It is well also to note that while at first they were distressed, they were soon comforted and brought safely to land. Then blessing extended to others on the earth, which we know will be the case with and through the Jewish remnant when the Deliverer comes out of Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob.

The Lord's coming for us cannot be far off. Though we look not for events, but for the Lord Himself, yet many events show that "the day," which sets in after the Church is gone, is approaching. Speaking according to prophetic instruction, the day of the Lord begins at sunrise, or the Lord coming with His saints in manifested glory as "the Sun of righteousness" to bring healing to His ancient people, to shine gloriously on them that fear His name, and to tread down the wicked and make them as ashes under the soles of their feet (Mal. 4:2, 3).

But "the bright and morning star" for which we wait, must be before that. As such, He is the Hope of the Church of God. His last presentation of Himself to His Church on earth, to comfort our hearts and attract them heavenward to Himself, was, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." He adds, "Surely I come quickly." What should our warm and constant response to such grace be then but, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"?

How very solemn then, as well as cheering, are the words of our Lord, "If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so [that is, watching], blessed are those servants."

May we hear His voice to us in these encouraging words, and not only wait for Him, but also watch; for He said, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13:37.

Our Bodies Shall Be Changed

"The Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21.

It is important to see the correct translation of part of this verse; it is "shall transform our body of humiliation," not "vile body." The body is not looked at in Scripture as vile. Our bodies are fitted through grace to be presented to God as living sacrifices. They are bodies of humiliation because they are marked with weakness and infirmity, with the possibility of dissolution and death. But the body in Scripture is not regarded as vile.

This is the reason the monkish idea of punishing the body as something vile is all wrong. When Paul speaks about buffeting his body and keeping it under, he is not speaking of the physical frame, but the lusts that are in the flesh. The human body is not regarded as vile and may be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

With the Christian, that body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to glorify God in it. This body may finally break up and go to pieces, but by-and-by it is going to be changed for one that will never break up or go to pieces—a body that is fitted for glory. When God gave us a body and put us in this world, He gave us a body that was fitted for this world. When He takes us to glory, He will give us a body that is fitted for glory.

C. H. Brown

Editorial: When Money Fails

In Luke 16:9 it says, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail..." In another translation it reads, "When it fail." This is readily understood today when, in many countries, the money used loses its value rapidly. People themselves will surely fail, but we can daily see the changes in the value of money (the mammon of unrighteousness).

Currencies are rated against the U.S. dollar, and each other, as well as gold. One example of the changing value of money is that inflation in Brazil is now about 30% per month. Brazil is one of many countries that uses much U.S. currency. Information I have received through the head of a local bank suggests that about 50% of all the currency of the U.S. is outside the U.S.

Recently we received this paragraph from a highly respected, influential Canadian banker: "Through my work, the total fragility of most world financial systems has become so clear. More than ever before, the world's finances are closely connected as a result of international trade and electronics. Self-discipline is gradually being abandoned, and the will to work hard and do things right is becoming a thing of the past. As a result, the events described in the tribulation are not just something awful, off in the future, but are rather the possible reaction of desperate and wicked men to a world system which will inevitably break down."

When will it break down? As they frequently say in Latin America, "Dios sabe"—God knows. We do not know, but the warning signs are here. Meanwhile, the believer need not be alarmed, but rather stirred up to use the wonderful opportunities to do what we learn farther on in Luke 19. The certain nobleman called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds and said unto them, "Occupy till I come." The J. N. Darby translation says, "Trade while I am coming."

There is none so noble as our Lord Jesus Christ. He has gone into heaven and given believers the privilege as His servants to use for Him all that He has committed to us. The words "while I am coming" make it seem very near at hand.

You may be interested to know that the paper bills—the dollars that we use—are 6 and 3/16 inches long. Two bills laid end to end are a little longer than one foot. Just to make it easy in our calculations, let us lap them so that two are exactly one foot. When placed this way, to make one mile it would take 10,560 bills. The measurement of the earth at the equator is stated to be 24,902 miles. If we multiply that distance by the number of bills in one mile, the astonishing figure is 262,965,120. In order to try to understand in a more physical way, you may want to see how long a distance the 1.4 trillion bills that make the cash payout of the United States each year would be.

In the time of famine in Egypt we read in Gen. 47:15, "And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth." In contrast to people and money that do fail, we have assurance of the Lord who does not fail. Surely we, too, can claim the promise given in Deut. 31:8, "And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." (See also 1 Cor. 13:8.) Ed.

The Standard of Individual Holiness

Whatever the condition of the professing Church, it is the privilege of each individual Christian to enjoy as high communion and to tread as high a path of individual devotedness as ever was known in the very brightest days of the Church's history. We must never draw a plea from the condition of things around us for lowering the standard of individual holiness.

Indifference — Neutrality — Self-Assertion

W. Trotter

Revelation 3REV 3

It will be found that these three—indifference, neutrality and self-assertion—are the great leading features of the professing Church, fully developed in its last phase. Those whose eyes are both opened and anointed at the present time see very distinctly how rapidly the growth of these evil principles is being developed. So all the elements which will reach maturity in full-blown Laodiceanism are being rapidly hurried to the front. But to see this in the midst of the clouds of dust which Satan is perpetually raising, there must be that which Scripture describes as the "senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Heb. 5:14.

The first great mark of infection with this evil principle is the indifference to Christ as Lord, which very plainly displays itself, though in a form and guise which deceive the unwary. It is true that in terms the authority of Christ is not denied, but practically it is not recognized. And, moreover, there are various shades of this, as of every evil thing, but the question is not the amount which may be accredited to us, but whether we are through grace entirely apart from it ourselves.

Has He not recently, as our Lord, given a very solemn proof of His authority as well as His right to sift and try and test that with which His name has been and is still associated on earth? And are there not many ways and forms of saying to Him, "What doest Thou?" Now what shall we say to the Lord's contention, the Lord's test, the Lord's voice like many waters, and the Lord's eyes as a flame of fire? Alas for us all if our eyes are not open to see this, and if we can rise no higher than men and their ways!

It is solemn to remember how the road has been prepared so that His way should not be perceived. The enemy has skillfully set traps to catch the feet of the saints of God. It is well for us to remember the character of his opposition now. Violence and corruption are the two great weapons by which Satan has wrought from the first, and the last is the more to be dreaded, because more subtle. "The wiles of the devil" have now to be withstood on God's ground, and we need the whole armor of God, buckled on, and the spirit of dependence maintained in order successfully to resist the foe.

Where this is not the case, as the story of the Gibeonites in Joshua sorrowfully illustrates, we fall a prey to the corrupting wiles of the devil. It will display itself where the battle rages most fiercely. In Laodicea there will be an indifference to Christ as Lord, which is deeply heartbreaking. There will be a lack of conscience and spiritual affection which would secure His blessed name from being associated with that which is repugnant to Him who is holy and true. And last, where this corruption gains entrance, there will be exhibited an antagonism to His thoughts and mind which is most solemn to contemplate.

Neutrality

The next characteristic mark of the professing Church in its closing state is neutrality, "neither cold nor hot." It is very solemn to see that indifference to Christ is the producing cause of this lukewarm state. In Laodicea He is outside, and they are neutral inside!

The saints, if true to Christ, would be intolerant to evil; patience and long-suffering would assuredly mark them in their actions as well as in their spirit. But where these blessed qualities are pleaded for a toleration of sin, and a course of action is attempted to be founded or based upon this, it is clearly the spirit of this neutrality concerning which the Lord says to Laodicea in His indignation, "I would thou wert cold or hot." Moreover, on heavenly ground there can be no such principle. "Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?" is the abiding illustration and witness of this great fact.

May I not appeal to another solemn witness of what I am setting forth? If the history of God's testimony during the past century be prayerfully read and pondered, it will be seen that at this very day the fruit of this principle of neutrality abides. Oh, for eyes to see and hearts to feel for Christ in all this. Then it will be clear to us as taught of God that the path of safety is the path of faith, and that holiness is, as it were, the very pavement of that way, and that Christ's company is enjoyed by those who walk in that way. This and this alone can suit Him, and He gives us to know how blessed it is for us.

We rejoice that "there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." It is a divine path because it is above the wisdom and knowledge of the most acute creature. Moreover, this wisdom cannot be procured by man as such, for he "knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.... The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Job 28:7, 8, 13-15, 19

Such, then, is the nature and value of the path of faith and wisdom in God's estimate of it. When He further proclaims its character to men, notice His words: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job 28:28.

Self-Assertion

The last feature in Laodicea, which I will notice here, is the miserable self-assertion and self-complacency evinced in the language, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Oh, imagine such words, and the blessed Lord outside! This is the full development of Laodiceanism. It is found alongside indifference to Christ and a luke-warmness which is neither cold nor hot. Does it not become all His saints to guard against this spirit?

God calls it "miserable, and poor." How soon any of us might be corrupted and infected with it. Things which are all right in themselves may be used by Satan in his wiles to ensnare us with this spirit. For instance, if ourselves, our service, our work, our usefulness, are before our eyes instead of Christ, how soon the spirit of Laodicea will enfold us in the meshes of its self-complacent net! Christ alone is our safety and rest. To keep His Word and not deny His name is within the reach of "little strength." Yet, it is also our preservation as our comfort and joy.

May the Lord in great grace preserve His own in this day from the principles we have been reviewing. May He also in sovereign mercy rescue from their power and influence any who have fallen under them.

One would not doubt his natural existence because he had a headache. Neither should he doubt his spiritual existence because his heart is not as happy as he wished it were.

Apostasy

J. N. Darby

The day of the apostasy is hastening on with rapid strides, and also the day in which the Lord shall come to snatch His own away. The present moment is of so solemn a character that I feel constrained to address you with this word of exhortation.

Godly men everywhere, who watch the signs of the times, see the moment approaching which shall terminate the present acting of grace. The time has evidently arrived when one must speak plainly and decisively to ask you where you are and what you are about.

You have by grace, which has shined brighter and brighter as it has approached its termination, been gathered out of the seething mass of idolatry and wickedness which now threatens Christendom and the world with an overthrow more awful than that of Sodom and Gomorrah of old. The question is whether you are adequately impressed with the responsibility, as well as the blessedness, of the ground you are on, and walking like men and women whose eyes have been opened.

Believe me, there has never been in the history of the world such a time as the present, and Satan is occupied with none as he is with you. His occupation with you is the more to be feared because of the subtlety of his operations. His object is to withdraw your attention from Christ, while you suppose you are on safe ground and have nothing to fear. He would destroy you with the very truth itself. For mark the subtlety: you are on safe ground, but only while Christ is your all in all. Here is where Satan is drawing some away. Interpose anything between your soul and Christ, and your Philadelphia becomes Laodicea. Your safe ground is as unsafe as the rest of Christendom; your strength is gone from you, and you become weak like any ordinary mortal.

Some of you are young and recently converted, or brought to the right ways of the Lord, and you do not know the depths of Satan. But you are hereby solemnly warned of your peril, and if mischief overtake you, you cannot plead ignorance. Again I say, Satan has his eye especially upon you for the purpose of interposing the world in some form between your soul and Christ. He cares not how little, or in what form. If you knew but how little will answer his purpose, you would be alarmed. It is not by that which is gross or shameful; such is the development, not the beginning of evil. It is not by anything glaring that he seeks to ruin you, but in small and seemingly harmless trifles—those that would not shock nor offend anyone as things go, and yet these constitute the deadly and insidious poison, destined to ruin your testimony and withdraw you from Christ.

Do you ask what are these alarming symptoms and where are they seen? The question only shows what is the character of the opiate at work. You are being infected with the spirit of the world. Your dress, your manner, your talk, your lack of spirituality betray it. There is a dead weight, a restraint, a want of power that reveals itself as plainly as if your heart were visibly displayed and its thoughts publicly read. A form of godliness without power is to be seen among you as plainly as in Christendom generally.

It must be Christ or the world. It cannot be—ought not to be—Christ and the world. God's grace in drawing you out of the world in your ignorance is one thing, but God will never permit you to demean His grace, and play fast and loose when you have been separated from the world. Remember, you take the place and claim the privilege of one whose eyes have been opened, and if on the one hand this is unspeakably blessed, and it is; on the other hand [if you are not real] it is the most dreadful position in which a human being can be found. It is to be at the wedding feast without the wedding garment. It is to say, "Lord, Lord," while we do not the things that He bids. It is to say, "I go, sir," as he said who went not.

Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak, and I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will bless Him for these few faithful words. Nothing can be more glorious than the position you are called to occupy in these closing days. Saints have stood in the breach, have watched through weary days and nights these nineteen hundred years, and you only wait for the trumpet of victory to go in and take possession of the glorious inheritance. Other men labored, and you are entered into their labors, and yet, you are lowering your dignity to the level of the poor potsherd of the earth, who only wait for the rod of the Victor, to be dashed into pieces.

Oh, awake, then, from your lethargy: slumber no longer. Put away your idols and false gods, wash your garments and get you to Bethel, where you will find God to be better than ever you knew Him, even in your best days. Lay aside your last bit of worldly dress, guard your speech that it be of Christ and His affairs, and not, as you know it now often is, of anything but Him. Let your prayers mingle with those of other saints at the prayer meetings; they never were more needed. Neglect no opportunity of gathering up instruction from that Word which alone can keep us from the paths of the destroyer, and let your life be the evidence of the treasures you gather up at the lecture, or the reading meeting, or in secret with the Lord. If you want an occupation with a glorious reward from a beloved Master, ask that Master to set you to work for Him. You will never regret it, either in this world or in that which is to come.

Beloved, bear with me; I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. You belong to Christ, and Christ to you. Break not this holy union. Let not the betrothed one be unfaithful to her Bridegroom! Why should you be robbed and spoiled? And for what? Empty husks and bitter fruits, while you waste this little span of blessing! All the distinctions acquired here in the energy of the Spirit will but serve to enhance your beauty and render you more lovely in the eyes of Him who has espoused you to Himself.

Can you refuse Him His delights in you? Can you refuse Him the fruit of the travail of His soul who once hung, a dying man, between two thieves on Calvary, a spectacle to men and angels and for you— you who have forgotten this devotedness for you? He could have taken the world without the cross and left you out, but He would not. Now will you, having been enriched by those agonies and that blood, take the world into your tolerance and leave Him out? Impossible! Your pure mind only needed to be stirred up by way of remembrance.

"Wherefore also we pray always

for you... that the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ may be

glorified in you, and ye in Him.”

2 Thess. 1:11,12

Bible Challenger Clues-10-October V.08

1. 2 Peter; 2. Leviticus; 3. Daniel; 4. Hebrews; 5. 1 John; 6. 1 Timothy; 7. Mark; 8. Romans.

Heaven's Bank

I know a never failing Bank, well-filled with
golden store;
No other bank contains so much that can enrich the
poor.
Should all the banks of Europe break, the Bank of
England fail,
Fear not that Heaven's glorious Bank its discounts
will curtail.
Though a thousand notes He scattered round, all
signed, and sealed and free,
Yet many a doubting soul will say, Ah! they are not for
me.
Proud unbelief cannot admit such tidings to be true,
And yet I tell each bankrupt soul, These notes belong
to you!
I, too, right at the door have been with painful
doubts molested,
Knowing, if Moses keeps the bank, my notes had been
protested.
Some fear they write so bad a hand their notes will be
rejected,
But always humble souls obtain much more than they
expected.
Whenever all my money's spent, and I'm in utter
need,
Straight to my Bank I always go, for generous aid to

plead.

I've been a thousand times before, and never was
rejected;

No notes can ever be refused, that are by Grace
accepted.

Should all the bankers close their doors, my Bank
stands open wide

To all the chosen of the Lord, for whom the Savior
died.

Sometimes my Banker, smiling says, "Why don't you
oftener come?"

And when I draw a little bill, "Why not a larger sum?"

Dependence, Communion, and Hope

H. H. Snell

Psalm 16PSA 16

It is when the soul enters upon and takes possession of its new standing and relationships, as in Christ Jesus in heavenly places, that it necessarily becomes exercised as to the character of its walk down here. The reason is this. As long as the true believer finds all his need met by the cross as to sin and guilt, the question of walk is mainly as to morality, or propriety, and consistency in the world. But when he learns through the teaching of the Holy Spirit that the cross of Christ also declares the complete end of the first man, the Adam nature as put under the judgment of God, he has a different exercise of soul. He discovers also that the world in rejecting the Son of God had its doom sealed. All resources thus being cut off by the judgment of God in the cross, both as to man and the world, his confession is that he has no confidence in the flesh, and that he is not of the world.

All this becomes more and more real as he is able to see that in a risen and ascended Christ, God in His grace has given him righteousness, life, and completeness before Him. He not only sees, but enters upon and enjoys it in the presence of God. The conscience then becomes exercised about a walk down here suited to Him up there—a walk, not in the flesh, nor according to this present evil age, but suited to the calling and standing given us in Christ. This life and course will be fed and strengthened by Him in heaven, in whom God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. The walk now will be in the Spirit, and the life one of faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. It will, therefore, be characterized by dependence, communion, and hope, which three points are blessedly brought out in Psa. 16.

This psalm sets forth some of the perfect ways of our blessed Lord in passing through this scene. It is sweet to see that in it there was one object for His heart's delight. It is His saints in whom was all His delight. These, too, He distinguished from the apostate people who were hastening after another god. And if His heart's affections flowed out so blessedly to the faithful little remnant in Israel, what must be His heart's love now to us who are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones"?

Taking everything as He did from the hand of His God and Father, and walking always in the perfect sense of obedience to the will of Him that sent Him, He could say, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places." And no doubt the great secret of our going through this world in the enjoyment of the peace of God is walking in the path of obedience, and taking everything, painful or pleasant, from the hands of our gracious God and Father.

Dependence

For the reasons stated above, our path necessarily must be one of absolute dependence upon the Lord Jesus. In the days of His flesh, He voluntarily took this place. He was truly God; all fullness was pleased to dwell in Him. But we are told that He, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient, etc. We could not take upon ourselves the form of a servant, for we are servants and never were anything else. In this way the blessed Lord trod the path of faith perfectly, and has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Hence we are told that "when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

So it is in Psa. 16, the first words are, "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." How wondrous is the love and lowliness that could take the place of such entire dependence! Surely when hungry for forty days and nights He could have commanded bread to be brought forth, and it could not possibly be withheld, but He chose this place of dependence and replied, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Again on another occasion when men were seeking to swallow Him up in their cruel hatred, could He not have prayed to His Father and He would presently have given Him more than twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53)? Most assuredly He could. But He chose rather the path of dependence and obedience as Jehovah's servant, and in this He has left a perfect example for us to follow.

I gather, therefore, from this psalm that a life of absolute and constant dependence will characterize those who follow Christ. As the Apostle Paul forcibly puts it, "Having nothing, and yet possessing all things," having no resources in self, no stock in hand, but unceasing and thorough dependence on Him for all our help. I do not doubt that the true effect of entering into our perfect standing and full character of blessing in Christ will be to seek to bring the power of all that into this present scene, as alone suited to Him whom having not seen we love.

It is comparatively easy and natural to make God our refuge in great emergencies, but to trust in Him at all times as the constant habit of our lives in all the details is another thing. We must look to Him about every matter, whether rough or smooth, painful or pleasant, and go forth day by day watching His hand, obeying His voice, leaning on His arm, associating the almightiness of His power. The infiniteness of His wisdom, and perfectness of His love with all our affairs, great or small, at home or abroad, things spiritual or temporal, must mark the character of those who thus live in dependence on God.

So perfectly and unceasingly was this path of dependence trodden by the Son of God that we hear Him saying, "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.... Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." John 12:49, 50. So here we see the perfectness of the blessed Lord in thus depending on the Father for every word He should speak.

He sought out a solitary place in the wilderness for prayer, getting up a great while before day and going out into a desert place to pray, spending a whole night in prayer. Being usually engaged in prayer before any great event, such as choosing His apostles, the transfiguration, etc., all show the reality of the life of dependence which this perfect One lived. From all this and other scriptures, we learn how faith, prayer, and thanksgiving must accompany our exercise of real dependence upon God.

Communion

Unbroken communion with Jehovah also marked the path of the blessed Man Christ Jesus, the true Son of David. He could surely say, "I have set the Lord always before Me." (v. 8.) He did not know a moment of interrupted communion until our sins were laid on Him, and as the sin offering He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Then God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, must abandon His own well-beloved Son, because sins, our sins, were upon Him. Hence that most bitter of all cries was wrung from His holy, pure and loving heart in deepest agony and distress, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It could not be otherwise, for God is holy. Except for that time when His soul was made an offering for sin upon the tree, He was always in uninterrupted communion with God His Father. This was His perfectness and joy.

He could under all circumstances say, "I do always those things that please Him." "I have set the Lord always before Me." So should it be with us, for we are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and He has sent forth the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to dwell in us. He did this not only that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, but that we should enjoy them in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

With us we easily allow a trifle to come between us and our adorable and loving Lord. Then a process of self-judgment, humiliation, and confession may be called for, in order to have enjoyment again in faith of the unclouded sunshine of His blessed Presence. In fact, the moment we allow anything to come between us and the Lord, we get away from Him, and our communion becomes interrupted. It is well, therefore, habitually to receive everything from Him, to refer every matter to Him, to cast all our care upon Him, and to know that all our springs are in Him. As long as He is consciously known as our fountain of living waters, the broken cisterns which come in our way will have little attraction for us. The question should not be so much with us in this day, "How much do we know?" as, "How much do we enjoy?" It is impossible to know the Lord Jesus as the satisfying, commanding, and absorbing object of our souls without having that deep, calm joy which is more easily felt than described, and is known in no other way.

There is another point here: He could not only say, "I have set the Lord always before Me," but could blessedly add, "Because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved." There is an important connection in these two sentences, and highly instructive to us. The Lord always realized the presence of God and power of God with Him—the right hand of Jehovah. And do not we realize it in our measure too, according as our hearts are looking to Him?

If we grow cold and careless, it is no marvel that we have little sense of the power and presence of God with us. Instead of this, such souls must necessarily be walking in darkness. When they need the "right hand" of God to sustain and comfort, they do not find it. Instead of this the Spirit is grieved, and there are questions as to the state, the walk, and the conduct to be settled before the soul can be restored to the enjoyment of His holy Presence who is light and love. Then they can again know the present power of the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

Oh the blessedness of being able to say, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." May our souls realize this more and more, and our affections be drawn and fixed upon the Lord Himself, by His mighty and irresistible attractiveness! Surely Mary made a wise and happy choice when she took her place at the feet of Jesus to hear His word. It was as pleasing to the Lord as it was needful and profitable to herself. She learned that this place of dependence was the secret of comfort and power, as well as the only way to get into the circle of His thoughts and the current of His affections.

With what a holy dignity and style we see her afterward breaking the alabaster box and pouring the very costly ointment on this precious object of her heart. The whole house was filled with its sweet fragrance and she realized the Lord's approval! What a vast range of blessing even now may be known by those who unfeignedly take this place of dependence, and set the Lord always before them. May those of us who have somewhat tasted it know it better; it is wise, I am sure, and wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. 3:17.

What in Thy love possess I not?

My star by night, my sun by day;

My spring of life when parched with drought,

My wine to cheer, my bread to stay;

In Thee, my strength, my safe abode

Now made the righteousness of God,

My robe before the throne of God.

Hope

There is a third point to notice in this psalm; it is hope. The blessed Lord knew every step of the path of suffering He would have to endure. He knew all things that would come upon Him, and could see beyond it all. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame. His hope was in His God. He could look through all the sufferings and death on Calvary, and the reality of the sepulcher too, and say, "Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory [or My tongue] rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [hades]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (vv. 9,10.)

So our adorable Lord could contemplate His own death, the actual separation of soul and body, the soul going into hades (the state of departed spirits), and the body into the sepulcher, where all others go to corruption. But more than this, His confidence was in Jehovah, the God of resurrection. He knew that, for He said He would rise again the third day, and that He would be raised again from among the dead by the glory of the Father. He also said that He would be seated at the "right hand" of the Majesty on high.

He says, referring to resurrection, "Thou wilt show Me the path of life"—this path which, though beginning from the sepulcher, would extend to the right hand of God as He so blessedly adds: "in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." What a triumphant path in the power of faith and hope!

Surely our privilege, too, is to be rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, in fact, to be abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. We triumph in His victories and we look forward to eternal blessedness based upon His already-accomplished work. Though our destiny is to share His glory, yet how different is the path of hope for us from what it was to Him. But if He went down into death and the grave, and grappled with sin, Satan, the grave, and judgment, what was it for? It was to give us present and everlasting triumph over all these enemies and intruders into God's once fair creation.

Our hope, then, is not to follow Him into death, but because of His having accomplished that triumphant work for us, it can now be said, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and "caught up... to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We earnestly desire "to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.... Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." 2 Cor. 5:2, 4. Our precious Lord, therefore, by His death, and His triumph over death, Satan and the grave, has given us a near way into glory at His coming. A momentary journey, a rapid flight like a lightning flash, and we shall be changed and translated, and so be forever with the Lord.

Oh the perfect bliss of this hope, based on the atoning work, and made certain to us by the risen Jesus having gone into heaven by His own blood! How divinely real it is! It is like having only a curtain between us at this moment and the positive and unchanging possession of eternal glory.

The Head in heaven and members on earth, already joined by one Spirit, are soon to meet in the air. His desire is that we should be with Him and behold His glory. The thrice-repeated "I come quickly" of Him who is "the bright and morning star" should nerve our souls to hearty, loving response, for the Spirit incites the cry in us, "Come." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Happy are those who know the blessedness of the life of faith so as to tread the path of dependence, communion, and hope!

Bible Challenger-10-October Answers V.08

1. Cloak 2 Tim. 4:13
2. Linen ephod 1 Sam. 22:18
3. Old garment Mark 2:21
4. Thirty Judg. 14:12
5. Hats Dan. 3:21
6. Impart to him Luke 3:11
7. New garment 1 Kings 11:29
8. Girdle Acts 21:11

'But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft CLOTHING are in kings' houses.'" Matt. 11:8.

Bible Challenger-11-November V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word that defines the purpose for which a plain man (brother to a cunning man) was using his tents. [1] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 295.)

1. Something unlawful which was a daily vexation to a righteous man. [1]
2. A seventh-day activity absolutely prohibited by statute throughout all Israel's generations. [1]
3. That which a mighty monarch did which was after the manner of oxen. [2]
4. The place where three men sojourned (prematurely) in a great display of faith. [3]
5. An attribute of God which Christians fully know and believe because of His Presence with them. [1]
6. A quality of life which the One who is the blessed and only Potentate possesses. [1]
7. What negative statement was made concerning a man who was continually found among the tombs. [5]
8. Desirable actions seemingly unattainable by mere mortals, because of the mutual exclusiveness of will and performance. [1]

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

The Lord Is Coming

WHEN? It may be today! The Word of God does not tell us, but we read that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:8. Again, "Surely I come quickly." Rev. 22:20.

WHY? In order to take His blood-bought ones, dead and living, to be where He is. We read that "the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds... and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. And again, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. In this verse the word "ye" excludes mere professors such as the "foolish virgins" of Matt. 25.

HOW? "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thess. 4:16. "Behold, I come quickly." Rev. 3:11. It is the Lord Himself who comes.

WHERE? The meeting place shall be in the air, and not on earth. The Lord shall descend; they shall "be caught up... to meet the Lord in the air."

WHITHER? To the Father's house on high, the heavenly home of the children of God, to the prepared mansion above, and the joys of the eternal presence of the Lord. (See John 14:1-3.)

EDITORIAL: Little or Great?

The closing days of 1993 remind us that the closing days of Christendom are fast approaching. The greatness of what is called Babylon in Rev. 17 and 18 is surely now more and more evident. She is seen in these chapters as the woman that rides the beast. She will be seen as the great apostate ecclesiastical system. She is called the Mother of Harlots. Notice that she is called Babylon the great.

In August Pope John Paul II visited North and South America in a great display of grandeur and power. In Colorado the largest assembly that state has ever known came out to see him.

At this present time there is increasing evidence of the coming of what is represented as a man called a beast in Rev. 13. This will be the great apostate civil power that rises up out of the sea which is a symbol of the masses of the people.

This world as a civil or secular thing is spreading out in technological improvements, attractive and entertaining beyond past thoughts. While God is not in man's thoughts, still He allows men to discover for themselves what has always been in His creation, and to use these things for themselves, whether for good or for bad.

As to the greatness of the beast, the question is asked in Rev. 13:4, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Surely all is now in the fast lane moving toward the full display of the woman and of the beast in their various forms of greatness and grandeur, which will, according to God's Word, precede their judgment.

In contrast, we ask this question: Is there any indication in God's Word that the saints, or the true Church, will arise to any condition of beauty or greatness before the hour of their translation comes? The apostate things are to be great and magnificent before their judgment. What does the Scripture say about the true thing before her removal to glory?

Luke 12:32 says, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The word to the angel of the church in Philadelphia is: "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."

Littleness is seen in the true Church, before her rapture out of this world into the glory. Greatness in the world is to be displayed in the two apostate systems, the civil and the ecclesiastical, just at the time when its judgment comes. Ed.

Bible Challenger Clues-11-November V.08

1. Genesis; 2. 1 Kings; 3. Acts; 4. Luke; 5. Psalms; 6. Acts; 7. Ecclesiastes; 8. Daniel.

Second Advent

We are looking for the advent (the coming) of the Lord Jesus Christ; this is the second one. I heard about it 50 years ago; that seems a long time to wait, but they waited a longer time for Him to come the first time. Back in Genesis, 4000 years before, God had said the woman's seed would bruise the serpent's head. It was never said of any other that he would be the woman's seed.

That is what is referred to in Luke 2:13, 14, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." All heaven was astir because of the birth on earth of that One who was promised so long before. A multitude of the heavenly host was rejoicing and praising God.

Matt. 3:2, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," is the fulfillment of Mal. 3:1, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." John the Baptist was that messenger sent to announce His first coming.

Matt. 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." That is the second messenger who is spoken of in Mal. 3:1.

In verses 13 to 17 it says, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

John discerned that it was not becoming for him to baptize this sinless One, seeing that John was a sinner. But the Lord says, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." He identifies Himself with the repentant remnant. Then the Holy Spirit comes as a dove on Him, but at Pentecost He came on the believers as cloven tongues of fire, speaking of separation to Himself. The dove speaks of purity, peace, and holiness. Since God knew that men would be quick to use this instance of the Lord's being baptized with sinners to try to prove that He was a sinner, God blocked that by allowing heaven to be opened and declaring, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Can you visualize in Matt. 17:2, "And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light"? We know how dazzling the sun is, and what a glorious appearance this must have been. Verse 3: "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." Moses and Elias were both great men and we would consider it much to be in their place. But when Peter wanted to class the Lord with them, God spoke from

heaven again and announced, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." How privileged, then, we are to be gathered about that Person. What a sight before God and heaven to see a little company gathered in simplicity answering to His request in a world like this.

C. H. Brown

The Two Covenants

A covenant is a principle of relationship with God on the earth, conditions established by God, under which man is to live with Him. The word may, perhaps, be used figuratively or by accommodation. It is applied to details of the relationship of God with Israel, but strictly speaking, there are but two covenants, the old and the new. The old was established at Sinai. The new covenant is made also with the two houses of Israel. The gospel is not a covenant, but the revelation of the salvation of God. It proclaims the great salvation. We enjoy indeed all the essential privileges of the new covenant, its foundation being of God, but we do so in spirit, not according to the letter. The new covenant will be established formally with Israel in the millennium.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What about "things under the earth" in Phil. 2:10?

ANSWER: "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven [angels], and things in earth [men], and things under the earth [demons]." Phil. 2:9, 10. If we confine ourselves to the passage itself, redemption is not in question either in the humiliation or the exaltation. If it were, demons would be saved too, which they will never be. This passage is quoted by some to prove a very bad doctrine. We often say when referring to this passage, how wondrous the grace that gives us to bow the knee, but what is spoken of here is not redemption, but subjugation.

In the end of Rev. 5, the "creatures... under the earth" are not infernal beings, but creatures under the earth. Their redemption is celebrated: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." He is spoken of as a "little" Lamb in Revelation—unchanged in His character as the Lonely One, the unresisting One. "Led as a lamb to the slaughter." He is worshipped as the sacrificial Lamb.

How Low the Lord Went

The thought in Phil. 2 is how low the Lord went. In Zech. 13:5, "Man acquired Me [as bondman] from My youth" (JND). The moment sin came into the world, the heart of God set Him to work. The promise was made and God by His Spirit has been working ever since, and will until the eternal state is brought about and every trace of sin removed. The affections of His heart set Him to work, and what should set the evangelist to work is the same—affection and love for lost, perishing souls. That, too, is what should set the pastor or teacher to work, love to Christ. That is expressed through caring for His people.

"Man acquired Me as bondman from My youth" meant taking a bondman's form, and taking His place in the likeness of men. It was a voluntary act. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." It was His love that motivated Him. A translation of Psa. 40 which I like reads: "The good pleasure of Thy will, O God, is My delight." That is, the good pleasure of the Father's will was the delight of the heart of Christ, and so in His pathway that we meditate on here, it is love that took Him down to the shame of the cross. He loved the vilest thing on earth—you and me! Men's hearts were deceitful and thoroughly wicked and expressed themselves in the act that took place at Calvary. His grace toward us should break our hearts. What a Savior!

God is seeking to win our hearts from earth to heaven. Satan got man's ear in the Garden of Eden. And because God has been seeking to get the ear of man that his heart might be won, and that you and I might know all that is in the heart of God, Christ went down to the shame of the cross. It is not a question of bearing our sins here, but of love going to the shame of the cross—a voluntary act.

Trials and Blessings

Jacob's greatest trial (having Joseph taken from him) was in the end his greatest blessing. How often we have been made to prove that the clouds we so dreaded have been big with richest blessings (Rom. 8:28).

The Church: Her Hope and Service

J. N. Darby

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

Where, besides in the Church, is the truth found? Nowhere. The supposition that the truth is anywhere else would be the denial of the truthfulness and ways of God. The truth can be nothing but what God has said; it is the truth, independent of all church authority, of any but that of God who is the source of it. But where the truth is, supposing a body to be constituted by its means, there is the Church, and the Church which possesses it, and subsists by possessing it, thereby manifests it to the world.

The authority of the Church cannot make that which it teaches to be truth.

Truth alone does not constitute the Church. That is, the meaning of the word "church" embraces other ideas. A single man holding the truth is not the Church, but the assembly of God is distinguished by the possession of the truth. An assembly which has not the truth, as the condition of its existence, is not the assembly of God. The passage under consideration, and the importance of this point, must be my excuse for this little digression, which is but indirectly connected with the subject of the Church.

There is one more passage which presents the Church in a complete manner, as to its hope and its service, that I will quote. It is that of Rev. 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say; Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

In this passage we find the Spirit introduced in a very remarkable manner, somewhat analogous to Rom. 8. Both passages show how far the Holy Spirit is considered in the Word of God as dwelling upon the earth since the day of Pentecost, and as identifying Himself either with the believer or with the Church. In Romans it is, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because," it is added, "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Now it is our groanings that are spoken of there.

Here in the Revelation, the Spirit and the bride say, Come. The Spirit so takes His place with the bride, that the sentiment of the Church is that which the Spirit Himself expresses. The Spirit is upon earth and animates the Church, being the true source of its thoughts. The Church animated

by these very thoughts, expresses her own affections under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Had it been only an expression of affection, one might have questioned its legitimacy, and that also of the groans spoken of in Rom. 8, but since the Holy Spirit connects Himself with it, this desire of a feeble heart has the power and authority of a divine thought.

This, then, is what characterizes the Church in her desires and in her hope. She desires that her Bridegroom should come. It is not a question about prophecy; it is Christ, the communicator of the prophecy, who presents Himself. "I am... the bright and morning star." The Church knows Him. She will be with Him before the great day of His manifestation comes—she will appear with Him in glory. But when He is thus presented in His Person, it awakens the earnest desire of the bride that He should come.

There is also a testimony to be borne. It is what follows. She calls upon those who hear, but who have not understood their privilege of being of the bride, to join this cry and to say, Come. In the meantime, she already possesses the river of living water, and turning towards those who are athirst, she invites them to come and make a free use of it.

How beautiful a position for the Church—for our hearts! The first affection of her heart is towards her Head—her Bridegroom, who is to come like the morning star, to receive her to Himself in heaven before He is manifested to the world. Then she desires all believers to share this desire, and to reinforce her cry that He may come. In the meantime, she is the vessel and herald of grace, according to the heart of Him who has shown grace to her.

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

If I forget His grace when I have failed,

I might get into despair.

If I forget His government,

I may grow careless.

Bible Challenger-00-December V.08

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the words that identify the time frame in which a prophet, a widow, and her house ate from supplies that neither wasted nor failed. [2] The number in brackets indicates the number of words in the answer. (Additional clues may be found on page 312.)

1. That which an aged man did upon seeing something his ten sons said they had found. [1]
2. The name of the king to whom a prophet was told to show himself because of a weather forecast. [1]
3. The words of authority used by an apostle to exorcise an evil spirit from a certain damsel. [4]
4. The one who gathered all together after a father divided his living between two. [2]
5. That which defines the eagerness of anyone in his quest to see good (in his life). [2]
6. A quantity of hope taken away as many sailors labored to save a floundering ship under overcast skies. [1]
7. The usual quantifier of a man's age which, if he has begotten one hundred children, will surely be many. [1]
8. A command by Gabriel to a prophet concerning a true vision seen in the evening and the morning. [5]
9. Answers to these questions will be found in the next issue of Christian Treasury. R. Erisman

Bible Challenger-11-November V.08

1. Deeds 2 Peter 2:8
2. Work Lev. 23:31
3. Eat grass Dan. 4:32
4. Land of promise Heb. 11:9
5. Love 1 John 4:16
6. Immortality 1 Tim. 6:15, 16
7. No man could bind him Mark 5:3
8. Good Rom. 7:18

"And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, DWELLING in tents." Gen. 25:27.

Christ's Sympathy

Why does the Lord not put forth

His power and

deliver me?

It is well to bear in mind that this is not the day of Christ's power, but it is the day of His sympathy. When passing through the deep waters of affliction, the heart may at times feel disposed to ask, Why does not the Lord put forth His power and deliver me? The answer is, This is not the day of His power.

He could prevent that catastrophe, or He could avert that sickness. He could remove that difficulty; He could take off that pressure, and He could preserve that beloved and fondly cherished object from the cruel grasp of death. But instead of putting forth His power to deliver us, He allows things to run their course and pours His own sweet sympathy into the oppressed and broken heart. He does it in such a way as to elicit the acknowledgment that we would not for worlds have missed the trial, because of the abundance of the consolation.

By and by He will display His power; He will unsheathe His sword, He will come forth as the rider on the white horse. He will bare His arm; He will avenge His people, and right their wrongs forever.

Now His sword is sheathed, and His arm covered. This is the time for making known the deep love of His heart, not the power of His arm, nor the sharpness of His sword.

Are you satisfied to have it so? Is Christ's sympathy enough for your heart, even amid the keenest sorrow, and the most intense affliction?

The restless heart, the impatient spirit, the unmortified will would lead one to long to escape from the trial, the pressure, the difficulty, but this would never do. We must pass from grade to grade in the school, but the Master accompanies us, and the light of His countenance and the tender sympathy of His heart sustain us under the most trying circumstances.

"For as the sufferings of Christ

abound in us, so our consolation also

aboundeth by Christ."

2 Cor. 1:5

Grace

R. B. Wallace

The dispensation of the grace of God

The New Testament begins with that inscrutable mystery, the incarnation. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This was the dawning of the day which Abraham saw by faith when he offered up Isaac, his "only son Isaac." "Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad," although Abraham's faith doubtless carried him right on to that which is yet to come, the "morning without clouds."

It is the opening of that period spoken of as "the dispensation of the grace of God." First, Jesus as Messiah is presented to "His own," the little remnant left in the land from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

In Matthew He is presented as their king: "Behold thy king cometh." As Messiah, His genealogy is here traced in an ascending scale. The line of Joseph should have been reigning, but Herod upon the throne tells a sad story of awful decline. Moses had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear." Acts 7:37. He was of the seed royal, of the house of David. But they knew not the day of their visitation, and soon their Messiah is rejected: "We will not have this Man to reign over us."

In Mark's gospel the Lord Jesus is presented as the perfect servant, so there is no genealogy given here, for one does not record the lineage of a servant. His wonderful and perfect service as a Man among men is especially reflected in this gospel.

Luke presents our Lord as the Son of man. The moral setting, we may say, gives in some measure His human biography. The genealogy goes back until Adam is reached, "which was the son of God." In this we get the line of Mary, of whom He was born, the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15). It is doubtless Mary's genealogy that we get in Luke, just as it is that of Joseph in Matthew. Comparing Matt. 1:16 with Luke 3:23, there can be no doubt but that Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli; that is, Mary was a descendant of David.

John unfolds to our hearts the Son of God in all His moral, personal and official glories. He was the glory that tabernacled among men, even the Eternal Word, made flesh.

The book of Acts is historical. Instead of it being called the Acts of the Apostles, it should be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. It testifies of the crucified One, now ascended to the right hand of God, beheld by the quickened spiritual sight of Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom. It records the transition from Judaism to Christianity.

The Epistles follow and are doctrinal, practical and prophetic, and the canon of Scripture closes with the Apocalypse, the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Reviewing in more detail this dispensation, the day of grace, we find it opens with the birth of Christ. For 33 years the Light shined among men until God hid His face from the Lord Jesus Christ in the blackness and darkness of Calvary, while Jesus was there as the sin-bearer. The world never saw Him after those three hours of darkness. Matt. 23:39 was doubtless uttered in view of this fact: "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

So also Hos. 5:15: "I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me early." Ephraim's sin was idolatry, while Judah rejects the Messiah. After Jesus arose from the dead He showed Himself alive for 40 days, the perfect

period of manifestation, to establish the truth of His resurrection.

Notice that all of these many appearances were confined to His own. It was as if to crown the transcendent infamy of the Jews and the world of that day in crucifying Jesus, after the blessed One had ascended and was yet "standing at the right hand of God," in waiting grace. The added testimony of the Holy Spirit as to His resurrection and ascension glory is rejected, and Stephen became the target upon whom their rage was vented. They stoned him and sent him back to his Master. Thus the first martyr "fell asleep."

The testimony of a risen and ascended Jesus being rejected, the Holy Spirit now takes charge of the counsels of God respecting the Church. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus had said, "I will build My church." The foundation was laid in the cross and the superstructure began to rise on the day of Pentecost, which was the Church's beginning. The Church, the "ecclesia," the called-out ones, the body of Christ, is formed by the Holy Spirit baptizing all believers into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). So the Church began her journey through a great and terrible wilderness—yet not such as tested Israel, but a moral wilderness, and she becomes, just in the measure in which she is true to her Lord, a stranger and pilgrim. She finds it a place where there are no springs abounding with water, but can say, "All My springs are in Thee."

The Church is an exotic plant; her roots are in heaven and she is seen as such in Eph. 1:3 and John 17:16. Nature's resources do not avail for faith in the valley of Baca, the place of weeping and bitterness. But looking upon the face of the Anointed, "beholding as in a glass [that is, with unveiled face] the glory of the Lord," the place is changed into a well, the rain filling the pools. It is thus that the desert yields a song (Num. 21:16, 17).

Fellow believer, this is the way home to the Father's house. It is through the land of the enemy, a land of dreariness and drought, but Jesus gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4), when we were walking and acting according to the course of this age (Eph. 2:2).

In the former dispensation Israel walked by sight, led by the cloud; the Church walks by faith. The experiences Israel passed through we are told happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the age are come. God's external dealings with His ancient people are now suspended and Israel is sifted as corn among all nations (Amos 9:8, 9). Jerusalem is downtrodden by the Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

As of old, Jehovah held back the tide of judgment until the iniquity of the Amorite was full. So now the Gentiles, the wild olive tree which through grace was grafted in to partake of the root and fatness, has become boastful and high-minded and awaits the cutting off (Rom. 11:22). The whole history of the Church from her beginning at Pentecost is written in symbolic language in Rev. 2 and 3.

Rev. 1 shows us 7 golden candlesticks and light-bearers giving complete and precious testimony. Everything in this book is complete; it is closing and final testimony. We have 7 spirits, 7 lamps of fire, 7 stars, 7 candlesticks, 7 eyes, 7 horns, 7 seals, 7 angels, 7 trumpets, 7 vials, and 7 plagues. Chapters 2 and 3 give us 7 successive stages of the Church's history.

1. Ephesus: It is here in the beginning that affection of heart was at its height, and it was here at the close of the Ephesian character of the Church that affection had failed. The love of many had waxed cold. Zeal abounded, but affection waned. Works, labor and patience were in evidence, but not the work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope. "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." A sense of relationship lost, and love losing its jealous character soon allows "deeds" of the Nicolaitans to become "doctrine." So began clerical domination, conquering or lording it over the people. Beloved, beware! Be warned of waning affection. Paul knew the subtlety of the world's charms and by the Spirit exclaims, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." "Does the Spirit which has taken His abode in us desire enviously?" He is intensely jealous of our hearts that they may be kept for Christ. Divided affection is the seed of spiritual decline.

2. Smyrna: Smarting under the lash of the persecutor while suffering for Him is the lot of Smyrna. She is characterized by tribulation and poverty, but He says, "Thou art rich." Persecution which impoverishes the saints here, enriches them for eternity, "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. 6:10. Suffering in faithfulness unto death is rewarded by a crown of life. How truthfully it has been said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." They that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled everywhere preaching the Word. The "ten" days of pagan persecution which Smyrna passed through was perhaps greater than that of the apostles' day.

3. Pergamos: The word means marriage. Here we have the heavenly bride mingling with an earthly, idolatrous world. That which was allowed only as deeds in Ephesus became doctrine in Pergamos. Now we have priestly pretensions. Here also is the doctrine of Balaam; spiritual fornication was held, which bore the fruit of corruption in Thyatira. The Church no longer a stranger and pilgrim, succumbs to the wooing of the world, and the world becomes the ruler of the Church. This began about 316 A.D. when Constantine professed Christianity. It is the old story of Balaam and Israel; failing to curse the people, he accomplished his purpose by corrupting them.

4. Thyatira: This is papacy: the Church arrogating to herself authority to teach, assuming to delegate infallibility to fallible man, and setting up claims to be the ruler of the world. This doctrine is well known to historians as the doctrine of "the holy Roman empire." The state of the Church is so low in Thyatira that she is only fit to be represented by that blasphemous and infamous woman Jezebel. The dark days of the Middle Ages are crimson records of her fearful iniquity and cruelty.

But even in such a state the Lord has His own, for He speaks of some in the midst of her as "My servants." Here a little remnant becomes manifest and goes on concurrently with the succeeding three stages of the Church until the testimony closes. Mercy precedes judgment and of Thyatira He says, "I gave her space to repent... and she repented not." Rome never repents. Her doom is pronounced. "I will kill her children with death." Rev. 2:23.

5. Sardis: We get here the state of Protestantism which grew up after the dark ages through the untiring zeal of the reformers. But we get "the established church," not the primitive form of Christianity of apostolic days. It has been said that in popery we see the Church assuming to govern the world; in Protestantism we see the world governing the Church. Sardis is addressed thus: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." We are exhorted to turn away from a form

of godliness where the power is denied. Great enthusiasm wrought up by perfect human organizations is not power. It is not the spontaneity of the Spirit.

6. Philadelphia: The name means brotherly love. In this state which grew out of Protestantism we find a feeble testimony, but accompanied by an open door which no man can shut. The three things which characterize Philadelphia are stated thus:

- a. Thou hast a little strength.
- b. And hast kept My Word.
- c. And hast not denied My name.

Strength consists not in numbers, a lesson which David had to learn at awful cost to his people. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 4:6.

"Kept My word" does not mean that Christendom has preserved the Bible from the attacks of infidels. No, the Word is absolutely indestructible; it is the Word of God which "liveth and abideth forever." What the Spirit contemplates here is obedience and owning of the lordship of Christ. This is what is precious to Him. "To obey is better than sacrifice."

And lastly, "My name" has not been denied. To be linked with His name is to walk in holiness and truth, to repudiate and refuse all human names however eminent in scholarship or piety. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee." Sol. 1:3. It is only here and now as strangers and pilgrims that we may emulate those early saints who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

7. Laodicea: This is the last phase of the professing Church's history on earth. Here the people are justifying themselves. They are settling down, lulled to sleep in the lap of a luxurious world and saying peace where there is no peace. She says, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." What an appalling state! And yet, even here there are souls who will form part of the bride of Christ, and will be caught up to meet Him. But when Laodicea merges into Babylon the Great, it is a state in which no saints by heavenly calling are found. She is proud and boastful, but loathsome to Christ. Her nauseating lukewarmness and independence call down His judgment. Rich and needing nothing, not even Him, she is in His sight wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Are we not now in the very last days of this abhorrent, insipid and nauseating state of profession? "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Beloved saints of God, it is high time to awake out of sleep. Are we not already in the gray dawn of the fourth watch, a dawn soon to be lighted up by the rays of the approaching Bright and Morning Star? Look up, the morning comes, but, for this poor world, also the night.

The rapture (which means "I seize") of the Church will surely occur shortly. Then the sleeping saints will be raised first, that they may have part in the first resurrection, the resurrection out from among dead men. This is the "out resurrection" of Mark 9:10, and Phil. 3:11. Then the living saints, the Church on earth, are caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. The Holy Spirit (He who restrains) will be taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2:7). The unsaved left behind, frenzied with fear, seeking their loved ones, will be like the children of the prophets in the days of Elijah, searching for

the translated prophet, but seeking in vain. "They sought three days, but found him not." 2 Kings 2:17. Of Enoch also it is said that he "was not [found]," indicating the fruitless search for the raptured saint who walked with God.

The Church, now safely sheltered in the glory in the Father's house to go out no more, bows in holy reverence before the One who sits on the throne, and worships her worthy Lord. We next see Him honored by an ever-widening circle of redeemed creation until ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands are ascribing blessing and honor and glory and power unto the Lamb.

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