

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 1

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 1, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

112 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Christian Truth Volume 1
1. The Distinction Between the Advocacy and Priesthood
2. America and the Roman Empire: the Editor's Column
3. Substitution and Righteousness
4. The Appian Way Station: the Three Taverns
5. As Is the Heavenly, so Are the Heavenly Ones: the Heavenly Character of Christia...
6. At His Gate
7. Be Ye Not Unequally Yoked With Unbelievers
8. Believing Because of Man's Testimony Is Not Faith in God
9. Simon Blessed Art Thou: Get Thee Behind Me, Satan
10. That Blessed Word of Invitation, Come
11. The Blessing From Prophecy: for Those Not the Subjects of It
12. The Field of Boaz
13. The Body Is Dead Because of Sin: the Spirit Is Life Because of Righteousness
14. Some Very Good and Very Poor Building Material
15. The Comfort of My Lord's Presence: a Parable
16. The Common Sense View and Natural Cause & Effect: Natural Cause and Effect
17. Contrast Between Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon
18. Cut off From Natural Resources to Trust in God: Trust in God
19. The Dew of Hermon
20. Noting the Difference Between Romans 12 and Ephesians 5
21. Difference Between Two Men Who Heard Same Gospel: Simon the Magician and the Eth...
22. Ye Are the Epistles of Christ
23. Even Christ Pleased Not Himself
24. Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah: a Brief Outline of the Books of the...
25. The Failure of King Saul
26. Faith
27. The Fathers of the Church
28. When Five Words Are to Be Preferred to Ten Thousand Words
29. Fulfillment of Details: the Test of Prophecy
30. Solemn Lessons From the History of Gehazi
31. God's Gospel, Son, Wrath, Power, Righteousness
32. God's Object in Our Trials
33. The Good Shepherd Gave His Life
34. Guidance in Service
35. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: a Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible
36. Have We Proved It?
37. Have Ye Not Read and It Is Written
38. Hearts Fresh With Heavenly Streams

39. High and Low Tide
40. Him That Is Able
41. The Holy Spirit: the Seal and the Earnest
42. How Can We Have Settled Peace?
43. How Much Would You Be Missed Here?
44. If I Sin, Am I Still a Child of God?
45. Infidelity and Reason Opposed to Faith: Faith and God's Revelation
46. A Few Words on Isaiah 53
47. Israel a New Nation: the Editor's Column
48. Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: a Brief Outline of the Books of the Bi...
49. Judgment According to Works
50. A Few Words on Knowing God's Will
51. The Last Days: by Paul, Peter, John, and Jude
52. A Learnable Lesson
53. Let Us Have Faith in God
54. Little Foxes
55. Living by the Word
56. Dr. J.L. Cameron on the Lord's Death
57. Magnanimity and Its Results: Saul Spared Agag
58. Man-Made Peace and Security
59. Man's Extremity - God's Opportunity: Carest Thou Not That We Perish?
60. Mercy
61. An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King
62. Modern Technology Advances: Learning War
63. Mohammedanism: a Roomy Religion
64. Moral Standards Lowered and Results
65. Some Mountain Top Scenes: a Short Review
66. My Sheep Hear My Voice and Follow Me
67. Nature Puffed up by the Abuse of the Law
68. Nearness to Christ the Secret of Power
69. Nothing but Christ
70. Nothing Is Added by Either Joy or Sorrow
71. The Pastoral Gift: Publicly and From House to House
72. Three Scriptures About Paul and Trophimus
73. Political Campaigns
74. The Power of God
75. Practical Grace
76. Praying to the Holy Spirit
77. Thoughts on Redemption in the Book of Exodus
78. Reflections and Experiences of One Who Had Lost an Only Son
79. Rejoicing in God and Waiting for Christ: Waiting for Christ
80. Reply to a Paper Entitled "Heathen Theories": Heathen Theories

- 81.** The Resurrection of Christ: the View in the Gospel of Matthew
- 82.** Some Additional Thoughts on Salt
- 83.** What the Scriptures Say About Salt
- 84.** Which Shall It Be: Patronage or Fellowship?
- 85.** The Shepherd's Voice or Shrewdness? Which Will Keep Us
- 86.** The Shepherd's Voice or the Voice of a Stranger
- 87.** Some Helpful Words on Psalm 32: Three Grand Realities
- 88.** Some Words of Encouragement and Warning
- 89.** Something More Than Salvation: the Saviour Known and Loved
- 90.** Special Notice to Our Readers
- 91.** Successional Religion
- 92.** Suffering With Christ
- 93.** Summary of Events of the Year
- 94.** Surrounded by God
- 95.** Taking the Lowest Place
- 96.** Television
- 97.** Temptations in the Wilderness
- 98.** Thou Gavest Them Me
- 99.** To Him That Overcometh
- 100.** To Those Who Know the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- 101.** A Trip to the Unfailing Physician
- 102.** How to Perform True Service: True Service
- 103.** The Truth in Action
- 104.** The Two Worlds
- 105.** The Well of Bethlehem: a Drink of Water From the Well
- 106.** The Well-Watered Plains
- 107.** Western European Nations
- 108.** Why Shouldn't Christians Play Cards?
- 109.** The Word of God and God
- 110.** A Word to Those Who Have Gone Down to Shechem: Arise, Go up to Bethel
- 111.** Your Treasure and Your Heart

Christian Truth Volume 1

The Distinction Between the Advocacy and Priesthood

Priesthood is the divine provision of grace to sustain those who have been set in God's righteousness before Him in Christ. It reconciles the condition of a poor feeble creature on earth, liable to fall at any moment, with the glorious position which is his in Christ. I believe that Hebrews is the complement of the Epistle to the Romans - the one setting us, through redemption, before God in Christ, the other maintaining us there. In its prime aspect it is preventive and sustaining. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." You find at the end of Heb. 4, the provisions made in order that we may not fall in the wilderness - the detective power of the Word of God to deal with the will, and the supporting priesthood of Christ to sustain us in our weakness. So we are to go boldly to the "throne of grace" and find timely help to sustain, that we may not fail.

Then there is advocacy for absolute falls. "If any man sin, we have an advocate." 1 John 2:1. He is engaged before and with the Father for us, and the result of His advocacy is to turn the Word, by the Spirit, in its convicting power, on the conscience: and then, when confession is produced, the soul having bowed under His action, restoration follows. A double action takes place - conviction for the failure, and, on confession, restored communion.

In Numb. 18 you have priestly service in grace to maintain communion. In chapter 19, the provision, not of maintaining communion by priestly grace, but for the restoration of communion individually when lost - the double application of the ashes and water on the third and seventh days answering to that of advocacy - the third day showing what sin is in respect of grace - the seventh showing what grace is in respect of sin. The ashes and water used here point, the first to the impossibility of the sin being imputed, as the victim on whom they were was wholly burnt - the latter to the Word of God in its convicting and restoring power by the Holy Ghost. This answers now to the thought of advocacy.

I do not like the word, One-who-manages-your-affairs - it is too long. Solicitor, though good, is not suitable, from its associations in common use - (Advocate is the same word in Greek as Comforter, in John 14) but One who manages your affairs is the thought.

America and the Roman Empire: the Editor's Column

There has been much speculation among prophetic teachers about the future of the United States. Some (among them Mr. Wm. Kelly) have stated that they saw no place in prophecy for such a power. Others have thought that inasmuch as the United States was peopled by the peoples of Western Europe it would, by blood ties, be bound to the Revived Roman Empire. The whole of the Western Hemisphere will probably be allied to the future Roman beast, for it is but a reflection of that part of Europe. Its people are either of the Teutonic or Latin races and originally came from Europe; they came from the British Isles, France, Spain, Holland, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and parts of Central Europe. There is every reason to believe that the parent countries and their prolific and powerful offspring will be united in the common cause of containing Russia. The languages of the parent countries are also spoken throughout the hemisphere - Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English - and even in the United States the Latin language is used in many ways and appears on its money and public buildings. Their laws are based on Roman law. Religion also forms another link, for all of South and Central America and Mexico are predominantly Catholic, also a large section of Canada; and in the United States the Roman Catholic Church boasts of 25 million members. Thus the ties between Southern and Western Europe and the Americas are manifold.

There is another consideration that would point to the inclusion of the United States in a future bloc of Western powers aligned against the Soviet Bear, which is potentially the greatest power on earth. When one considers the growing might and purpose of the U. S. S. R., it is easily seen that it will require a very great array of Western might to retain a balance of power, and yet when the Roman Empire is formed men will behold its vast resources and great military might, and say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Rev. 13:4. Now it is evident that an array of strength greater than Russia's will be possible only through the natural, manufacturing, and other resources of the American continents aligned with Western Europe.

Now since the last war, there is another indication of the United States being involved in the future Roman Empire. Today they still have armies, navies, and bases in both Southern Europe and Northern Africa; they actually have interests and certain controls in the sphere of the old Roman Empire. In a sense they have come out of the war an actual power in the territory of the future "beast." These indications are further borne out by the recent testimony before the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, where the statement was made that "any act of war in the Mediterranean or Middle East would have definite significance for us... The free transit of commerce and trade through the Mediterranean is a vital part of our national security."

Coming events are casting their shadows. Russia's growing power, greed, and unscrupulous methods are forcing the formation of a western bloc of nations; this will sooner or later lead to the formation of a ten-nation confederacy with headquarters at Rome, which will have close ties with the Vatican - the woman who will sit upon the scarlet-colored beast (Rev. 17). These nations are already courting the favor of the Vatican for the purpose of establishing something that will have control over the hearts of men to neutralize the growing threat of communism at home. The

Vatican likewise knows that communism in power would be her death-knell.

But there is a solemn reflection in all this that these nations long known as "Christian Nations" - this is only nominal, however - shall soon become a part of the most wicked and diabolical power the world has ever seen. Soon the Lord will call His Church home to be with Himself; then what is left of Christendom will become apostate, and the revived Roman Empire will be energized by Satan himself. Oh, can it be that such terrible apostasy is so close at hand! Surely "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." Rom. 13:11, 12.

Substitution and Righteousness

My dear Brother in Christ,

What you say about the blood of Christ I believe to be in the main correct. But to say "Sin attached to His life" is not a scriptural expression, and I think not a scriptural thought, although perhaps you mean right. Sins were laid upon Him, He bore our sins, and He was made sin, that is, sacrificially. The justice of God demanded the life of the sinner. The life is in the blood, and when Christ, as the Substitute, shed His blood, the life was given, and the demand met. This is, however, a very small part of what is taught as to the blood and death of Christ.

When you say, "The whole life of Christ, and His laying down His life, were in obedience to God," you agree with the Word of God. But when you say, "If Christ is our Substitute from His birth to His death," you depart from Scripture, for Scripture does not say, or teach it. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He made atonement by His death. God has set Him forth a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in His blood. He was made a curse for us that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law. Where? On the tree. Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. This is substitution. It is taking the sinner's place under sin and guilt, and drinking up the righteous wrath of God - The unmingled cup of gall filled up of God for Him - in the room and stead of the sinner.

The moment our sins were laid upon Him, the fellowship of God with Him was withdrawn. How could it be otherwise? If sin attached to His life from His birth to His death, or if he were made sin in His incarnation, how could a holy God have one moment's fellowship with Him? It would be impossible.

We find there was a life of unbroken fellowship with God until after He passed through the agony of Gethsemane, and came into those three awful hours of darkness. In the wilderness, an angel is sent to comfort Him. At the Jordan the heavens open upon Him, and God says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Never could the heavens open for such an announcement before. God had been trying man in every way, but failed to find one in whom He could delight. At last He found one - His beloved Son - the second man, the last Adam. On Him the heavens opened, and God announced His own delight. In innumerable ways in His life you see the unbroken fellowship between Him and the Father. Finally, you see it in Gethsemane, where His agony is not suffering in atonement, but His going through all the agony of the cross in anticipation, and in communion with His Father who sends an angel to strengthen Him. It was His having gone through it all in spirit with the Father in Gethsemane that prepared Him for the terrible hour of suffering in actual atonement. And when the hour did come all was gone through in perfect calmness. As a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

After that sin is laid on Him God's face is withdrawn. The word is then "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." Instead of 'the heavens opening, and

proclaiming God's delight, darkness filled the land, and the vengeance of heaven - the awful, unmitigated wrath and judgment of a holy God against sin - was poured out upon Him in that dark hour of unparalleled sorrow and agony. There was no light there, no opening heavens, no expression of divine delight, no ministering angel - nothing but the awful expression of God's judgment against sin all the mighty waves of divine vengeance sweeping over His soul in the midst of that unmitigated darkness that closed over Him when His God forsook Him. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was His cry.

In the Levitical offerings, the sin was transferred to the lamb when brought to the altar, not before. Then death immediately followed. So with God's spotless Lamb. When His hour was come, He gave Himself up to be a sacrifice. Sin was laid on Him then, and immediately God's judgment was expressed against it.

I do not mean to say that God had no delight in His Son while hung on the cross. Far from it. Surely if ever God was glorified, it was then. If ever His heart was satisfied, it was then. But sin was in question. God delighted in the One who took it on Him, but while it was on Him, there could be no fellowship - nothing but judgment. He took it on Him that it might be put away.

Again, not only did not Christ bear sin till His hour was come, but there was no relationship formed between Him and sinners during His life. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." It was impossible there could be union until guilt was atoned for. 'Union with Him is in resurrection. "But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24. The moment He took man's place there was nothing but death. It was by going down to death that He put Himself in man's place, for man was dead in trespasses and sins.

Having taken that place, He died unto sin once. And now as the risen One, the last Adam, he takes believing sinners into union with Himself on the ground of having put away their sins, and by taking them out of their old position in Adam, and linking them with Himself, the last Adam --a man in the glory of God.

Again, there is no union with Him in His death. That is substitution, and substitution is not union. He takes my place as substitute, and I go free.

But there is representation in His death, as well as substitution. If I look at Him on the cross for me, I see first of all my guilt, my sins, laid on Him. That is substitution. He bears them; I do not. Again I see myself there represented by Him, not as bearing sins, but dying unto sin (for sin and sins are different; sins being my actions as a sinner; sin, a principle in my nature). As a child of Adam, depraved in my whole nature, a mass of sin (without any question of my sins), Christ having been made sin, represents me on the cross. If then I look at Him as my substitute, I say, "He has borne my sins, and God has forgiven me, and set me clean." But if I look at Him as representing me there in my first Adam state, I say, "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not "serve sin." And again, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

There is a most important distinction here. I see the first case - substitution, resulting in forgiveness of sins, redemption from guilt - in Egypt, as the Israelites sit in the houses sheltered by the blood of the slain lamb. The second case I see at the Red Sea. The slain lamb was death by substitution. The Red Sea was death by representation. The children of Israel pass through the

sea, and thus in figure pass through death. And the result is, they get a new standing, outside of Egypt. They stand on the shore of the sea, as it were a new creation, on resurrection ground. They have forever cleared the death-doomed shores of the old creation. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Union is only on this ground. It is not in His life before the cross, nor in His death, but with Him in His resurrection life. If He had taken us into union with Himself either in incarnation, or in death, He would have been uniting to Himself only a mass of horrible corruption.

His death opens the way for our union, but it is with Him risen that we are united. And we are united with Him as a new creation, sin condemned and sins forever cleared away by His death on the cross. I look at the cross, and there I see in the judgment of a holy God, every trace of myself as a child of Adam put away from His presence - old things passed away. I am now linked with the One who accomplished the work. I see Him today, the second man, the last Adam; a man in the glory, and I am linked with Him there - all things have become new. Blessed, wondrous position for the believer! He has thus passed from under his guilt, and out of his position as a child of Adam, through the blood and death of Christ. He has passed beyond guilt, beyond death, beyond condemnation, beyond judgment, quickened, raised up and seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus -linked forever with the Man in the glory of God, and accepted according to the full perfection both of His work and His Person.

I turn now to justification. As you say it is "the justification sinner by a holy and righteous of God." "It is God that justifieth." If then God is righteous, the justification of a sinner is a question in which righteousness is involved. Well, we know it cannot be by man's righteousness, either without law, or under law. The Gentile without law was lawless. The Jew under law was a law-breaker. Every mouth was stopped, the whole world brought in guilty before God. How could God justify either the lawless or the law-breaker? Righteousness was not to be found in man. Where then could righteousness he found for man? Not in any creature surely, for the innocent creature - be it man or angel - has none to spare. All he has is due to God. The only source of righteousness, then, is God Himself. His righteousness is revealed in the gospel, on the principle of faith to faith.

God gave the law to man to test him. By it He demanded righteousness (not from man in innocence, but) from man, a sinner. But how could a sinner meet the righteous demands of a holy law? He could not. The only thing the law could do was to give the knowledge of sin, and condemn the sinner. When a man is brought to this extremity, God comes in grace. The righteousness of God is revealed -not a righteousness of man for God, but righteousness of God for man. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." It is without the law - not on the principle of law-keeping at all, whether by the sinner, or by Christ. It is apart from law altogether. "Even the righteousness of God... by faith of Jesus Christ." It is by faith, without the deeds of the law, and that by faith of Jesus Christ, "unto all and upon all them that believe." Its tendency is unto or toward all men everywhere. Its scope is like that of the gospel - to every creature. But it is upon them that believe. The offer is to all. The believer only receives it. The believer is "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Jesus by His blood redeems from guilt, and justifies every one thus redeemed. It is through redemption in Christ Jesus. Now comes the basis. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy seat] through faith in His blood." God has set forth Christ as a mercy seat, that is, a meeting place for God and the sinner. How does the

sinner meet God there? "Through faith in His blood." You see, in this whole passage (Rom. 3) there is not a word about meeting God on the ground of law-keeping. What we have is the blood alone, and by it the sinner is justified. In virtue of the blood of Christ, the righteousness of God is revealed for the justification of the believer in Jesus and His blood. Here the motive on God's part for justification is the blood alone. That God has found more in Christ than His blood is blessedly true, as we shall see by and by. But what must be insisted on is that we have justification by the blood of Christ alone, in Rom. 3, without any question of law-keeping whatever. It is wholly apart from law. There is more than this further on. But it is important to know that the believer in Jesus is not only cleared of every charge of sin, but the righteousness of God is actually upon him by virtue of the blood alone. Such wonderful value does God attach to the blood of His beloved Son. Examine the passage closely and with simplicity, and you will see this is the case.

How then is this? If we look at the blood of Christ as that which averts wrath only from the sinner, it would be inexplicable. But there is infinitely more in the blood of Christ than the averting of wrath and judgment. The sinner's need is not the only thing Christ had in view in offering Himself a sacrifice on the cross. Not only was the sinner's need in question, but also the glory of God. Through the presence of sin in His creation down here, God's law, justice, government, throne and righteousness were ignored; His majesty and holiness were slighted; His character was in question. All this was in view when Christ offered Himself He not only met the sinner's need, but also glorified God in every particular, making His righteousness and glory to shine forth as the noonday. The blood has not only secured redemption from guilt for the sinner, but it has vindicated God's character in the presence of sin in the most glorious way. The righteousness and holiness and unsullied glory of the throne have been sealed with blood. The blood is on the throne as its eternal vindication against sin. Thus it is that God finds such a motive in the blood of Christ. His righteousness has become debtor to the blood and sacrifice of Christ, if I may so speak. He has glorified God, and "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself" (John 13:32). For God to glorify Him is righteousness. There was a demand on the righteousness of God by the work of Christ on the cross. And so the righteousness of God was displayed in raising Christ from the dead and setting Him on the throne in glory. But that is not all. The righteousness of God is further displayed in justifying everyone who believes in Jesus. In virtue of the blood, the believing sinner gets complete clearance from his guilt and sins, and also is clothed in the righteousness of God. As a sinner redeemed by blood, I am brought into the presence of God, and there stand, all covered over with the righteousness of God. I am under it as a shelter. The same justice that administers the fatal stroke to my Substitute on the cross is now on my side, and shelters me, a justified sinner, forever in the presence of God. Not only so, but God's righteousness as a quality or character belonging to Himself is upon me as His gift (Rom. 3:22 and 5:17). Such is the righteousness of God revealed for the sinner, and secured to him by the blood of Christ.

In Rom. 4 there is another aspect of righteousness -imputed righteousness. It is not the righteousness of God imputed, nor the righteousness of Christ; but it is the believer imputed, or reckoned, righteous by faith. It is not so much righteousness set over to the sinner's account, but it is the believing sinner accounted righteous while he is not righteous, but unrighteous, ungodly. To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The person is ungodly, but he is reckoned as in a state of righteousness. The basis on which God could do this is the blood of Christ. Because of what God has found in that, He

reckons every believer righteous.

In the end of the fourth chapter there is something more than there is in the third chapter. In the third there is only blood shedding and the display of God's righteousness on that basis - for the justification of the believing sinner. In the end of the fourth chapter there is not only death but resurrection. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." If I look in the third chapter I have there blood shedding for my justification.

But in the fourth there is more I have Him who shed His blood risen again, so that I have not only His blood before God as my full clearance from sins, but I have Himself, risen as the triumphant Conqueror over death, sin and Satan. Thus I have not only clearance from sins, but I am set in the cleared place through His resurrection.

In the fifth chapter there is another aspect of righteousness which is very different. In the Greek there is an entirely different word used, and which can hardly be expressed with exactness by any word in the English. In this chapter we have the two heads with their respective families - Adam and his family, Christ and His family. It is the disobedient one, and the obedient One; the one offense, and the one righteousness.

Adam by one offense -one act of disobedience - involved his whole family in ruin. Christ by one righteousness - one unbroken act of obedience - secured a standing righteousness before God for all His family. By Adam's one act, his whole family were constituted sinners; by Christ's one act, His whole family were constituted righteous. This one act of Christ includes His whole work in life and in death. The first Adam was tested, and by one act fell. The last Adam also was tested during a life of over thirty-three years. We know well what an awful test it was-a test which ended in the bearing of sins, and in atonement drinking the awful cup God had filled for Him. But He stood the test from the first to the last. Obedience was not suspended for one moment. Every act, word, and thought from first to last was obedience, so that His whole life and death are looked at as one unbroken act of obedience. And this unbroken obedience is looked at in contrast with Adam's one offense. Because of Adam's one offense, he and his whole family fell. Because of Christ's one unbroken act of obedience for thirty-three years, He stands accepted before God, and all His family stand accepted in Him according to the perfection of that one righteousness. His whole life, but especially His death, went up as a sweet savor to God. As the second man, the last Adam, He stands accepted according to the perfection, the sweet savor, that God found in all those years of unbroken obedience sealed with His blood under the fire of divine judgment against sin. The believer stands accepted in the same, and according to the same measure. He becomes possessed of this, not by its being imputed to him, not by its being transferred from Christ to him, but by his becoming one with Christ through faith - by his being taken out of Adam, and put in Christ, and thus getting a standing before God as one with Him, a part of Himself, so to speak. It is not righteousness transferred from Christ to a sinner in Adam, but a sinner in Adam transferred by faith from Adam into Christ, and consequently into the righteousness in which Christ stands before God.

I wish to notice two other passages. The first is 1 Cor. 1:30, "But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness," etc. In this passage Christ Himself is our righteousness. The Corinthians had been making much of man, were walking according to men (chapter 3:3, margin). It was, "I am of Paul," etc. The Apostle shows them

(chapter 1) how that God had brought man to naught in the cross, how He had judged all flesh there, and set it aside forever, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." If then God made nothing of man, what had these Corinthians - what has any of us - before God? None but Christ. We have Him for wisdom, righteousness, etc. In virtue of being in Him, He is our righteousness before God. It is a higher character of righteousness than that in Rom. 5, blessed as that is. In the one case it is His work; in the other, it is Himself.

The other passage is 2 Cor. 5:21. "For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made [become] the righteousness of God in Him." Here it is not the believer accepted according to Christ's work, as in Rom. 5, nor yet Christ, the righteousness of the believer before God; but it is the believer becoming the righteousness of God in Him. It is what he becomes in Christ. It is in Christ, not apart from Him. Christ is the perfect expression of God's character. Christ on the throne is the expression of God's righteousness there. So the Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness because He had gone to the Father (John 16). It was righteous in God to set Him on the throne, and He is there as the expression of that righteousness. But the believer through grace is in Him, and looked at as a part of Himself, so that he also becomes the expression of God's righteousness in Him. "As He is, so are we in this world." What marvelous grace! Made the righteousness of God in Him! This is of God. God made Christ the expression of what we are. He made Him to be sin on the cross. What are we but a mass of sin? And God made Christ the expression of this, in order that in Christ He might make us the expression of Himself in His character of righteousness. How manifest this will be when we are in the glory! Christ is the pattern of what we will be then. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. What a glorious position now belongs to the believer in the righteousness of God in virtue of Christ's work! Surely it calls for praise and adoration from these poor hearts of ours.

Let me sum up what I have said about righteousness:

The righteousness of God is revealed for the sinner in virtue of Christ set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, and it is upon all who believe.

The believing sinner is justified, and accounted righteous while really he is ungodly.

Not only have we clearance from guilt by the blood of Christ, but by His resurrection we are also put in the cleared place.

In virtue of our being in Him, the risen One, the last Adam, we are not only justified from all things, but have also justification of life. This, we have through His one righteousness.

By His one righteousness - His obedience unto death - He stands accepted as the last Adam before God, and we, poor sinners who believe, being linked with Him, are constituted righteous - accepted in the same perfection as Himself - in that sweet savor that ever ascended to God from the obedient Man.

God has made Christ our righteousness, and in Him as our righteousness we stand before God. What a robe! Surely it is the best robe!

7. We become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now then, dear brother, is not all this befitting that holy and righteous God who justifies the sinner? In virtue of this stupendous work accomplished through Christ, does not, if I may so speak, a new and everlasting glory accrue to God - a glory displayed in the last Adam, the Son of God, the Man in the glory, with whom are connected all the ransomed millions of His blood, and in whom man - humanity as a part of Himself - is forever and inseparably linked with God? When the hour of public manifestation comes, what a glorious scene the heavens will then display! Truly it will be glory then! These poor, shriveled up hearts of ours will then be enlarged to their utmost capacity. That lovely Man in the glory - slighted so much now - will then be the glorious center that will draw every eye and every heart, and call forth the praise and adoration of every blood-washed sinner. Oh! why should not He be the only center around whom all such gather now? One gaze upon His blessed face by faith ought to be enough to fix the heart upon Him forever.

I have thus written long on the subjects you raise in your letter. I do not know that I have expressed myself so as to be understood. It is because I deem the subject of immense importance I have written so lengthily, and because I believe there is a depth of rest and joy, and a holy liberty for work and service in getting to the bottom of it, not otherwise enjoyed.

My desire and prayer to God is that you may understand all clearly as it is in God's Word, and that it may have its due effect upon your heart as one of God's redeemed left down here for a little while to witness for our blessed Lord.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord Jesus,

A. H. Rule

Substitution and Righteousness

Continued

I turn now to justification. As you say it is "the justification of a sinner by a holy and righteous God." "It is God that justifieth." If then God is righteous, the justification of a sinner is a question in which righteousness is involved. Well, we know it cannot be by man's righteousness, either without law, or under law. The Gentile without law was lawless. The Jew under law was a law-breaker. Every mouth was stopped, the whole world brought in guilty before God. How could God justify either the lawless or the law-breaker? Righteousness was not to be found in man. Where then could righteousness be found for man? Not in any creature surely, for the innocent creature - be it man or angel - has none to spare. All he has is due to God. The only source of righteousness, then, is God Himself. His righteousness is revealed in the gospel, on the principle of faith to faith.

God gave the law to man to test him. By it He demanded righteousness (not from man in innocence, but) from man, a sinner. But how could a sinner meet the righteous demands of a holy law? He could not. The only thing the law could do was to give the knowledge of sin, and condemn the sinner. When a man is brought to this extremity, God comes in grace. The righteousness of God is revealed -- not a righteousness of man for God, but righteousness of God for man. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." It is without the law - not on the principle of law-keeping at all, whether by the sinner, or by Christ. It is apart from law altogether. "Even the righteousness of God . . . by faith of Jesus Christ." It is by faith, without the deeds of the law, and that by faith of Jesus Christ, "unto all and upon all them that believe." Its tendency is unto

or toward all men everywhere. Its scope is like . that of the gospel - to every creature. But it is upon them that believe. The offer is to all. The believer only receives it. The believer is "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Jesus by His blood redeems from guilt, and justifies every one thus redeemed. It is through redemption in Christ Jesus. Now comes the basis. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy - seat through faith in His blood." God has set forth Christ as a mercy-seat, that is, a meeting place for God and the sinner. How does the sinner meet God there? "Through faith in His blood." You see, in this whole passage (Rom. 3) there is not a word about meeting God on the ground of law-keeping. What we have is the blood alone, and by it the sinner is justified. In virtue of the blood of Christ, the righteousness of God is revealed for the justification of the believer in Jesus and His blood. Here the motive on God's part for justification is the blood alone. That God has found more in Christ than His blood is blessedly true, as we shall see by and by. But what must be insisted on is that we have justification by the blood of Christ alone, in Romans 3, without any question of law-keeping whatever. It is wholly apart from law. There is more than this further on. But it is important to know that the believer in Jesus is not only cleared of every charge of sin, but the righteousness of God is actually upon him by virtue of the blood alone. Such wonderful value does God attach to the blood of His beloved Son. Examine the passage closely and with simplicity, and you will see this is the case.

How then is this? If we look at the blood of Christ as that which averts wrath only from the sinner, it would be inexplicable. But there is infinitely more in the blood of Christ than the averting of wrath and judgment. The sinner's need is not the only thing Christ had in view in offering Himself a sacrifice on the cross. Not only the sinner's need was in question, but also the glory of God. Through the presence of sin in His creation down here, God's law, justice, government, throne and righteousness were ignored; His majesty and holiness were slighted; His character was in question. All this was in view when Christ offered Himself. He not only met the sinner's need, but also glorified God in every particular, making His righteousness and glory to shine forth as the noonday. The blood has not only secured redemption from guilt for the sinner, but it has vindicated God's character in the presence of sin in the most glorious way. The righteousness and holiness and unsullied glory of the throne have been sealed with blood. The blood is on the throne as its eternal vindication against sin. Thus it is that God finds such a motive in the blood of Christ. His righteousness has become debtor to the blood and sacrifice of Christ, if I may so speak. He has glorified God, and "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself." John 13:32. For God to glorify Him is righteousness. There was a demand on the righteousness of God by the work of Christ on the cross. And so the righteousness of God was displayed in raising Christ from the dead and setting Him on the throne in glory. But that is not all. The righteousness of God is further displayed in justifying everyone who believes in Jesus. In virtue of the blood, the believing sinner gets complete clearance from his guilt and sins, and also is clothed in the righteousness of God. As a sinner redeemed by blood, I am brought into the presence of God, and there stand, all covered over with the righteousness of God. I am under it as a shelter. The same justice that administers the fatal stroke to my Substitute on the cross is now on my side, and shelters me, a justified sinner, forever in the presence of God. Not only so, but God's righteousness as a quality or character belonging to Himself is upon me as His gift (Rom. 3:22 and 5:17). Such is the righteousness of God revealed for the sinner, and secured to him by the blood of Christ.

In Romans 4 there is another aspect of righteousness -- imputed righteousness. It is not the righteousness of God imputed, nor the righteousness of Christ; but it is the believer imputed, or reckoned, righteous by faith. It is not so much righteousness set over to the sinner's account, but it is the believing sinner accounted righteous while he is not righteous, but unrighteous, ungodly. To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The person is ungodly, but he is reckoned as in a state of righteousness. The basis on which God could do this is the blood of Christ. Because of what God has found in that, He reckons every believer righteous.

In the end of the fourth chapter there is something more than there is in the third chapter. In the third there is only blood shedding. and the display of God's righteousness on that basis - for the justification of the believing sinner. In the end of the fourth chapter there is not only death but resurrection. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." If I look in the third chapter I have there blood shedding for my justification.

But in the fourth there is more. I have Him who shed His blood risen again, so that I have not only His blood before God as my full clearance from sins, but I have Himself, risen as the triumphant Conqueror over death, sin and Satan. Thus I have not only clearance from sins, but I am set in the cleared place through His resurrection.

In the fifth chapter there is another aspect of righteousness which is very different. In the Greek there is an entirely different word used, and which can hardly be expressed with exactness by any word in the English. In this chapter we have the two heads with their respective families - Adam and his family, Christ and His family. It is the disobedient one, and the obedient One; the one offence, and the one righteousness.

Adam by one offence -- one act of disobedience - involved his whole family in ruin. Christ by one righteousness - one unbroken act of obedience - secured a standing righteousness before God for all His family. By Adam's one act, his whole family were constituted sinners; by Christ's one act, His whole family were constituted righteous. This one act of Christ includes His whole work in life and in death. The first Adam was tested, and by one act fell. The last Adam also was tested during a life of over thirty-three years. We know well what an awful test it was-a test which ended in the bearing of sins, and in atonement drinking the awful cup God had filled for Him. But He stood the test from the first to the last. Obedience was not suspended for one moment. Every act, word, and thought from first to last was obedience, so that His whole life and death are looked at as one unbroken act of obedience. And this unbroken obedience is looked at in contrast with Adam's one offence. Because of Adam's one offence, he and his whole family fell. Because of Christ's one unbroken act of obedience for thirty-three years, He stands accepted before God, and all His family stand accepted in Him according to the perfection of that one righteousness. His whole life, but especially His death, went up as a sweet savor to God. As the second man, the last Adam, He stands accepted according to the perfection, the sweet savor, that God found in all those years of unbroken obedience sealed with His blood under the fire of divine judgment against sin. The believer stands accepted in the same, and according to the same measure. He becomes possessed of this, not by its being imputed to him, not by its being transferred from Christ to him, but by his becoming one with Christ through faith - by his being taken out of Adam, and put in Christ, and thus getting a standing before God as one with Him, a part of Himself, so to speak. It is

not righteousness transferred from Christ to a sinner in Adam, but a sinner in Adam transferred by faith from Adam into Christ, and consequently into the righteousness in which Christ stands before God

I wish to notice two other passages. The first is 1 Corinthians 1:30, "But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness," etc. In this passage Christ Himself is our righteousness. The Corinthians had been making much of man, were walking according to men (chapter 3:3, margin). It was, "I am of Paul," etc. The Apostle shows them (chapter 1) how that God had brought man to nought in the cross, how He had judged all flesh there, and set it aside forever, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." If then God made

nothing of man, what had these Corinthians - what has any of us - before God? None but Christ. We have Him for wisdom, righteousness, etc. In virtue of being in Him, He is our righteousness before God. It is a higher character of righteousness than that in Romans 5, blessed as that is. In the one case it is His work; in the other, it is Himself.

The other passage is 2 Corinthians 5:21. "For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made [become] the righteousness of God in Him." Here it is not the believer accepted according to Christ's work, as in Romans 5, nor yet Christ, the righteousness of the believer before God; but it is the believer becoming the righteousness of God in Him. It is what he becomes in Christ. It is in Christ, not apart from Him. Christ is the perfect expression of God's character. Christ on the throne is the expression of God's righteousness there. So the Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness because He had gone to the Father (John 16). It was righteous in God to set Him on the throne, and He is there as the expression of that righteousness. But the believer through grace is in Him, and looked at as a part of Himself, so that he also becomes the expression of God's righteousness in Him. "As He is, so are we in this world." What marvelous grace! Made the righteousness of God in Him! This is of God. God made Christ the expression of what we are. He made Him to be sin on the cross. What are we but a mass of sin? And God made Christ the expression of this, in order that in Christ He might make us the expression of Himself in His character of righteousness. How manifest this will be when we are in the glory! Christ is the pattern of what we will be then. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.- What a glorious position now belongs to the believer in the righteousness of God in virtue of Christ's work! Surely it calls for praise and adoration from these poor hearts of ours.

Let me sum up what I have said about righteousness:

The righteousness of God is revealed for the sinner in virtue of Christ set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, and it is upon all who believe.

The believing sinner is justified, and accounted righteous while really he is ungodly.

Not only have we clearance from guilt by the blood of Christ, but by His resurrection we are also put in the cleared place.

In virtue of our being in Him, the risen One, the last Adam, we are not only justified from all things, but have also justification of life. This, we have through His one righteousness.

By His one righteousness -His obedience unto death - He stands accepted as the last Adam before God, and we, poor sinners who believe, being linked with Him, are constituted righteous -accepted in the same perfection as Himself - in that sweet savor that ever ascended to God from the obedient Man.

God has made Christ our righteousness, and in Him as our righteousness we stand before God. What a robe! Surely it is the best robe!

We become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now then, dear brother, is not all this befitting that holy and righteous God who justifies the sinner? In virtue of this stupendous work accomplished through Christ, does not, if I may so speak, a new and everlasting glory accrue

to God - a glory displayed in the last Adam, the Son of God, the Man in the glory, with whom are connected all the ransomed millions of His blood, and in whom man - humanity as a part of Himself - is forever and inseparably linked with God? When the hour of public manifestation comes, what a glorious scene the heavens will then display! Truly it will be glory then! These poor, shriveled up hearts of ours will then be enlarged to their utmost capacity. That lovely Man in the glory -slighted so much now -- will then be the glorious center that will draw every eye and every heart, and call forth the praise and adoration of every blood-washed sinner. Oh! why should not He be the only center around whom all such gather now? One gaze upon His blessed face by faith ought to be

enough to fix the heart upon Him forever.

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My desire and prayer to God is that you may understand all clearly as it is in God's Word, and that it may have its due effect upon your heart as one of God's redeemed left down here for a little while to witness for our blessed Lord.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord Jesus, A. H. R.

The Appian Way Station: the Three Taverns

Along the famous Appian Way paved road that ran from ancient Rome to the Bay of Naples, many processions had traveled. Over it mighty conquerors made their way victoriously to the great city, bringing along captives and other tokens of victory. But about the year 63 A.D. two little companies of Christians could be seen making their way (very likely on foot) from the world metropolis toward the sea. One company went as far as "The Three Taverns," about thirty-three miles from Rome, while the other went on about ten miles farther to "Appii Forum." History gives a rather dark picture of the conditions along the road and the bad reputation of the two named stations on it. What were these early Christians traveling along this road for? Was it to meet some great personage, some mighty conqueror? What motive prompted them to make, what was in those days, such a long hard trip? It was love that took them forward on that journey. The news had reached them that the Apostle Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus, had arrived the week before at Puteoli, a city on the Bay of Naples. When they landed they found "brethren" there and, as they desired, Paul and his party remained one week with them.

It was springtime now after a strenuous and hazardous winter. Paul the prisoner, and his friends, the soldiers, and other prisoners had started for Rome the fall before, and after a terrible storm in the Mediterranean, the ship was wrecked and they were stranded on the Island of Malta. Now at last the great Apostle to the Gentiles was approaching the great and wicked city of Rome. This was his first trip to Rome; he had often longed to go there as he says in the letter he wrote to the Roman Christians. We do not know how the gospel was carried to them, but the Apostle Paul had not done it, and as far as we know, no other apostle had -either. God had ordered it that others should carry His glad tidings to Rome.

That precious bond that unites all the children of God was surely felt and manifested in this touching scene. Paul loved the dear saints, whom he had not seen, and they loved him. Many of them had not long before been pagan worshippers of false gods, without God and without love for His people. Now they were drawn together by the same Spirit. Paul had written to them, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Rom. 1:11-12. He had written this, perhaps about three years before, just previous to his arrest in Jerusalem. At that time he did not know that when he did go to see them he would go as a prisoner.

Now the time that Paul looked forward to had arrived - he was approaching Rome where there were many who were dear unto him. How would they treat him, a prisoner? Would they welcome him? He did not have to wait until he reached the city to find out and see evidence of love and affection. Prisoner or no, when they heard he was coming, many of the saints took up their journey to meet him enroute and escort him to the city. To the teeming multitudes of the great city Paul was nothing, but no greater personage ever traveled that road - he, the greatest servant the Lord ever had - the great Apostle of the Gentiles, although a prisoner under military guard.

Paul had desired to be a help to them, and to be comforted and encouraged by the faith in them; thus they would encourage each the other. How sweet and precious the fact that each is a member in that one body and each has his own particular place to fill and his own function to perform.

No one doubts that Paul would be a great help to those dear saints at Rome, but notice how he was first helped and encouraged by them. In Acts 28:15 we read that when Paul saw those fellow members of the one body "he thanked God, and took courage." No doubt Paul had natural fears and dread as he approached that great city for, his trial before Caesar. The ordeals of his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea had not been effaced from his memory. He had suffered much for Christ in both cities, and in Jerusalem the Lord stood by him one night and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). And when he and all on board ship had been in that terrible storm for many days "an angel of God" stood by him at night and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all that sail

with thee" (Acts 27:24). But this time as Paul neared Rome the Lord did not appear but used His people

to strengthen and encourage him. How touching is that scene along the Appian Way! as Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus, came along the road, to receive a loving embrace and words of comfort and cheer. Perhaps never before or since was such a scene enacted on that Roman paved road. Surely God looked down on them that day, and it was He who was using fellow Christians to comfort and strengthen his faithful and wearied servant.

And, fellow-Christian, have we not each and all opportunities to encourage one another? Which of us have not at some times felt the need of a word in season to lift up hands that hang down? And if we have such times, so have all the rest of the saints. And if we have received such cheer, may we not desire to be able to render it to others? Yes, even Christ's greatest servant needed and received words and acts of encouragement, for which he thanked God.

P. W.

As Is the Heavenly, so Are the Heavenly Ones: the Heavenly Character of Christianity

1 Cor. 15:48

It is of no little importance that we should recognize that Christianity in its very essence is as heavenly as He who inspired it. Many are they who accept its divine authorship, who have never adequately apprehended it to be an absolutely heavenly thing, though in an earthly locale. But practically we find that the less it is apprehended as heavenly, the less also will its divine aspect be before the soul. And this we may safely predicate, that it is impossible to understand its character and its scope, unless in its origin, in its essence, in its operation and in its end, it is seen to be altogether a heavenly product for a heavenly purpose. How contracted and how erroneous are the prevailing thoughts of what Christianity is. How little is it accepted as the reflection of a heavenly Christ in a heavenly people redeemed from the earth, who are here only for Himself and looking for translation at His coming!

"The first man... of the earth, earthy," had been running his carnal and material course for forty centuries here below, before "the second man" paid a visit of three and thirty years to the same scene, having been sent into it in grace to "the first." As man, He was, He is, "the heavenly," and by this title is contrasted with "the earthy." In God's reckoning He was "second man," for all before God counts as one; and He was "last Adam," for there could be no more after. But more than this He was "from [or out of] heaven" as the first was out of the earth, made of dust. Refused and cut off from the earth, having nothing, He is now the risen Man in the glory of God, and alike in incarnation and in resurrection is He - "the heavenly" -there, now and eternally!

Further, as is He, "the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly [ones]." There is, it is admitted, another aspect of Christianity in which birth and profession give status, and wherein are certain privileges and answering responsibilities; but what is now before us is a matter of race, and as to this we are born of God, are partakers of the divine nature, and just as truly as the angels, are we one of the heavenly families. The One "who lived, who died, who lives again," has redeemed unto Himself a chosen race of which, as the risen Man, He is the glorified Head, and this word - "as the heavenly [One], such also the heavenly [ones] " - so constitutes Christianity in its very essence, that every bit of it which is a genuine thing before God, expresses in word or in deed, the cardinal truth that man is in the glory of God, and God is glorified thereby. One who was once visible upon earth, "in likeness of flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3 JND) sits now in a glorified, but no less real, positive human body on the Father's throne. From the glory of God, from the throne of the Father, and in the risen, exalted Man who fills all heaven with His peerless presence, Christianity has its origin; and in the power of the Holy Ghost alone, witness from thence of His exalted majesty and glory, it has its activities in so far as they are according to God. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" - marks its starting point both as to the time and place. It is thus "the heavenly" gone back to heaven - man in the glory of God - in whom it takes its rise; and it is this fact - the parent truth of Christianity - which

imparts to it its distinctive character. It is a divine thing as He is divine; it is heavenly as He is heavenly; He is its sure foundation, its tried corner-stone, its immovable keystone, its crowning top-stone!

Two questions naturally arise here. 1. Have we truly accepted the fact that generically we are as heavenly as He who adorns the Father's throne? (Compare John 17:16 with Heb. 2:11.) 2. How far does the character and order of our lives make patent that our former earthly standing has been eternally abrogated to make room for the new and indissoluble relations we hold to the Man whom God has gratified His own heart in exalting to highest glory? Could believers answer these inquiries satisfactorily it would be utterly impossible that they should go on in practical fellowship with the course and current of this world - governed by its principles, giving utterance to its maxims, aiding its objects, adopting its practices, and accepting its patronage, the fruit of which is as the apples of Sodom, and whose reaping shall ever be leanness and poverty and wretchedness of soul.

May He, "the heavenly," so blessedly connect with Himself the hearts of those who have accepted His heavenly call, and who know that what they have been brought into is as intrinsically of heaven as it is radically of God, that our Christianity may not comport with that of "this poor, faithless world," but may, through grace, be ever acquiring in an increasing degree a character suited to its divine origin, expressive of its celestial destiny and redolent with the graces and the virtues of a glorified Christ!

At His Gate

"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."
Pro. 8:34.

"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." Isa. 40:31.

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isa. 30:21.

I am watching at Thy gateway:

Master, speak "a word," I pray!

Life's journey lies before me,

A lonely, rugged way.

Oh, speak a word of power,

Which my soul will gladly own

Was just the word I needed,

And meant for me alone!

Some, more richly, grandly gifted,

'Midst the throng of hurrying feet,

Sound the tidings - Thou art "coming,"

In the busy, crowded street.

Souls arrested stand to listen,

Wooed and won for heaven above

By that tale of matchless sorrow,

And that tale of wondrous love!

But more humble is my service;

Can I give it such a name

While my heart is filled with sorrow,

And my head is bowed in shame?

Few to speak to, few to listen

As I point them up above;
For the words are faint and faltering,
And my only "gift" is love.
But I'm watching at Thy gateway
For "a word" of sympathy
To some broken heart to whisper,
A message straight from Thee!
That blest acquaintanceship with grief
Which Thou didst learn below,
Has fitted Thee to minister
To every child of woe.
And give "a word" to keep me
From snares which lie around;
A melody to charm me
From every earthly sound.
A message - by Thy Spirit
Brought home in power - I pray,
Of guidance, cheer, or warning;
A message for today!
A. S. O.

Be Ye Not Unequally Yoked With Unbelievers

2 Cor. 6:14

For the Christian to keep himself free from being yoked with unbelievers, becomes more and more difficult because of the many confederacies that are formed on every hand, and for every purpose.

It is well that it is seen that this applies to marriage, for there is scarcely anything that leads to greater dishonor to the Lord, and to the hindrance and discomfort of the Christian, than a mixed marriage; and yet, alas, even this is disregarded by many Christians, who are often satisfied with a profession where there is no reality.

It was a law in Israel that they should not give their daughters in marriage to the sons of the Canaanites, nor let their sons marry the daughters of the land. Even Solomon disregarded this, and sad was the result. We read that "king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." 1 Kings 11:1-2.

Now Solomon was the wisest man, but his wisdom was no protection when he was in disobedience. The wisdom that cometh down from above is first pure; and Solomon had departed from that which was pure, and only evil could be the result.

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD." vv. 4-6.

Solomon may have thought that he would make proselytes of his strange wives, and that they would have worshipped the God of Israel, in a similar way to the thought that many Christians have had, that they will be the means of the conversion of their unbelieving partners. But, alas, in Solomon's case, instead of the wives becoming worshippers of Israel's God, he became a worshipper of their idols, and erected high places before Jerusalem for their abominations.

So with many a Christian, the unbelieving partner has not been converted, but the believer has been dragged into the world, lived a miserable life, and been dealt with in discipline by God.

How sad an ending it is, after the victorious reign of David, and the glorious reign of Solomon, that God should say, in reference to Solomon's idolatry, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." (vs. 11). And all this was the result of loving "strange women," who turned his heart away.

Let all take warning from the fall of this wise man. We all have the flesh remaining in us, and it is only when walking in obedience to the Word that we are in the path of safety, or can count upon His keeping us from falling. The injunction is very plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And if a Christian marry, it must be "only in the Lord."

But there are many ways in which a Christian may be unequally yoked with unbelievers besides in marriage; indeed, the passage in Corinthians does not mention marriage, so that the injunction is general. And it is amplified in a very full way. The Apostle asks what fellowship there is - what is there in common between

Righteousness and unrighteousness?

Light and darkness?

Christ and Belial?

He that believeth and an infidel?

The temple of God and idols?

These things may sound harsh, and be deemed uncharitable, when applied to those who dwell in what is called a Christian country; but are not the terms simply the characteristics of the Christian and of the unconverted? And the passage asks, what communion, what concord, what part, what agreement, can there be between the one and the other? He sums it up by declaring of the Christians to whom he was writing, "Ye are the temple of the living God."

And this is followed by the injunction, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

To be yoked with unbelievers in matters of business, or in having shares in a company, is one of the great snares laid for the Christian. The question is, Is it being yoked with the world? Is it becoming a member of any worldly organization? If so, surely it comes under the above injunction, that we are not to touch the unclean thing. Many a Christian has touched them, and has become a shareholder with unbelievers, and has greatly suffered there from. God has given the promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28. But if I place myself in a union in which God cannot make things work together for my good, without making them work for good to the unconverted in the same community, how can I possibly reckon on this promise? No indeed, I have placed myself outside the sphere in which God has promised to make things work for my good. He has not said that He makes them work for good to the unbeliever. Again, we may surely say that the path of obedience is the only place of blessing, as well as of safety. May God keep all His beloved people in this path.

There is also the snare of association with the world on the plea of philanthropy - doing good to the poor and afflicted. It is urged, how much better this can be effected in associations than it can be done by individuals; and why need the same strict rule be enforced when the purpose is a good one, and not for one's own profit?

God's word is "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6:9-10. Now, here it is "well doing" - doing good - and while caring for the needs of the body, how can this be separated by the Christian, from the need of the soul in the gospel to the unconverted and the word of truth to God's people? And how can association with the world help in these higher aims? It can only hinder and destroy them. If we can associate with other Christians in the path of obedience in doing good to all, it is well; but if not, let each do that which his hand findeth to do, looking for God's guidance as to when and where to do it, and count upon His blessing on what is done. The injunction, not to be yoked together with unbelievers, cannot be in view of doing evil simply, but for all and every purpose; there must be no fellowship with such.

There is also, in these days, a great temptation to both employers and employed to form unions for the maintenance of their several rights; indeed, in many places great efforts are being used to compel the workmen to unite for protection, as it is called, against what is held to be the oppression of the employers. Christians are, at times, placed in great difficulty as to such demands, and many give way and join the unions.

Well, the simple question is, Is it being unequally yoked together with unbelievers? And if so, how can it be attended with the blessing of God? It may seem to lead to quietness in some instances, but in others it has led to distress; for joining a union has involved joining in a strike, and that too, where the Christian had to own that he had good wages, and had no personal complaints; but for some grievance the majority of the union had decided on a strike, and all the members were compelled to submit.

Ah, that word "member" shows what a false position a Christian would be in. He is a member of the body of Christ, and should not be a member of any human society. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." And what then - get on the best way they can by themselves? No, but God says, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." Cannot such a Father guide and protect you?

Yes, our heavenly Father has helped many a one who has been faithful to Him, and delivered them out of their difficulties; for "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." 2 Pet. 2:9. And "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Pro. 16:7. He gives instructions to both masters and servants, to which all do well to take heed.

The times are indeed difficult, as has been foretold, but our God is the God for difficult times, as well as when all is smooth and easy; and often has He intervened for the welfare of His saints who trust in Him; and indeed, He is ever true to His promise in making all things work together for good to those that love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.

May God increase the faith of all His beloved people, in separating from this dark and evil world through which we are passing, of which Satan is the god. Satan's great effort, where he cannot destroy, is to seduce, and lead God's saints into union with the unbeliever, knowing only too well how this will hinder their progress, and bring them under the discipline of their Father in heaven. May God keep the feet of all His saints in these difficult times; they will soon be over, and faith will

be consummated in sight.

"Things New and Old"

Believing Because of Man's Testimony Is Not Faith in God

The tradition of men is never faith; whether it be truth or error, it is never faith; it is natural, and belongs to man. Faith is the reception of a divine testimony by the soul, so that God Himself is believed; and, further, it is founded on His testimony alone. Man may be the instrument of leading me into truth - a signpost shows me the way - but I cannot believe man; that is, I cannot believe because man says it; I believe God. We have believed Satan when we were enjoying God's blessings; now God calls upon us to believe Himself. Herein is the real return of the soul to God. If I believe because "the Church" has put its authority or its sanction on that which I believe, I am just simply saying that I do not believe God.

The Bible is the Word of God. God has given a testimony carrying His authority with it, which testimony I am bound to believe; otherwise I despise God's testimony. To believe because man says it is true, or because "the Church" says it is true, is to make God a liar; for when I had only what God said, I did not believe. It is well to look this distinctly and definitely in the face.

There are two things: (1) that which I believe - the fullness, riches, and perfection of Christ; and (2) the ground on which I believe it. Now as to the latter, if a person were to tell me something, in order to really believe that person's testimony I must receive what he said, because he said it.

If I cannot believe God, why is it? My eyes are holden; I cannot believe when God speaks. He has not failed in giving the testimony. The only righteousness in regard of this is to believe what God says, because He says it; in other words, to believe God. To tell a person, "I will believe what you say when I get it sanctioned by another," is to distrust him. To require "the Church's" testimony to accredit God's Word is to disbelieve - to dishonor - God. In doing this, I am, as it respects moral position, infidel in regard to God.

J. N D

Simon Blessed Art Thou: Get Thee Behind Me, Satan

The two parts of this title stand out in sharpest contrast with each other, even though they were spoken to the same man by the same Speaker - the Lord Jesus Christ - and are found only six verses apart in the 16th chapter of Matthew.

Simon Peter was pronounced "blessed" after he had given expression to the wondrous truth concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus. The world at large and even the privileged Jewish people did not understand who He was. "He was in the world... and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." But there was a little band attached to Him - attracted to His Person - although even to them it was only by revelation from the Father that they could see who the glorious One was.

The crowd had speculated as to who He was - a Jeremiah, Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the prophets. When the Lord asked His disciples who He was, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," whereupon the Lord calls him "blessed," for he was privileged to receive that revelation from the Father.

Happy Peter! happy disciples! to be able by faith to see in the lowly Jesus, the Christ - God's Anointed - the Son of the living God (vs. 16).

O that our hearts may take in more of His beauty, His glory! He will fill the range of our enlarged vision in heaven; may He become increasingly precious to us here - here where He is still despised, and where men restrict His glory to that of a mere man - "one of the prophets."

When we come to the 21st verse, the Lord "began... to show unto His disciples... that He... must... suffer many things... and be killed." This was indeed a blow to them; they saw in Him God's Son and God's King, but were slow to take in His sufferings and death. They looked for Him to take the kingdom and reign, but instead He must first suffer. The sufferings must precede the glory; the cross must come before the crown. It was natural for them to shrink from rejection and suffering for their Lord and Master, for if He was to be rejected and suffer in this world, they must receive the same - "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord."

Such thoughts provoked Peter to dare to rebuke the Lord and to say, as in one translation, "be favorable to Thee, Lord, this shall in no wise be unto Thee." v. 22. Blessed Lord! He knew the source of such thoughts; Satan had come to Him before, in the wilderness, to turn Him out of the pathway of dependence and obedience as a man; now he was using a chief Apostle to urge the Lord to shun the path of reproach and suffering. The Lord instantly recognized in Peter's words another effort of Satan, and promptly said to Peter:

"Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." v. 23.

Poor Peter - only shortly before he was called "blessed"; now he is rebuked as being the instrument in the hands of Satan. Once the receiver of divine revelation as to the Son, he now is

the mouthpiece of the enemy. But such is man; he is not to be trusted. It is natural to the human heart to shrink from reproach and suffering, and also to seek honor in and from this world. How easily Peter's mind was on the things that are of men.

And we, who have greater light than Peter had at that time, are so easily influenced by the things that are of men that we shrink from a little reproach for Christ, and seek some of this world's honor or favor. Sometimes we sing:

"Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,

With all thy boasted store

We'd not have joy where He had woe -

Be rich where He was poor."

And how easily we drop back from the expressions of our lips!

Sometimes we may be like Peter, when he enjoyed divine revelation, and rejoice in Christ Jesus our Lord; and at other times we may be engrossed with the things "that be of men."

Sadder yet! - we may speak of the glories of the Son of God and encourage others at one time, and at another, if not in the current of God's thoughts, give advice to fellow followers of a rejected Christ that will be the advice of Satan himself. How easily we are influenced by the "things that be of men" and may be, by act or word, the instrument of evil persuading some young Christian (or older one either) to seek worldly gain, position, honor, or some of the applause of the very world that Christ died to, and died to deliver us from. May we be more careful in our thinking, that it may not be of this world's philosophy - "the things that be of men" - and may we be on our guard against giving the advice of Satan to a follower of a rejected Christ.

On the other side of this point: may we be careful about receiving such advice. May "the things that be of God" so influence our thinking that when we receive advice to seek the world's advancement, popularity, wealth, station, or such like, we may discern the voice of the enemy. This should not be construed to mean that an employee may not accept a better position in his work, but even in doing that he should first seek the Lord's guidance and weigh the consequences. One may well ask himself if he can carry out the duties of the better position heartily as to the Lord - whether there would be certain demands which he could not meet with a good conscience. The higher we get in the world, the closer we get to the prince of it. Many who went on happily with the Lord when in humbler stations, have been caught in the world's vortex, when in higher places, to the Lord's dishonor and their loss. We are responsible for our conduct and must watch against the influence of the world, even though it may come from the lips of one who at another time may have thrilled our hearts as he spoke of heavenly things and the glories of the Son of God.

The Lord follows His word to Peter with a word to all the disciples:

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." vss. 24-25.

That Blessed Word of Invitation, Come

"Come!"

What power and sweetness in this little word "come!" How it lets us into the very secret of the bosom of God, and tells of the loving desire of His heart, that any and every poor lost one who hears it, should take Him at His word, and "come." "He, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. 55:1.

Here, every thirsty, needy, penniless one is invited to come. It is the desire of the loving heart of God that he should come - come now - come just as he is and drink at the living fountain of water, so freely opened by the hand of redeeming love. There is no hindrance. Grace has removed every difficulty out of the way. The very fact of God's sending forth the invitation to come, proves that He has taken away every barrier. He would not - He could not say "Come," if the way were not perfectly open - perfectly free. And not only so, but we may rest assured that when God says "Come," He means what He says. He expresses the language of His heart. In a word, not only is the way open, but God earnestly desires that every thirsty, needy, helpless soul that reads these lines should come now and drink - come and draw water out of those wells of salvation which are freely opened to every creature under heaven.

Take another lovely passage culled from the prophet Isaiah. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Chapter 1:18. Here, it is not merely a question of thirst and poverty, but actually of scarlet sins - guilt of crimson dye. Even these need be no hindrance, seeing that God, in His infinite grace, has found a means whereby He can righteously cleanse the guilt and blot out the sins, and render the soul of the poor guilty sinner as white as snow, as the wool just pure from the washing.

And let the reader especially mark the grace that shines in the words, "Come now, and let us reason together." Only think of the high and mighty One that inhabiteth eternity - the Maker of heaven and earth - the Creator and sustainer of the universe - the One who has power to destroy both soul and body in hell - think of His condescending to reason with a poor guilty sinner, covered from head to foot with scarlet sins! What grace is here! What loving kindness and tender mercy! Who can withstand it? Who can refuse to come? Who will harden his heart against such love as this? God grant the reader may not do so! Oh! that he may come now and trust in the perfect, because divine, efficacy of that most precious blood - even the blood of God's own Son, which cleanseth from all sin, and makes the soul clean enough to stand in the full blaze of the holiness of God.

Take a sentence or two from the gospel - from the very lips of Him who spake as never man spake - the lips of our adorable Savior and Lord. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Here the laboring and the heavy laden are called to hearken

to the same most touching, gracious, winning word, "Come!" Every weary, burdened heart, every crushed and broken spirit is invited to come to Jesus, who alone is able and willing-willing as He is able, and able as He is willing - to give rest. Oh! what a soothing word is "rest!" How it fall, upon the poor heart like showers upon the parched and thirsty ground!

If the reader is one who has not yet come, we beseech you. Come now, and have your thirst quenched, your burden removed, your sins forgiven, your guilt canceled. Come, we earnestly entreat you, now. Do not linger. Time is very short. Eternity, with all its tremendous realities, is at hand. Oh! do come now!

The Blessing From Prophecy: for Those Not the Subjects of It

It is the happy portion of every Christian to know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Man by nature knows not this grace; his every thought is foreign to it. Sin made man a coward, and a stranger from God, and his innate thoughts are that God is a hard master. He is, as the poet so aptly expressed it, "A stranger to grace and to God." Grace is not only unknown but unwanted. It is strangely sad that man should be so desperately in need of grace and yet be a total stranger to it, while all the time the heart of God is yearning to show grace. But there are those who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious"; they have touched, as it were, the hem of His garment and found an exhaustless river of grace flowing forth. Every true Christian knows the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"; he may not know much of its soundless depths, but unless he knows that grace he is lost, in his sins, and on the road to the pit. So then, we may divide mankind into two classes: those who know that grace and are saved, and those who do not. He who knows it can joyfully sing those well-known words:

"Grace is the sweetest sound

That ever reached our ears;

When conscience charged and justice frowned,

'Twas grace removed our fears."

Thus the Spirit of God, by the Apostle, addresses these words to us: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. Each child of God is embraced in "ye know." And fellow-Christian, what grace it was that opened our poor blind eyes and hard hearts to lay hold of His grace - grace that met us where we were in our dire need. And note whose grace is here spoken of: "our Lord Jesus Christ." Him whom we have owned as our Lord - that One to whom we belong. And has it been a hardship? far be the thought. The Apostle spoke very affectionately of "Christ Jesus my Lord." The beloved Apostle was an old man in prison for his Lord's sake when he wrote those words to the Philippian saints; was his service hard? no, Paul gloried in it, he loved it.

Then take the next word of this verse - "Jesus" -and see what memories it brings to our hearts. Yes, "Jesus the name we love so well!" The name of that blessed One who came from heaven and trod the pathway on earth. How we delight to trace His footsteps in the Gospels - every step showing divine perfection on earth, and yet He was truly a man.

It is the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, "God has made that same Jesus... both Lord and Christ." Christ means "anointed." He is God's anointed One. He is now seated in heaven at God's right hand, and God views us who know His grace as being in Him there. Oh, what a place of favor! All our blessings are in Christ. Yes, dear Christian, we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but how are we to gauge that grace? read on: "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."

First we must ask the question, How rich was He? Such a question plunges us into thoughts of His glory that amaze and astonish. His riches include all His glory in deity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Can we poor finite creatures comprehend that? No. Go back before Gen. 1, go back before the world was, back as far as the mind can go, and when you get there, He "was" there, and He "was God." "All things were created by Him and for Him." There is no single exception; all was created by Him and for Him. Go through the Word of God and you will find many verses which tell of His riches. He speaks through Isaiah the prophet, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." Yes, He "was rich."; not as man saw Him in His pathway on earth. Here He was with the poor, and according to men's standards, He was poor. We never read of the Lord having had a piece of money. He came into the world in the stable of an inn. He was laid in one man's manger, and when He was to leave the world, He was placed in another man's tomb. Surely when Scripture speaks of His having been rich, it refers to all that He had before He became a man.

Then we see Him becoming poor. If His riches excelled all, so His poverty was greater than all. From the very highest, He went to the very lowest. From the "form of God" to the "form of a servant" and "the likeness of men." Down, down, down He came and did not stop until He had gone to "death," and lower than that - "the death of the cross." Lower He could not go; higher He could not have been. The "cross," that death reserved for the lowest, for slaves and the meanest of criminals - such was the Roman thought of death on a cross. And what was the Jews' thought? It was formed by Scripture, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

And when we think of the shame, ignominy, and suffering of the cross, let us not forget those three awful hours of darkness, when the sun refused to shine - from 12 noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It was in those three terrible hours that the blessed Lord Jesus was made sin for us --

"What shame, what grief, what we prove

That He should die for us!

Our hearts were broken by that cry-

'Eli, lama sabachthani?'

It was the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree that forced from His blessed lips those awful words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Such then, dear saints of God, is the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" in coming from the highest height to the very lowest depth; and why? "for your sakes." Does not this touch something in your heart and mine? Yes, for our sakes He came where we were; for our sakes He became a man and went into death and there was made sin - "the Just for the unjust." Our condition was so bad that such a great descent was necessary to pick us up; nothing short of such coming down would have met our case, Yes,

"Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,

Thence is all Thy people's hope."

And was His grace only displayed in coming all the way down to where we lay in order to cleanse us from our sins? No, no, no; that would not have been "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" His grace will not stop until it has us with Him in glory - "that we through His poverty might be rich." He

came from the highest to the lowest and He lifts us up from that low place, where He found us, to the heights of heaven. There we shall be, not as beggars, not as strangers, but there with and like Himself, far above angels; We cannot comprehend the riches that He had, nor the poverty to which He came; and we cannot fully know the pit we were in, nor lay hold of the glory that shall be ours. Yes, that "we through His poverty might be rich." Well may we add the words of the poet,

"Thou wast poor that we might be

Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee."

P. W.

The Field of Boaz

Ruth did not forget the first learned in the field of Boaz, "Go not to glean in another field," for we find in Ruth 2:23: "So lesson she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."

She had taken her right place as an outcast, she had owned she was not like one of the handmaids of Boaz, and she found this to be the way of true blessing. In the field of Boaz, during the months between barley and wheat harvest, many happy and blessed lessons were learned.

She learned to keep her eyes on the field that was being reaped. She learned where to find refreshment for her thirst, and the mealtimes of the reapers, and found that Boaz was there to reach her a portion of parched corn more than enough to satisfy her own needs.

She learned to glean patiently after the reapers, and to beat out patiently what she had gleaned.

Lastly, she learned the name of Boaz, and the value of his word (vss. 19-21).

These are simple but blessed lessons that flow from the work of grace when the soul has met with Jesus.

Instead of the restless wandering and seeking for some object to satisfy, the heart finds a place where full satisfaction is known.

Instead of a thirst that cannot be quenched at the broken cisterns of the world, the heart finds abiding refreshment and joy in Christ enjoyed by the Holy Ghost, a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Then the joy is learned of gathering with the children of God in God's way, according to the Word, to find that the Lord is always in the midst of His own, to feed His sheep, and fill the heart with His preciousness.

The value of patient study of the Word, and the need of beating out with diligence and prayer the portion gathered are real things that the young Christian learns in the field of Boaz, nor does the older Christian ever cease to need them.

But above and beyond all, and indeed through all, the great lesson is the knowledge of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and that His Word must be everything to the soul.

"The man's name... is Boaz." "He said unto me." These are the words that show what Ruth had learned, though the ephah beaten out bore witness to her labor, and the portion reserved bore witness to the gracious care of Boaz.

S. H. H.

The Body Is Dead Because of Sin: the Spirit Is Life Because of Righteousness

Not only am I in Christ (Rom. 8:11), but Christ is in me as a believer (v. 8). The effect of knowing that I am in Christ is that there is no condemnation - not merely that I am not condemned in this or that, but all condemnation is absolutely annulled. There could not be anything of the sort for the Christian. God must condemn His own Son if He condemned those that are in Him; and every Christian is in Him....

The measure of His [God's] salvation is that, first of all, as to our standing, we are put in Christ risen from the dead, who is our life in the power of the Spirit. Next, there is the active working of the Spirit of God in the believer. This is what is spoken of here: "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." If I allow the body its own will, there is nothing but sin produced. How am I to get power against its dragging me into sin? Hold it [the body] for dead; this is the prescription. "If Christ be in you"-he is not speaking of unbelievers, but simply about Christians. To them the word is, "If Christ be in you. Remember, this is what you are to do-count the body as a dead thing-do not pamper it-never yield to it. If there be the allowance of the active will therein, it is not merely the body; it becomes then simply "flesh." Where rein is given to the will, irrespective of course of God's, the body is but the instrument of sin, not of righteousness.

Thus the way for the Christian to get power against the sin that is in him is to count the body dead. Is he that is dead to allow such and such an evil thing to work? When you cease to hold it for dead, there is sin; but if you do, the Spirit works in moral power. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness."

It is only so far as you do not yield to your own will that sin is practically null and void, and the Spirit of God acts freely. The Apostle is looking at the actual working of the Spirit of God in us. It is not life simply viewed as ours, but as in exercise-a matter of experience day by day. What is between the soul's deliverance (as in verses 1 and 2) and the resurrection of our bodies? "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Righteousness is not found simply by seeing that I am in Christ. This alone will not do. A man who merely talks about being in Christ and makes this his Christianity will turn out very bad indeed. He is merely making Christ a means for getting off eternal condemnation and present responsibility, but this will not do. As sure as you have got Christ and you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and if Christ is in you, take care you do not allow self to work. Where the body is not treated as dead but alive, and is allowed to have its way, sin must be the result. If you treat it as dead, its career is cut short, its course is closed, and the Spirit of God deigns to become the sole spring of what you are seeking.

And let no one suppose that this is bondage. It is Christian liberty. A slave thus works because he must; and we also, when in a low state, are apt to make a law of everything. When the affections

are not flowing, we are only kept from what is openly evil, because there is a servile dread of doing what our consciences know is contrary to God. When this is the case, I am forgetting my ground of duty. What is it? Even now Christ is in me. If Christ be in me here, I am responsible to do His will. How is this to be done? I have got my body; if I allow it to have its own will and way, it will land me in sin. Treat it as dead; and let the one spring of what you desire be that which pleases the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." There is no practical righteousness produced in the Christian, except by the power of the Spirit of God. If the body is allowed loose rein in what we desire, it is only sin. The Spirit, on the contrary, is life in the practical sense, and this is the only way of righteousness for our walk.

W. K.

Some Very Good and Very Poor Building Material

Every Christian is building, and in First Corinthians 3 he is exhorted to "take heed how he buildeth." The Spirit of God here uses the figure of building to express the testimony of Christianity in this world. We can easily visualize a wall or a four-walled structure in the making - bit is added to bit, as many workmen do their jobs.

The workmen mentioned in 1 Cor. 3 do not all do good building; some of them evidently build with enthusiasm and zeal, but put very poor materials into the building. We can easily see that this is not the building that our Lord spoke of in Matt. 16 when He said that upon the Rock of Peter's confession - "Christ the Son of the living God" - He would build His Church. Christ will never place any bad materials in His building and nothing shall ever destroy what He builds. He is building His Church, and that work is entirely in His hands. It is composed of every true believer in Himself, in this age.

Now there is that other building which men build in the world - Christianity as entrusted to the hands of men. There is no other foundation but Jesus Christ (v. 11). To depart from that foundation would be to leave Christianity itself. Each believer is within the scope of Christianity in this world, and each is building something into that testimony. We may not have seriously weighed it before, but we are adding something to that building. Now the scripture before us is "let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." v. 10. Why should there be any need for such an exhortation? Verse 12 supplies the answer by listing some of the materials being put into the building; these fall into two classes - "gold, silver, precious stones" and "wood, hay, stubble."

The standard by which to test the building materials is a divine standard - that which will stand the test of fire. Every bit of material that goes into that building is going to pass through the fire, for we read, "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." v. 13. So then only fireproof materials will be of any account. The Laodiceans were counseled to buy "gold tried in the fire" that they might be rich; and not to trust in what they called riches.

It is a solemn thought that each of us is day by day building something that is going to be tested by fire - God's fire that will consume everything that is not according to His mind and His Word. Such being the case we may well inquire how we can build things that will withstand the heat of His discerning judgment in that day. We may ask, Just what are "gold, silver, precious stones" with which we should build? and what are the very combustible materials which we should avoid placing in this building of Christianity on earth?

In order to answer this we may notice first that the things that will stand the fire test are - comparatively speaking - very small in bulk. A bale of hay would make a sizeable contribution to any wall. Hay is very good in its place, and some hay is much better and higher priced than other hay, but none of it is suitable fireproof building material. Wood also builds quickly and soon makes an appearance before the eyes of man, but it is no good in this building.

Gold, silver, and precious stones make little bulk, but after the fire has passed they will be left, and their builder will receive a reward.

Further, in considering what these figurative materials represent to us in our daily building, we need to remember that this chapter is not dealing with a Christian living for the world - trying to get rich, going after its pleasures, etc. - which is spoken of in other parts of the Word of God. The whole question here is what we are placing into our Christian testimony. Maybe you have not thought of yourself as such a builder but if you will examine the scripture you will find that you are.

It is apparent then, that things which make the greatest bulk and are best seen by men are most likely not to stand the fire test. Christendom is filled with materials being built into it (and by real Christians) which will be burned up. (There are also false doctrines that corrupt that are mentioned as being put in by bad builders, but our subject here is more what we as Christians build.) Men have always admired things that make a big display, and such things are highly accredited in Christendom. If we go back to Genesis we find building spoken of in the fourth, sixth, and eleventh chapters. First, Cain built a city after he killed his righteous brother and then went out from God's presence. His city was popular for he incorporated into it all that he could to make men who are away from God happy. The cities of today are basically the same; that is, they have everything that man can conceive to please the human heart which is apart from God. This first building mentioned appeared big and grand, but was destroyed in the flood. Second, Noah built an ark on dry ground at God's command and "became heir of the righteousness that is by faith." His building was not approved but so scorned by his fellow men that not one beside his own family entered it. Third, the whole world banded together to build the tower of Babel but God wrote confusion on the venture and scattered the people. This may give us some idea of what men naturally respect in the way of building in the world; that which is of God is never popular. Remember the word: that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15. This is an important principle and should make us wary of anything that has popular approval.

Another Old Testament scripture that will throw some light on men's thoughts is found in 1 Sam. 4 Israel had been beaten by the Philistines and, instead of owning their sin as the cause, they sent for the Ark of God - that which spoke of Jehovah's presence - in order that it might save the people thought so, for when it came into the camp they all shouted "until the earth rang again." Surely this was a great work of God, they must have thought, if not said. And so to day, if men could gather thousands of people together and shout out the truth of Christianity until the earth would ring it would be praised as a great work of God, but God's work is not done in that manner. Men would have organized a great campaign to introduce Christianity on the continent of Europe and sent advance agents to prepare the way with great advertising; but God sent Paul and Silas over there with no such human agency to help, and the first thing they did when they landed in Macedonia was to speak to some women at the riverside. Later these faithful servants landed in jail in order that the jailor might be saved. How differently men would have opened such a program! Yet from that lowly beginning the gospel spread all over Europe.

It is very easy for us to have men's thoughts in the things of God, for they abound all around us, but if we are to take heed how we build, how we contribute to them. That sounded good and all the testimony of Christianity in the world, in view of the judgment seat of Christ, we need to dislodge human thoughts and seek divine guidance. This will be found in the Word of God.

If we go back to First Samuel we find that even the uncircumcised Philistines could value and appreciate such a crowd and such a shout; they understood human thoughts and pretensions, and they were terribly afraid. Their fears, however, were groundless, for God was not in that great shout and He allowed His Ark to be taken by the Philistines. But if the Philistines could value human pretension they could not understand human weakness which counts on God to work in His way. In the seventh chapter of the same book, Israel came together to mourn, to confess their sin, to put away strange gods, to pour out water as a symbol of their weakness. This the Philistines did not understand and fearlessly went into battle against Israel, to be smitten when God thundered from heaven. And so today, even the unsaved will join in and applaud any great movement that can garner thousands and make the earth ring. Even the prophet Elijah could understand fire, wind, and earthquake, but not the "still small voice" that does wonders.

Now to go to the last book of the Old Testament, we read that of the small remnant of Israel that returned from 'Babylonian captivity many had turned to their own ways, and away from God. They were saying "it is vain to serve God." Is not this heard in the land today? But fellow-Christian, is it really vain to serve God and walk carefully before Him? of course not! However, in such days as Malachi describes, there were some who feared the Lord and thought upon His name, and these came together often to speak about the Lord and His things. It was not all Israel - days were gone when all Israel could be gathered - or great crowds gathered together speak of the Lord. It was not anything that man would consider great; it was what was despised according to human judgment. But God approved it and He hearkened and heard. He stooped, as it were, especially to listen to their conversation, and He had a special record written before Him about this little thing that He greatly valued. Surely in the language of First Corinthians it was "gold, silver, precious stones" in His eyes. When conditions were bad they did not say "it is all over," ' or "it is vain to serve God," nor did they fold their hands in self-complacency, but were actively engaged to encourage one another in a simple and faithful testimony to their Lord. They were in that sense building, but not with the hay of greatness and man's approval.

Then when we come to the book of Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) we find the ruin of the Church on earth described (not what Christ is building, but that committed to men), and we find great boasting at the end and great deeds mentioned, but what especially received the Lord's greatest commendation is, "thou... hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Rev. 3:8. And to whom was this spoken? To those who had "little strength." No great deeds! No crowds that could make the earth ring! No approval of men, but rather the contrary. Others might boast of great bales of hay, great efforts to revive the testimony of Christianity. "Wood, hay, stubble" may be built very high and receive acclaim on every hand, but what will stand the test of fire are those things done in simple obedience to the Word of God, and faithfulness to Christ's name. This is the "gold, silver, precious stones" that will stand the test at the judgment seat of Christ.

O fellow-Christian, whose approval do we want? Do we want to make a show and impress men, or simply to please God, and leave the results with Him? Far be it from me to speak one word against our being faithful in giving out the gospel to those around us; we should remember the unsaved all around and be ready to speak a word for Christ. It is to our shame that we are not more faithful, but let us not seek popular, appeal or that which has human approval. Let us seek to communicate "spiritual things by spiritual means" (as a better translation of First Corinthians 3 says). Men may act on the principle that the results justify any means used, but God's Word says "a man is not

crowned except he strive lawfully"; or in other words, "wood, hay, stubble" will be burned up and only "gold, silver, precious stones" survive the fire. The one who built with the latter will receive a reward, or be "crowned," as in the illustration of an athlete (see 2 Tim. 2).

May the Lord grant us each grace to seek more and more to witness for Him in this world, and in everything to do all according to His Word and in devotedness to His name. Then it will not be a matter of seeking to do great things before men, even ostensibly for His sake, but doing all in view of the day which shall soon declare of what "sort" the work was - not how "much." Each of us can seek to encourage others and to speak often of Him. If we follow the little remnant from the days of Malachi to the days when the Lord Jesus came (see Luke 2) we find a very aged widow speaking of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And cannot we speak of Him? We should remember that even our presence in the little Bible reading, or prayer meeting, is helping to maintain that little testimony to His name, and will surely receive its reward.

P. W.

The Comfort of My Lord's Presence: a Parable

I was sitting the other day in a large assemblage, where a sense of duty and not choice had taken me; and looking round upon it, I felt, in some measure, the pain of being a stranger, exposed, it might be, to notice and inquiry. My thoughts soon turned to my loved and deeply-remembered child; I fancied I saw him enter the room, and like myself suffer under the uneasiness of beholding a large, unknown assembly. But then, following my fancy, I thought of his suddenly turning his eye on me, and at once, without asking leave, taking part of my chair, and using my side as a shelter from all that was paining and disturbing him; and finding there more than a shelter, a loophole and calm retreat, from whence to look on the scene rather with delight than with painful amazement.

This parable was very sweet to my mind. It told me that such was the way of my Lord to me, and that such it would be to me, though the bright assemblage of unknown glories were all to open on my view in a moment. This was happy; but from this parable I drew more.

I concluded how important I and my confidence were to my Lord, if He and His presence were thus important to me. Because I was assured that, in the case assumed, my child was imparting more to me than I was to him. He was finding a shelter at my side; and in an instant a strange place, full of painful surprise to him, became more than a mere home to him. He was at ease, and I alone had made him so. This was my value to him. But then he was using my side and my presence without asking, or even thinking of asking, my leave; and this confidence, I was assured, made me far happier than my presence and shelter made him. And this was his value to me.

Did I not taste that it was more blessed to give than to receive? Did I not rejoice with joy of a higher order? How was the value and sufficiency of my presence set off under my own eye! I was everything, as I saw in my fancy, to my startled child; and he took everything at my hand without reserve or question. What value was he in all this to the purest happiness of my heart! And in the parable, I am the same to the

Lord in whom I trust. I claim anchorage at His side in full conscious safety; let the scene around, or without, be what it may. It may be altogether strange to me; but that is nothing. It may have splendors to dazzle me with, and even terrors and judgments to alarm; His side is enough for me. But all the while He is in a wealthier place than I am, and sits at a richer feast. For, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

J. G. B.

The Common Sense View and Natural Cause & Effect: Natural Cause and Effect

By Abraham listening to his wife, who had not believed God as he had, he was brought down to her level, the old level of natural cause and effect. (Gen. 16.) According to nature Abraham's belief was folly. So it appeared to Sarah.

Accordingly she took the common sense view of the matter, and said the thing must be brought about by natural means. Not so are the purposes of God wrought out, and not so does the just man live the life appointed for him.

The result of natural cause is natural effect; the bondwoman produced a son who by nature was not, and could never be, the son of promise. He lived and became the father of a race ever at enmity with the seed of promise. This is God's way of pointing out that the just must live by faith.

It is no use attempting to bring God's purposes to pass by our own wills, in our own time, by natural means. The only result will be a crop of thorns that will give us many a sore thrust and many bitter reflections. Still God will use even our crop of thorns to His own ends and our blessing. His government is grace.

S. H. H.

Contrast Between Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon

The soul is much, instructed by the different purposes of the Spirit of God in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Placed together in the progress of the oracles of God, they may naturally be looked at together. One penman also, under the divine Author, was employed in both; they will, however, be found to convey to our souls very different, though consistent lessons.

In Ecclesiastes we are taught that he that drinketh of these waters shall thirst again; in the Song we learn that he that drinketh of the water that Christ gives shall never thirst. See John 4:13, 14.

In Ecclesiastes the soul is presented as having full capacity to try everything "under the sun." Solomon had been reared as such a one. What could any man do which he could not do? What within range of human attainments was beyond him? He could say, and it was not a vain boast, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" Eccles. 2:12. And the only answer was, "Even that which hath been already done."

No one had, or could have, at his command more extended resources than Solomon, because God had so exalted and appointed him. He commanded wealth, and honors, and pleasures, and learning. He could wield the instruments and traffic in the markets of all human, natural, earthly, and carnal attainments and treasures without stint and difficulty. He tried them to the full; he tried them in all their variety, as he eloquently tells us in his Ecclesiastes. He found, however, that they would not do. They left his heart a parched ground and wilderness still. Instead of raising music there, it was all and only "vexation of spirit" that was felt, and "vanity" that was uttered over it all. He that drank those waters thirsted still.

In the Song of Solomon the soul is affected altogether differently. It is in a different attitude and with a different experience. It has but one object, but that one is enough. It is satisfied, and never for a moment thinks of looking for a second object. It has "the beloved" and cares for nothing else.

The soul here, it is true, has its griefs as well as in Ecclesiastes. But it is a grief of an entirely different character. Here it sighs over its want of capacity to enjoy its object fully; there, as we saw, it sighed over the insufficiency of its object. "Draw me, we will run after thee," is the ardent language of the heart here. It seeks for nothing but Jesus, but laments that it is not nearer to Him, more intimate with Him, more fully and altogether with Him. "I sleep; but my heart waketh" tells us in like measure that want of power in wakefulness is felt, but no want of an object, as indeed the sequel of that fervent breathing discloses; for when that drowsy soul is questioned about its object, it recounts His beauties from head to foot, and thinks not for a moment of searching for another (ch. 5:9,16).

Such is the experience in the Song of Solomon, and such the character of the grief of the heart. It is conscious want of capacity to do justice to the object presented, to answer its worth worthily; it is a grief that deeply honors and, I may say, hallows it. We want a little more of this in ourselves. We want to find in Jesus a full and satisfying object, a corrective for the wanderings of the heart which, till it fixes rightly on Him, will in the spirit of Ecclesiastes go about and still say, "Who will show us

any good?"

The building of palaces, the planting of vineyards, the getting of singing men and singing women and musical instruments of all sorts, the multiplying of the children of men, all the trammels of the heart should end at the discovery of Jesus. Thus will the grief of the soul change. Then, as in the Canticles, it will be sorrow over our want of capacity in ourselves to enjoy what we have reached, though with the blessed assurance that there is no defect or insufficiency in our portion itself.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." John 4:13-14.

Cut off From Natural Resources to Trust in God: Trust in God

There is one great truth connected with Christianity which we do not think enough about -the peculiar place the bodies of the Lord's people occupy in His dealings with them. We must not forget that the body is the Lord's, "the body... for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13). Sometimes people make this a plea for indulgence, and sometimes for neglecting the body, but it ought to keep me from erring on either side.

It is an amazing fact that this body, once the vessel in which Satan's malignity was displayed against Christ, is now the vessel in which God is displaying the glory of His Son. I would call your attention to a passage in Phil. 1:20, where the Apostle speaks of his earnest expectation, and his hope that in nothing he might be ashamed, "but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.-In this vessel of clay, our body, that is the very sphere in which God proposes to display the superiority of His Son. If we reckoned thus, how differently should we think of bodily trial; He wants everything to be tributary to His great end - the magnifying in us, the displaying of the excellence of His own dear Son.

When we get into a difficulty, what is our first thought? Is not our first question generally, How can I escape from it? Rather let it be, How shall I best glorify God? How shall Christ be magnified? How wonderful a thing it is! Think of the blessed Son, the anointed of God, magnified in my poor body. The Christ at God's right hand magnified in me! I cannot, of course, make Christ greater than He is -that were impossible, that's not the thought - but all that Christ is to God, and for God, should come out in this worthless weak vessel; nothing less is His thought.

There is a danger of our making the things of Christ as so many doctrines to which we give our assent. Remember that Christianity is not a well-framed statement of theology (though, of course, it is a most full and perfect revelation of God), but Christianity, true Christianity, is a living power which ought to be displayed in me, seen in me, every moment. God never intended that the truths of Christianity should be separated from the Person of Christ. It is the display of His Person that gives force and power, and God would make all circumstances contribute to our showing out Christ - the Apostle says, "For to me to live is Christ."

The first chapter of Second Corinthians shows us the Apostle in circumstances into which he was brought by his testimony - all hope, humanly speaking, was gone. That was God's object. I suppose there are few but know more or less of what it is to prove something of this. When God closes every door what are we apt to do? The tendency in us is to try and escape of ourselves. The force and energy of our natural character comes out amazingly when we are pressed. Here the Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself. God brings him face to face with circumstances that shut out every hope, in order that he might turn his eye to the living God. Do we see that this is God's way - to cut us off from natural resources? Here the Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself, and looks up to the Quickener of the dead.

"We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."

It is God who does this to meet the natural tendency of our hearts to turn to an "arm of flesh." The Apostle gets the sentence of death in himself that he might not trust in himself. It is wonderful how self-confidence sticks to us; we do not deny this truth as a matter of doctrine, but we do very much in practice. It is one of the last things we learn, to have "no confidence in the flesh."

What a living resource for the heart is God, the living God, who quickens the dead. I look to Him, and not only this, but all that He is in Himself is my portion, apart from the question of all that He does. I have this wonderful resource - God Himself - apart from deliverances, apart from how He will intervene for me. It is an unspeakable comfort this - we have the Deliverer before we get the deliverance. That is what the Lord wanted to teach the disciples in the storm. He said to them, as it were, Have you so far forgotten the fact that you have the Maker of the bread in the boat with you? He would make my heart know the superiority of this knowledge - that I have the Deliverer Himself, who is above and beyond all circumstances.

We sometimes sing that hymn, "Jesus, Thou art enough!" Are we not wonderfully taken aback sometimes? Dear brethren, we must look for reality. God looks for it. Unreality is abroad. Two things characterize profession now - unreality and unrest. Now Christ gives both reality and rest. The Apostle could say,

"We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver."

He hath delivered, He doth, He will - past, present, and future. The Apostle knew God, knew Him as a delivering God. and thus he could speak as confidently of the future as he could of the past.

The Dew of Hermon

The expression at the head of this paper has, it seems, long proved "a geographical puzzle" to some. But to one who has the mind of Christ it is no puzzle, but a most striking and beautiful figure. Hermon is the very loftiest peak in all the land of Palestine, and from its snowy cap, when all the surrounding country is parched, the refreshing dew descends upon the mountains of Zion: and this is one of the figures used by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the beauty and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity.

Let us quote the entire Psalm.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down, upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon... that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Here we have two lovely illustrations of unity among brethren. It is like ointment descending from the head of the high priest to the skirts of his garments; it is like the dew descending, in refreshing power, from Hermon's snowy top.

How truly delightful! And yet they are but figures used to set forth the divine idea of unity among brethren. But how is the unity to be promoted? By living sufficiently near to our great priestly Head to catch the fragrant ointment as it descends from Him - to be living so near the Man in the glory as that the refreshing dew of His grace may drop upon our souls, thus rendering us fragrant and fruitful to His praise.

This is the way to dwell in unity with our brethren. It is one thing to talk about unity, and another thing altogether to dwell in it. We may profess to hold "the unity of the body" and "the unity of the Spirit" - most precious and glorious truths surely - and all the while be really full of selfish strife, party spirit and sectarian feeling, all of which are entirely destructive of practical unity. If brethren are to dwell are to "dwell together in unity, they must be receiving the ointment from Head, the refreshing showers from the true Hermon. They must live in the very presence of Christ, so that all their points and angles may be molded off, all their selfishness judged and subdued, all their own peculiar notions set aside, all their cues and crotchets flung to the winds. Thus there will be largeness of heart, breadth of mind and depth of sympathy. Thus we shall learn to bear and forbear. It will not then be loving those who think with us as to some pet theory or other. It will be loving and embracing "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

The blessed Head loves all His in the glory, that the fragrant members, and if we are drinking into His Spirit, if we are learning of Him, we shall love all likewise. No doubt, those who keep His commandments enjoy His special love - the love of complacency; and so we cannot but specially love those in whom we trace most of His blessed Spirit. But this is a totally different thing from loving people because they adopt our line of truth, or our peculiar views. It is Christ, and not self; is what we want, if we are to dwell are to "dwell together in unity."

Look at the charming picture presented in Phil. 2. There truly we see, first of all, the divine Head Himself, and from Him the ointment descending to the skirts of His garments. Where did Paul get the grace to enable him to be ready to be poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice of his brethren? What was it that made Timothy care for other people? What led Epaphroditus to put his life in his hand to supply his brother's lack? What is the one grand answer to all these questions? Simply this: these beloved servants of Christ be lived so in their Master's presence and drank so deeply into His Spirit, they dwelt so near the Man in the glory, that the fragrant ointment and the refreshing dew fell upon their souls abundantly and made them channels of blessing to others.

This, beloved Christian reader, be assured of it, is the grand secret of getting on together. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must have the "ointment" and the "dew" dropping continually upon them. They must live close to Christ and be occupied with Him, so that they may show forth His virtues, and reflect His blessed image.

And then, what joy to be enabled, in any little measure, to refresh the heart of God! He delights to see His children walking in love. It is He who says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Surely this ought to stir our hearts to seek in every possible way to promote this lovely unity. It should lead us to sink self and all its belongings, to surrender everything that might tend in any measure to alienate our hearts from one another. The Holy Ghost exhorts us to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Let us remember this. It is the unity of the spirit not the unity of the body, we are to keep in the uniting bond of peace. This will cost us something. The word "endeavoring" shows that it cannot be done without sacrifice. But the One who so graciously exhorts us to service will ever supply the needed grace. The ointment and the dew will flow down from Him in refreshing power, knitting our hearts together in holy love, and enabling us to deny ourselves, and surrender everything which might tend to hinder that true unity which we are imperatively called on to maintain.

Noting the Difference Between Romans 12 and Ephesians 5

The beginnings of Rom. 12 and Eph. 5 are evidently different, and the difference is not only interesting, but according to the tenor of the epistles.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1, 2.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Eph. 5:1-2.

In Romans the Spirit looks for an entire separation to God as men on earth, the giving up of self in consecration to Him as a living sacrifice. I am a man here, and am to be as one offered up to God. But love, as going out, does not come in here. We living men give ourselves by grace up to God.

In Ephesians we are sitting in heavenly places, and come out from God as Christ did, and that in love. And this is the direct connection, we forgiving and forbearing, as God in Christ did. Do you therefore, says the Apostle, be imitators of God, and walk in love, as Christ did, giving Himself for us.

Hence in Romans we are responsible men, giving ourselves up to God as in the world. In Ephesians we are children of God, dear children, who are to imitate Him according to the great pattern, Christ, the Son of God, come out from the Father, giving Himself for us, which is love, only to God as a sacrifice, which maintains absolute perfection as the One in view in doing so. The new creation had been brought out before, after God, in righteousness and true holiness. Here, when the Spirit of God is brought in, love, according to the divine nature, is to display itself, and does so in a remarkable character and place. Christ being the absolutely perfect model of it. Romans put us on the ground of proving His will, Ephesians of displaying His character, going forth in love as Christ, though always with a view of pleasing God, which makes the motive perfect.

Difference Between Two Men Who Heard Same Gospel: Simon the Magician and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Simon the Magician and the Ethiopian Eunuch

We are furnished, in Acts 8, with a very vivid and instructive contrast between the magician of Samaria and the eunuch of Ethiopia. Let us contemplate these two characters for a few moments and seek to bear away some wholesome instruction.

The passage opens with a record of Philip's preaching in Samaria. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Blessed theme! The only one for the true preacher! "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did... and there was great joy in that city." Thus it must ever be. When Christ is preached, and people give heed and receive the tidings, "great joy" must be the result. The business of the preacher is to preach Christ; the business of the people is to give heed and believe. Nothing can be simpler.

But alas! all this brightness was speedily overcast with the dark clouds which self-seeking is ever sure to produce. It was all simple and happy, fresh and bright, while Christ was exalted, and souls were blessed by the knowledge of salvation. "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one." Here then was something quite different - something which the inspired historian might well introduce with a "But." In place of the herald of salvation exalting Christ, it was a poor worm exalting himself; and instead of people made happy by the truth, it was a people bewitched with sorcery.

Simon gave out that himself was some great one, and the popular voice was in favor of his pretensions. "To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." It generally happens that those who put forth the loftiest claims are sure to get a high place in the thoughts of men. It does not matter how slender the basis of such claims may be; the multitude never think much about foundations - about what is beneath the surface or behind the scenes. Their thoughts are superficial. They are easily deceived by a pretentious style. The swaggering and boastful make way in the crowd; whereas the humble, the unpretending, the modest and retiring are consigned, by the men of this world, to obscurity and oblivion. Hence that Blessed One who emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation, had not where to lay His head - was deliberately given up for a robber and a murderer, and nailed to an ignominious cross between two thieves.

But Simon the magician gave out that himself was some great one, and the pompous claims of this self-important individual were readily admitted by a credulous multitude. "To him they had regard." Why? Was it because he sought to benefit them by the strenuous efforts of a large-hearted benevolence, or to elevate them by the resources of a commanding genius? Not at all. What then? "Because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries." "Such is

man-such is the world."

However, the tide was turned in Samaria by the introduction of the gospel. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

Now be it noted here that we do not raise the question as to whether Simon was really a converted man, or only a hypocritical professor. We can learn a most practical and seasonable lesson from his history without ever touching that question. Simon was a self-seeker from first to last. His object was to exalt Simon. At first he made use of magic for the attainment of his end; and when the tide of Christian profession rose and carried away the pedestal on which he had raised himself, he embraced the new thing. He placed himself on the bosom of the tide, not as one seeking rest for a broken heart and convicted conscience, but as one seeking to be something. It is evident from the inspired narratives that Simon was more occupied with the wonders and signs by which the gospel was accompanied and confirmed, than by the consolations which that gospel was designed to impart. It was not, in his case, a heart filled with peace by the grace of the gospel, but a mind filled with wonder by the miracles that were done. He "wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." It was on these he fixed his wondering gaze. The things which were merely designed to call the attention of the heart to Christ were looked at by Simon as things whereby self might be exalted. In this way Christianity might furnish materials for a more solid pedestal for self than even the magic and sorcery in which he had formerly traded.

All this comes out more clearly when the Holy Ghost appears upon the scene. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But, Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

What a deeply solemn picture! What a holy lesson! Self-seeking must ever lead to bitterness. It matters not whether it be exemplified in the case of a converted or an unconverted person. Every one who seeks to exalt self - to be somebody - to figure before the eye of his fellow, must, sooner or later, reap bitterness and gall. It cannot be otherwise. We may set it down as a fixed principle that in proportion as self is our object will bitterness be the result. Had Simon found his object in the Christ whom Philip preached, he never would have been called to hearken to Peter's appalling words. His heart would then have been "right in the sight of God." It is only when Christ is really the object that the heart is right in the sight of God, but so thoroughly, wrong was Simon - so completely away from God, and from Christ, and from the Holy Ghost - that when exhorted by the

Apostle to pray God if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven, "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." Instead of confessing his sin, he asks others to pray that he might not be called to suffer its consequences.

Here the curtain drops upon Simon. May the lesson conveyed in his history be engraved on our hearts! May the Lord, in His great mercy, give us full deliverance from self-seeking, and fill our hearts with the love of His name!

We shall now turn and gaze upon a totally different picture.

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet."

Here the contrast strikes us at once. Instead of a sorcerer, on the strength of his magic and witchcraft, giving out that himself was some great one, we have a man of real authority, rank, weight, and dignity, looking away from himself and his position, to find the object of his worship and adoration. He was one of the great ones and had no need to give himself out as such; but instead of being occupied with himself or his greatness, his soul was thirsting after something above and beyond himself and all around. He had gone from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning, still evidently unsatisfied.

All this is intensely interesting. We are glad to get away from the self-seeking Simon, to be in company with the Christ-seeking eunuch. It is truly refreshing to look at that earnest, solitary man, poring over the prophetic page in search of an object for his heart. We may feel assured it was a sight in which heaven was interested. An angel was dispatched to Samaria, in order to summon the evangelist from the stirring scenes of service there, and send him into the solitudes of the desert Gaza, to address himself to a single individual. How remarkable that two such men as Simon and the eunuch should be placed in juxtaposition by the inspired penman! They form a contrast throughout. Philip found the one bewitching the people with sorcery, and" giving out that himself was some great one. He found the other earnestly engaged in the study of the Word of God. He found the one amid all the bustle and throng of the city, figuring before the world, and endeavoring to make capital for himself out of anything and everything. He found the other in the solitude of the desert, returning from worshiping at Jerusalem to his proper sphere of duty in Ethiopia. Thus far, they were perfect opposites.

But let us pursue the narrative of this interesting and highly favored Ethiopian. It might seem strange to Philip to be called away from such a brilliant field of service in Samaria, where such crowds flocked to hear, into a desert, where he could hardly expect to meet anyone. To whom was he to preach there? Nature might reason thus; but Philip did as he was told, and he was not left long in ignorance as to his work. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither:: How simple! How sweetly servant-like! It is all the same to a right-minded servant whether he is sent to a city or to a desert, to a crowd or to a single individual. The Master's will settles everything. Would that we knew more of this! Would that we tasted more

of the deep and real blessedness of doing our appointed work under the immediate eye of our Lord, totally regardless as to the sphere and character of that work. We may be called to stand before assembled thousands, or to make our way in, obscurity from lane to lane, to deliver the message in crowded halls, or to drop a word into the ear of some poor dying creature in the ward of a hospital. It would be quite the same to us, were we only gifted with the true spirit of a servant. The Lord grant us more of this!

"Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." The Lord knows how and when to make the preacher and hearer cross each other's path, and when they meet, a link is formed which can never be broken. There were those in Jerusalem who could have poured the glad tidings into the eunuch's ear; but God had so ordered it that Philip was to enjoy the privilege of conducting this stranger to the feet of Jesus, and by His gracious providence they met amid the solitude of the desert of Gaza.

And only note the passage of Scripture on which the eunuch's eye was resting when Philip accosted him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before His shearer, so opened He not His mouth: In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Here was the profoundly interesting question. Who was this mysterious "He"? Blessed inquiry! The eunuch did not ask Philip to expound the text. Ah! no; he longed for something far deeper than this. He wanted to know something about this wondrous Person who was led as a sheep to the slaughter. This was all he asked. Who could this Person be? It was Jesus. Happy eunuch! He had at length reached his object. He had gazed on the precious page of inspiration and found there the record of "the Lamb of God" led to the cursed tree, and bruised under the righteous hand of a sin hating God. And for whom? Why, for him - for any poor burdened one who would only come and trust the shelter of His atoning blood. Such was the glorious object presented to the eye and the heart of this earnest and interesting Ethiopian. The grand foundation truth of the gospel - the doctrine of the blood, of a sin-bearing Christ - broke with divine fullness and power upon his soul. There was no astounding miracle or sign - nothing outward to add authority to the truth proclaimed. There was no need. The word came with power. The ground was good and duly prepared for the precious seed. The eunuch's earnest seeking had issued in a joyful finding. The sinner and the Savior had met - faith linked them together and all was settled.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?... And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Thus then we see how that from first to last the eunuch of Ethiopia stands in most striking contrast with the magician of Samaria. And no doubt these two men represent two great classes; namely,

those who are occupied with self, and those who are occupied with Christ. Simon's object was self and his end "bitterness." The eunuch's object was Jesus, and his end "rejoicing."

Ye Are the Epistles of Christ

Ye are the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; not, you ought to be, but you are. What is your moral responsibility? To be an unblotted epistle; and you will be that by gazing on Him, and reflecting Him back. If we come together in assembly in this spirit, there will never be any trouble. There would be different measures of attainment; but the Apostle says, If in anything we differ, and if you and I are both true to Christ, and feeding on Him, "God will reveal even this unto you."

The only thing that will enable us to trample self under foot, is to have Christ before us as the one absorbing object of our hearts. All evils have resulted from self getting a place, and not Christ. The fullness of God ever waits on the empty vessel. The great point is to be the empty vessel. If I am full of myself, I must be turned upside down, and emptied of self, and then I can expect to be filled with the oil - filled from His hand. It is one thing to talk of empty vessels, and another thing to be such; but we do not know what we have to go through before we are really empty vessels. We begin full of enthusiasm, but we grow very small in our own estimation.

The English word "tribulation," comes from a Latin word signifying threshing-machine. You look smaller when you come out than when you went in; but there is more reality because the chaff is gone. In the opening of Rom. 5, we have our standing, "justified by faith," etc. But in the following verses, mark the steps down into the threshing-machine: tribulation, patience, experience, etc. Every real servant has to take out his degree in the threshing-machine. You may be in it sixty years; and you look very small when you come out, but it is better to be small and real, than to assume to be somebody when we are nothing. God will have moral reality. There is a terrible amount of mere sham among us - talking, writing, praying and singing far beyond our real experience. All this is most dangerous. It hardens the heart, deadens the conscience, and lays us open to the wiles of the enemy.

There may be plenty of intercourse with saints, without a particle of communion. It is Himself we have to cultivate - personal communion with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If you find half a dozen people together whose hearts are full of Christ, you find a home there, and you have the secret of the source and spring of the glow that was in the church in Philadelphia; it is Philadelphia condition, and you can count on the Holy Spirit's power. Things done in affection for Christ have a special charm for His heart. The moment you take your eye off Him, and get occupied with works, down you go. "He hath made my mountain to stand strong." We sometimes get occupied with the mountain and forget the power that made it strong. We get occupied with meetings, perhaps, instead of with the One who made them happy, and so lose the happiness. In place of the strong mountain, trouble comes. Keep your eye on Him, and there will be joy and peace, and deep communion with Him, and thus we shall be unblotted epistles of Him.

Even Christ Pleased Not Himself

If you have Christ at all, you have Christ not only for atonement, but as your life. He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life; and the everlasting life is Christ, just as truly as by being born into the world from Adam I have got an old natural life that loves evil, and which, as it grows in strength, grows in capacity for self-will. Even so, if I believe in Christ, there is this new life produced, which is developed in proportion as Christ is fed upon and looked to, and as Christ's words and ways are pondered over by the soul.

There is an assimilating power communicated thus to the believer by the Holy Ghost. The words of our Lord are spirit and life. It is not only that they produce life in the first instance, but they sustain the life, and are the means of its vigor. And this is what the Apostle Peter shows us (1 Pet. 1 and 2). He speaks of the incorruptible seed, the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. But then he shows that the same Word of God which is the means of first imparting the life through the revelation of Christ, is also the provision for strengthening and refreshing it. Therefore he exhorts them that, as newborn babes, they should desire the sincere milk of the Word. The Word of God which is first used to introduce the life into the soul, through the making known of Christ, is that which now keeps up the life, draws it out, brings it into healthful exercise. And here is one way—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." This was what Christ was doing when He was here below. He did not please Himself. He never chose the path of ease; hut, on the contrary, every case of wretchedness and sin and sorrow was what occupied the Lord Jesus, provided it were the will of God.

When He took His place as man on earth, there was the continual exercise of communion between the Lord Jesus and His Father, the spirit of dependence upon the living God that never acted without His Father's direction. And so it should be with our souls. If we are thus laying ourselves out to hear one another's burdens, we need to wait upon God about it to know what the will of the Lord is. It is not the law, nor ordinances, but "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

W. K.

Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah: a Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel gives the judgment of Jerusalem - God coming from without, but all Israel looked at, and not especially Judah; the judgment of the nations around, of the ungodly oppressors in and over Israel; the dealing henceforth with individual souls as regards judgment; the setting up of David, and the new birth, as the means of Israel's blessing; the union of Judah and Israel in one stick; and, on their restoration to their land, the destruction of Gog, by divine power, in fact, by the presence of Christ; and, in the end, a vision of the restoration of the Temple and of the order of the land.

DANIEL

Daniel has two parts - the history of the Gentile empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold; and, secondly, special visions of Daniel (beginning with chapter 7) marking out the conditions and circumstances of the saints in connection with the history of these empires more fully revealed, and the coming of judgment to set them all aside in favor of Israel. But he only comes to the door of the Millennium without unfolding it.

HOSEA

We have here the rejection of the house of Israel and the house of Judah distinctively, as Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi; the door secretly opened to the Gentiles by it; Israel's long-enduring deprivation of everything; and then the restoration of the whole under Jehovah and David in the latter days. Paul quotes chapter 1:10 and 2:23; Peter only the latter. From chapter 4 we get the most earnest dealing with the conscience of Israel, but closing with their return in repentance to the sure blessings of Jehovah. It is the testimony of the ways of the Lord.

JOEL

Under the figure of the desolation left by a plague of insects we have announced the inroad of the northern armies in the last days, and the coming in of the whole power of man against God's people, and the consequent coming in of Jehovah to judge the whole power of man in the day of the Lord, and in the valley of decision. Meanwhile, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon all manner of people, and the promise of certain deliverance to whoever called on the name of the Lord. You may add, the summons to repentance of all who have ears to hear.

AMOS

Amos gives the patience of God's dealings and ways, which he rehearses in connection with the precise pointing out of the iniquity Israel's ways; but marking out punishment of bordering nations on the same ground of definite moral evil. He notices the rejection of a testimony against the evil, and declares the sure, infallible, inescapable judgment of Jehovah on the whole people, the

righteous remnant being as certainly saved; closing with the promise of building up the tabernacle of David, as head of the nation, and blessing the people.

OBADIAH

Obadiah is the judgment of Edom for their hatred of Israel, warning them that the day of the Lord is upon all the heathen, while deliverance should be in Mount Zion, and thence holiness and blessing, and the kingdom be the Lord's.

JONAH

Jonah is the witness that, though God has chosen Israel, He has not given up His right as a faithful Creator in mercy over all the earth, while those that are connected with Himself must be subject to His power and bow to His grace: otherwise the sense of favor is unfaithfulness and self-exaltation. At the same time we get a type of death and resurrection as the way of blessing.

MICAH

In Micah we have the general judgment of the people, Samaria and Jerusalem, for their transgressions, iniquities, and idolatry, and their rejection of the testimony of God. Hence the whole land is treated as polluted, and no longer the rest of His people, who must arise and depart. He judges the princes and their prophets, brings in the power of the Spirit to judge even the chosen city of the Lord, but announces its re-establishment by Jehovah in grace in the last days; bringing in the siege of Jerusalem by the heathen, in fulfillment of God's counsels, though in consequence of the rejection of Christ, on account of which they were given up; and shows that the same Christ stands as their peace and defense, when the Assyrian comes in, in the last days. The remnant of Israel becomes the people of blessing to, and power over, others, while all evil in it is judged and destroyed, as well as the heathen who have come up against it. Having thus spoken of the restoration in the last days he returns and insists on the righteousness of God's ways, contrasts the attempt at ceremonially pleasing-Him with the practicing of iniquity which He hates, closing with the looking to Him to restore and feed His people as the God who passes by iniquity.

NAHUM

The power of the world, or man as such, put down forever; but with the testimony of the faithfulness of the Lord in the midst of His vengeance, and hence blessing to those that trust in Him and wait for Him. It is still the Assyrian; Babylon is another thing altogether.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk is the soul exercised by the iniquity of God's people - first, with indignation thereat, and then with distress at their being destroyed by those who are God's rod to chasten them. He then gets the answer of God, showing that He knows the pride of the wicked, and will judge it, and that the righteous man must live by trusting in Him. Lastly, he rises above all to the glorious power of God, exercised in the salvation of His people, so that he trusts in Him, come what will.

ZEPHANIAH

In Zephaniah we get the utter judgment of the land for iniquity, hypocrisy, and idolatry, at the great day of the Lord, and of all the neighboring nations around - everything of man's natural power,

Jerusalem among them, because of her iniquity, though distinctly brought out as the special object of displeasure, as connected with the Lord. The prophecy then singles out the remnant in a very distinct and definite way, calling on them to wait on the Lord, who leaves them as an afflicted and poor people but delivered by the judgments which He executes, and rests in His love over Jerusalem, making it a name and praise among all people.

HAGGAI

Haggai is occupied with the house, and declares that its latter glory will be greater than its first, at the time when He shakes all nations, and therewith encourages them to build, declaring that His Spirit went with them, as from Egypt, and that He will overthrow the throne of all kingdoms, but establish Christ under the name of Zerubbabel, as the elect man, as the signet on His right hand.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah is particularly occupied with Jerusalem, and so shows the Lord dealing with all nations, having Jerusalem as a center, using one nation to cast out another, till His purposes are accomplished; and then, when the glory has come, establishing Himself at Jerusalem. In the person of Joshua, the high priest, He justifies her against the adversary; He declares He will Come, and puts all wisdom, the omniscience of His government, in Jerusalem. He prophesies of the perfection of the administrative order in the kingdom and priesthood, and the judgment of all corrupt pretension to it, which is shown to be Babylonish, and builds the Temple of the land by means of the Branch; judging the hostile power of the world, and using all this to encourage them at that time in building the Temple. Thus far is one prophecy. (Chapters 1-4.)

In the next He takes occasion, by those who inquire whether they are yet to fast for the ruin of Jerusalem, to promise her restoration (only now, for the present, on the ground of responsibility); declares He will protect His house against all surrounding enemies; brings in Christ in humiliation, but carries it on to the time of glory, and of executing judgment by Judah upon Greece (Javan), gathering all the scattered ones. In chapters 11.14 we have the details of Christ's rejection, and the foolish and idolatrous shepherd, when He judges all the nations as meddling with Jerusalem, defends Jerusalem, brings them to repentance, and opens the fountain for their cleansing; and then we get, in contrast with the false spirit of prophecy, Christ's humiliation, the sparing "6 a remnant, when the body of the people are cut off from Judea at the end, with the final deliverance and the sanctifying of Jerusalem by the presence of the Lord, making her the center of all worship upon earth.

In chapter 13:5, we see Christ, the servant of man, the rejected One of the Jews, and the smitten of Jehovah. Read "for man possessed Me from my youth." It then appears that it was among His friends He had been wounded in His hands; and the great secret of all comes out, that He is Jehovah's fellow, and smitten of Him. Note, where Christ is owned as God, He calls the saints His fellows; and where, as here, He is in deepest humiliation, God calls Him His fellow.

In these books, Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews are never called God's people, except in prospect of the future.

MALACHI

We have here the testimony of the Jews' total failure when restored, according to what has gone before, in spite of God's electing love, which He still maintains; and then the Lord comes, sending a messenger before His face, but comes in thoroughly sifting and purifying judgment, owns the remnant who spake one to another in the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the wickedness, lifts them up, and sets them over the power of the wicked, the Sun of righteousness rising upon them for healing. But at the same time He calls them back to the law of Moses, with the promise of sending them Elijah the prophet to turn their hearts.

J. N. D.

The Failure of King Saul

In 1 Sam. 11, Saul is established as King in Israel. The distress of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead reaches his ear. Nahash the Ammonite had encamped against this place, and the people were willing to yield submission to Nahash, but not unreasonably hesitated to go the length of having their right eyes put out, which indeed would have proved a great reproach to Israel. (The enemies of the Lord's people ever aim at depriving them of their eyesight, and this has a voice to us. See Judg. 16:21; Jer. 52:11; Rev. 3:18.)

When Saul hears of the distress of the men of Jabesh at the terms imposed by Nahash, the Spirit of the Lord moves him, and taking a yoke of oxen, he hews them in pieces, sending messengers throughout the coasts of Israel, warning them that if they failed to follow the king and Samuel their cattle should be likewise cut in pieces. This threat had the desired effect. Saul is victorious, the Ammonites being completely conquered, so much so, that "two of them were not left together." The king acts prudently in not taking credit to himself, for when the people would have put to death those who had previously treated him contemptuously, he will not sanction it, saying, "Today the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel." And notice that giving the Lord His place, in acting simply for His honor and the deliverance of His people, leads to rejoicing, for "all the people went to Gilgal,... and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." 1 Sam. 11:15.

The history of "Saul, the son of Kish," however, only proves that which is always true - that whenever man is set in a place of responsibility he always fails, sooner or later, more often sooner than later.

Two short years of Saul's reign provide the proof of this, and how he, like others, when weighed in the balances, is found wanting. "Tekel" is written upon the wall over against the candlestick.

As a feather will show which way the wind is blowing, so sometimes a little sentence reveals where people are. This is seen in Saul's case. Jonathan (who, it appears to us, had more faith than his father, and acted upon that principle) had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and Saul takes the credit of it, blowing a trumpet and saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." For the Philistines to call God's people "Hebrews" was all well, for they did not understand the relationship existing between God and His people, yea, moreover, He Himself calls some of the people "Hebrews" when they fell away to the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:21), but for Saul to use the expression, "Let the Hebrews hear," tells a tale. Depend upon it, Jonathan would not have used any such expression (see 1 Sam. 14:12). No, if Jonathan is a man of faith, his father is a man of sight, even if King of Israel. Jonathan in faith acts above mere forms. Saul acts in a casually formal way. He is checking here, restricting there, and by his merely religious interference constantly hindering the work of God. The flesh, even if religious, is quickly manifested, and no sooner is the kingdom established than it is practically taken away from Saul.

What does the flesh know of waiting upon God? The king should have waited till Samuel came to Gilgal, as he had been instructed to do by the prophet.

It tests us to wait. Saul was tested, and failed. Notice the admission he makes in his excuse: "I have not made supplication unto the LORD; I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering." Exactly. Religious flesh may display considerable activity, but truthfully to say with the Psalmist, "My soul, wait thou only upon God," is unknown to it. Saul could not wait, and consequently loses the kingdom. Like the first man he is set aside, and another king is sought by the Lord, a man after His own heart.

We will just notice the difference between the actions of Jonathan and Saul. The former is simple and untrammelled; taking his armor-bearer, he fearlessly faces the Philistines, and by a narrow way ascends a difficult path.

The faith of Jonathan expresses itself thus: "It may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few."

Jonathan's actions might appear to the Philistines presumptuous or audacious, and in the ease of false security, the men of the garrison say, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." However, this boastfulness was but a sign to the man of faith that the Lord had delivered the enemy into his hands. When Jonathan and his armor-bearer appear, a panic ensues, and the Philistines begin to kill one another. The Hebrews (as they are called because of having taken their place with the enemy, but really never one with them - how could they be?) turned to be with the Israelites.

Jonathan, apparently, had not even heard of the curse which Saul had pronounced against those who should eat any food till the evening. To us it seems an absurd and uncalled-for restriction. Jonathan "had wrought with God," and Saul was hindering by his religious interference. There are joys given by God to His servants who work for and with Him, of which a carnal religion knows nothing.

Saul manifests mere formality. He builds an altar, his first to the Lord, proposing to go down by night and spoil the Philistines (taking credit to himself for the quiet but effective work done by his more faithful son). The priest properly suggests the propriety of the mind of the Lord being known. His mind is not made known; evidently there is far too much unbelief in the way. He that asks of God should ask in faith, and waver not (Jas. 1:5-7). There is great need for exercise of conscience and for heart-searching when our prayers are not answered. We often; ask, but ask amiss. While if iniquity is regarded in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us (Psalm 66:18,20). In all that follows we see how heartless is the religious formalist, and the want of affection and proper feeling displayed by Saul, who would have stood by and seen his own son put to death, which indeed would have taken place but for the interference of the people.

W. R. C.

Faith

There is always strength in looking to God; but if the mind rests upon the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. Difficulties may arise; God may allow many things to come in to prove our weakness; but the simple path of faith is to go on, not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need and find when the time arrives. It was no matter to David whether it was the lion, the bear, or Goliath; it was all one to him, for in himself he was as weak in the presence of one as in that of the other; but he went on quietly doing his duty, taking it for granted that God would be with him. This is faith.

The Fathers of the Church

Great effort is being expended on a 72-volume edition of "The Fathers Of The Church" which has started coming off of the press. This work is a translation of the writings of the early church fathers-the men who came after the departure of the Apostles. Their writings have been extolled by many men of prominence in the professing church as having great weight by reason of their antiquity; but let us remember that they are not Scripture, nor have they the weight and authority of the Word of God

The writings of the earliest of the so-called Fathers abound in mistakes and errors. After the death of the Apostles error came in like a flood, and nowhere are the writings of the Fathers to be depended upon. What men, or even devout Christians, held at such an early date has nothing to do with the truth of God. We have only to read the Epistles, written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, to see that the doctrines held and things practiced in the earliest days had much need of correction. Think of the errors at Corinth which the Apostle Paul corrected in the two Epistles to the Corinthians; even the truth of the resurrection was called in question at that time. The assemblies in Galatia had departed from the very foundation so that Paul wrote them a most solemn and searching epistle to recall them to the truth. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians had to correct a mistake as to the departed saints; the Second Epistle had to correct an even worse error as to the living saints and the day of the Lord. Shall we then go back to any early practice or teaching? Shall we accept anything as correct that is not from the Scriptures themselves? No, for in them only have we the truth of God.

When Paul was leaving the elders of Ephesus he commended them to "God and the word of His grace." Acts 20. That was to be the resource of the Church after the departure of the Apostles. Peter also, in view of his decease, brought nothing else before them but the Scriptures. It was neglect of the Scriptures and substitution of the thoughts and opinions of men that wrought such great havoc in the early Church.

There are supposed writings of such men as Barnabas and Clement who were fellow laborers with the Apostle Paul, but it seems incredible that men who were so blessed as to be companions of the great Apostle should have penned all that is attributed to them. One has only to read a little of any of these writings to see that they are not to be trusted, and that there is a great gulf between the best of them and the Holy Scriptures. Reading the writings of the Church Fathers would only tend to barrenness of soul and perhaps lead one into error.

Almost without exception the early Fathers went astray as to the proper hope of the Lord's coming for the Church. The coming of the Son of man to this earth and the rapture of the saints soon became confused; and almost from the days of the Apostles the true hope of the Church was lost, as in the parable of the "ten virgins" (Matt. 25) who all went to sleep instead of watching for the bridegroom. That blessed hope has been revived in the last century, as in the same parable the call went out, "Behold the bridegroom," to awaken the sleeping virgins.

As the Fathers saw division and strife coming in, they introduced from the old Judaistic system the separation of the Church into laity and clergy-they set up bishops and others with authority which grew and increased until there was a great strife for the ruling positions in the Church of God. That there is the common priesthood of all believers is plainly taught in

Scripture, but the Fathers soon set up a system that denied this truth. Perhaps they thought that divisions and heresies might thus be avoided, but soon the whole was torn with bitterest dissension and grossest errors; and instead of tending the sheep the shepherds became lords of the flock, thus going contrary to the words found in 1 Pet. 5, and strove for mastery in the Church.

Almost every kind of doctrinal error can be found in the writings of the so-called Church Fathers, even to that which is derogatory to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May we be reminded that we have in the sacred Scriptures the whole revealed mind of God, and so be encouraged to search them more diligently. They, and not the writings of men of antiquity, are the resource for the Church in this day of great weakness and ruin. We are not unmindful that the Lord has given gifts to the Church and has raised up men to unfold and expound the Scriptures (for which we may well thank and praise Him), but everything is to be tested by the written Word of God.

When Five Words Are to Be Preferred to Ten Thousand Words

It is often very wonderful to mark the way in which the words of Scripture seize upon the heart. They are indeed "as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." At times, some brief sentence or clause of a sentence, will lay hold upon the heart, penetrate the conscience, or occupy the mind in such a way as to prove beyond all question the divinity of the Book in which it stands. What force of reasoning, what fullness of meaning, what power of application, what an unfolding of the springs of nature, what an unveiling of the heart, what point and pungency, what condensing energy we meet with up and down throughout the sacred pages! One delights to dwell upon these things at all times, but more especially at a moment like the present, when the enemy of God and man is seeking in such varied ways to cast a slur upon the inspired volume.

The foregoing train of thought has frequently been suggested to the mind by the expression which forms the title of this article. "I had rather," says the self-emptying and devoted Apostle, "speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." How important for all speakers to remember this! Of course we know that tongues had their value. They were for a sign to the unbelieving. But they were useless in the assembly unless there was an interpreter.

The grand end of speaking in the assembly is edification; and we know this end can only be reached by persons understanding what is said. It is utterly impossible that a man can edify me if I cannot understand what he says. He must speak in an intelligible language and in an audible voice, else I cannot receive any edification. This surely is plain, and well worthy of the serious attention of all who speak in public.

But further, we would do well to bear in mind that our only warrant for standing up to speak in the assembly is that the Lord Himself has given us something to say. If it be but "five words," let us utter the five and sit down. Nothing can be more unintelligent than for a man to attempt to speak "ten thousand words" when God has only given him "five." Alas, that something like this should so often occur! What a mercy it would be if we could only keep within our measure! That measure may be small. It matters not; let us be simple, earnest, and real. An earnest heart is better than a clever head; and a fervent spirit better than an eloquent tongue. Where there is a genuine, hearty desire to promote the real good of souls, it will prove more effectual with men, and more acceptable to God, than the most brilliant gifts without it. No doubt we should covet earnestly the best gifts; but we should also remember the "more excellent way," even the way of charity that ever hides itself and seeks only the profit of others. It is not that we value gifts less, but we value charity more.

Finally, it would greatly tend to raise the tone of public teaching and preaching to remember the following very homely rule: "Do not set about looking for something to say because you have got to speak; but speak because you have got something that ought to be said." This is very simple. It is a poor thing for a man to be merely collecting as much matter as will fill up a certain space of time. This should never be. Let the teacher or preacher attend diligently upon his ministry - let him

cultivate his gift - let him wait on God for guidance, power, and blessing - let him live in the spirit of prayer, and breathe the atmosphere of Scripture; then will he be always ready for the Master's use, and his words, whether "five" or "ten thousand," will assuredly glorify Christ and do good to men. But clearly, in no case, should a man rise to address his fellows, without the conviction that God has given him something to say, and the desire to say it to edification.

Fulfillment of Details: the Test of Prophecy

A man may pretend to know the future, and by mere coincidence some of his predictions might come to pass. If he knows the climate in a given part of the country, he may prophesy that it will rain on a certain day, and it might happen. Or he may say that some day you will meet a man who has a black mustache, and very likely you will. But should this pretender add some details, as for instance, saying that the rain will start at 2 o'clock and stop at 2:25, or that you will meet that man in a certain city, and specify the date, hour, and the place, there is less chance of its coming to pass. The more detail he adds the sooner his fraud will be discovered.

But when God speaks of the future it is as certain of fulfillment in all its details as though it were recorded history, and every detail given but enhances the beauty of the prophecy and displays the divine wisdom of Him who gave it.

The Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ, and the very multiplicity of details concerning Him and His coming leave an "honest and good heart" no room for anything but admiration and praise. Let us consider

Some of the Details

The first mention of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this sin stricken world is found in Gen. 3 As soon as sin came in, God made known His purposes concerning the conqueror of Satan in these words to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here the coming One is called "the seed of the woman."

That He would come into the world as a babe is further told in Isa. 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The rest of the verse makes it plain that it refers to the Messiah.

Another point is brought forward in Isa. 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." He was to be born of a virgin.

Next we may trace the line through whom He was to come. It was said to Abraham in Gen. 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is the starting point from which to trace the line through whom Messiah must come.

Abraham had Ishmael as well as Isaac, but here again the word of God is explicit: "As for Ishmael,... I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac." Gen. 17:20, 21.

Isaac then had two sons-Jacob and Esau. Numb. 24:17 will settle it as to which of them shall be in the line: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."

And when Jacob blessed his sons he indicated through which one of the twelve sons the Messiah was to come: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto 'Him shall the gathering of the people [s] be." Gen. 49:10.

The line being traced through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, we shall next see what family in Judah is mentioned: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Isa. 11:1.

Jesse had many sons, but Isa. 9:7 tells us, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." And, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Jer. 23:5.

He was to come into the world as a babe, and be born of a virgin, be the woman's seed, and come through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and David.

Next let us notice the prophecy as to where He was to be born: "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.

He must be born in Bethlehem and in "Bethlehem Ephratah," in Judah-not the Bethlehem in Zebulun.

"Daniel the Prophet" tells us when the Messiah was to appear. We shall not go into the notable prophecy of Dan. 9 further than to state that there was to be a time when the Messiah was to appear, and the point of time from which calculations were to be made was definite and precise: "The going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," which is found in Neh. 2. Those who have computed the years marvel at the accuracy with which it was fulfilled, some saying that it was to the very day of His presentation to Israel; and no doubt it was fulfilled exactly.

Then we have the character of His ministry foretold: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Isa. 61:1-2. "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding." Isa. 11:2.

He would feed the poor with bread according to Psalm 132:15, and open the eyes of the blind according to Psalm 146:8. The man who had his eyes opened in John 9 said, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." This was a special miracle reserved for the Messiah. God had acted through prophets in the Old Testament to cure lepers and raise the dead, but of no one do we read that he opened the eyes of a blind man.

When John the Baptist became discouraged, when he was in prison, he sent some of his disciples to the Lord with a question. The answer they returned from Him was: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Such was the testimony of the Lord's ministry; He Himself could say, "The same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." John 5:36.

But when the Blessed One came, according to the prophecies, He was not received, but despised and rejected. This also was foretold in the Old Testament: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isa. 53:3. And "To Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom

the nation abhorreth." Isa. 49:7.

Not only was He going to be despised but actually "cut off"- to die. This is plainly stated in Dan. 9:26; after the presentation of Messiah to Israel at the appointed time "shall Messiah be cut off." So His rejection and death were as definitely foretold as His coming.

Isa. 53:8 even lets us know what would precede His being "cut off." "He was taken from prison and from judgment"; or, as given in Acts 8, where the Septuagint translation is quoted: "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." In other words, He was to be given a trial, but an unfair one where judgment would be wrested and the innocent One be condemned to death.

Other details of His sufferings from men are recorded thus: "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." Mic. 5:1.

"All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him." Psalm 22:7-8.

"They pierced My hands and My feet." Psalm 22:16.

"And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." Zech. 12:10.

"They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Psalm 22:18.

Judas, one of His disciples, was to betray Him: "Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me." Psalm 41:9.

"I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:20-21.

Scriptures could be multiplied that foretold of His rejection and the manner of it, but these are sufficient to show some of the details that God gave many centuries before His coming.

The first scripture we referred to (Gen. 3:15) indicates a conflict with Satan; this we know took place, first in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, and then again at the close.

That He would die for the sins of others was also foretold in Isa. 53:5: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Psalm 22 begins with those awful words. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" David wrote the psalm as a prophet, but he was never forsaken of God, nor were his hands and his feet pierced; it is plainly evident that this psalm could refer to no other than Jesus, our Lord. The first words of the psalm are the words used by the Lord Jesus in that cry of abandonment, when He, the holy One, was made sin, and was forsaken of God.

No doubt it was the intent of those who crucified Him between two thieves to bury Him in like manner; but the prophetic utterance was: "And men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death". (Isa. 53:9 JND), and it had to be fulfilled. So we read of Joseph of Arimathea-a rich man-lovingly giving Him a rich man's burial.

But was He to stay in the tomb? Was death to hold Him? No indeed, for the Scriptures said, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [sheol]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Psalm 16:10. "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry. He brought Me up also out of a horrible, pit, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock, and established My goings. And He hath put a new song in My mouth, even praise unto our [in resurrection victory He associates others with Himself] God." Psalm 40:1-3.

Now, reader, we have but very briefly touched upon the manifold details given centuries before the coming of Christ, which foretold His birth, of whom He was to be born, where and when, His ministry, His reception '(or rather rejection), His cutting off, His mock trial, His sufferings (both from man, and for man), His burial, and His resurrection. All these prophetic details, and many more, were precisely fulfilled.

One thing we did not mention was that in many of the scriptures quoted His deity was carefully guarded and maintained-yes, He was and is "God blessed forever," "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2)-"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6.

What a treasure we have in the Bible-The Word of God! May this brief review open our eyes to see more of its beauty, its perfection, and its divine authorship, so that we shall praise Him from whom all blessings flow.

Solemn Lessons From the History of Gehazi

Among the many instances of divine grace and illustrations of the gospel contained in the Old Testament, there are few more attractive than the story of Naaman (2 Kings 5).

Where is the evangelist that has not delighted to trace the thread of redeeming mercy toward that "honorable" but afflicted man, from the voice of "the little maid" in his own household, and the expostulation of his servants when his pride was roused, to the moment when, in obedience to the word of Elisha, he dipped himself seven times in Jordan's stream, and obtained the cure so ardently desired? "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" is the golden rule for the soul in having to do with God; and in becoming the Savior of sinners, Jesus Himself has trodden this path; He humbled Himself (Phil. 2). "God... giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5), to those who will take their true place before Him, as having sinned and perverted that which is right. To such the interpreter can say on God's part, "I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24); "his flesh shall be fresher than a child's" (verse 25).

But God, who fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich empty away, has placed side by side with this happy picture of deliverance and blessing, a most solemn example of divine warning and displeasure. The gospel is preached to those that are afar off, and to them that are nigh (Eph. 2:17), and the word to those that have been brought outwardly nigh, as Christendom has been, is "toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Rom. 11:22.

Gehazi, the servant of God's prophet, had a position of privilege that was unique in his day. Associated with the man who had the divine testimony in Israel, he has a share in the giving, and raising from death, of the Shunammite's son as well as the multiplication of the loaves and corn to the people (2 Kings 4). He also was with the prophet at the time, if he was not actually the "messenger" to bear the word of healing to Naaman. But vanity and the love of money lead him to falsify the grace of the God of Israel, expressed to this stranger, and the prophet has the melancholy experience of seeing the fresh springs of joy and healing corrupted in Naaman's heart, as he starts away to his own land. Unless one had faith in God that He who had begun a good work in the Assyrian captain would complete it, we might well feel saddened and distressed that this soul that had so lately learned that blessing from God was "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1) should have had his heart chilled by the reversal of the prophet's message. Who can tell if after all the mule's burden of earth was used on his return? (2 Kings 5:17).

Gehazi's heart being set upon gain, he became blind to every other consideration. But there is one thing most striking about the narrative, and that is, that the moment his object is achieved, he has the conscience of a thief, and bestows his silver and garments in a secret place (v. 24). The attractiveness of sin is lost as soon as it is committed. "Ye shall be as gods" seemed fair, but the moment the sin and disobedience was committed, the first pair learned that they were "naked" in the eyes of God and of one another. Who would envy Gehazi his success obtained by lying and deceit? Hardened by unbelief and deceived by Satan, he comes and stands again before his

master. He meets the prophet's searching question again with untruth, but he has to learn to his own confusion that neither God nor the prophet was deceived, though he had been, and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7. He had desired Naaman's money and apparel; he gets also his leprosy. He is numbered with the company of the many lepers in Israel (Luke 4:27), but with him is the added judgment that it should cleave to him, and to his seed forever - a suggestion, we may surely say, of the endless doom that awaits those who neglect, refuse, or corrupt the grace of God as it is now expressed in the gospel of Christ. We last meet him in the king's presence (and such a king!) (see 2 Kings 8:4) striving apparently to stifle the accusings of a bad conscience with the pleasures of the world.

What a warning and a lesson for us! If it be with the lips only we draw near to God, and the heart be far from Him (Matt. 15:8), after having been brought outwardly near and in a place of privilege, how shall we stand before a greater than Elisha "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ"? Rom. 2:16. It will be only to hear that awful word, "Depart" (see Matt. 7:21-23). To any such we would urge, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15.

F. L.

Ruth did not forget the first lesson learned in the field of Boaz, "Go not to glean in another field," for we find in Ruth 2:23: "So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."

God's Gospel, Son, Wrath, Power, Righteousness

In Rom. 1 We Find

GOD'S

GOSPEL

SON

WRATH

POWER

RIGHTEOUSNESS

What majesty! what wonders! All is of God, and we stand in awe as we contemplate the greatness of all that is His as revealed in the first chapter of Romans.

We are all familiar with the word "gospel"; it means "good news." Here then we meet with some good news that is described as being God's. Could any news be greater or better than that belonging to and originating with God Himself? Surely not. The gospel had been preached boldly after the resurrection of Christ, as recorded in The Acts, but nowhere do we find it so fully explained as in the Epistle to the Romans. How fitting then that this Epistle should be placed first among all the Epistles, for it expounds in beautiful order God's gospel.

From the outset we are brought consciously to the thought of having to do with God - a God that has good news. From the rich and unfathomable depths of Himself comes forth the fountain called His gospel, and so it is, and must be, worthy of its blessed Source. And while man's deep and dire need of the gospel is not mentioned first, it is self-evident that God's good news must be for some persons who are in need of it. A man of great wealth would not consider news that he had been given a trifling sum, as particularly good. News, to be truly good, must be suited to the need and urgency of the person's state. We see what ruin the whole human race is in because of sin, and we believe that the great God could devise a plan suited to the need; the news of such a plan would surely be good for it would bring hope and deliverance to the wretched and lost.

This wondrous gospel of God had been promised in the Old Testament through the prophets but it could not be proclaimed until the work on which it was based was accomplished.

If God is the source of the gospel, God's Son is the means by which it was accomplished; therefore the "gospel of God" is "concerning His Son." We naturally think of the gospel as it meets our need, but we must not forget that it originated in the heart of God, nor should we overlook that it concerns His Son. If it comes forth from God and is worthy of Him, it must also begin at God, and we should view it first as it concerns Him. Before man's need is mentioned we learn that God's interest in His gospel centers in His Son who alone could lay the foundation for the gospel; He alone could glorify God about sin so that God could announce His glad tidings. God is interested in

the gospel first because it centers in and around His dear Son. All that concerns God's Son is precious to His heart. It reminds us of the parable of the marriage of the king's son. (Matt. 22.) The guests that partook of that marriage feast were happy but the king was primarily occupied with the happiness of his son.

God's Son came into this world according to all the promises and prophecies and so these early verses of Rom. 1 connect with the Old Testament. The Son of God He was, but He came as the Son of David to fulfill the promises -He became a man - nevertheless He was declared to be the Son of God, and that by His victory over all the power of death -by resurrection. And those who it had faith to discern could see that Spirit of holiness all through His life - the same Spirit by whom was the power in resurrection.

This gospel then, concerns God's Son, but it is announced for the obedience of faith among all nations. Not that all nations are to be saved through it, but it is set forth to be received in faith among all nations. It is not restricted to the Jews; no race or tongue can lay sole claim to God's gospel. It comes for men wherever they are, for all have sinned all need it; however, it is not for mere intellectual knowledge but for faith obedience. Wherever it is thus received it bows the heart before God in true contrition and acknowledges Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Then in verse 16 the Apostle says he is not ashamed of that wondrous gospel for he knows it is - the power of God unto salvation. Knowing something of its source, its means, its scope, its power, the Apostle is not ashamed of it nor of his mission, but rather glories in it as something of inestimable value. What could be more powerful than something described as the "power of God"? Nothing! And nothing short of this very power could have met the need of fallen man. Lower he could not have fallen and nothing short of God's power could lift him out of such depths. As Hannah prophetically spoke in 1 Sam. 2, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill... to make them inherit the throne of glory." Nothing short of this "lift" would accomplish what the sinner required, and none less than God could do it. The Epistle to the Romans later goes on to show how God could do such a thing righteously; - this, Hannah's song did not enter into. Man was utterly powerless - "without strength"-and so all must be done for him by another. Mephibosheth being "fetched" by David from the place of "no pasture" (Lo debar) when he was lame on both his feet, and being brought by another to the king's table, is but a very feeble illustration of what the power of God does for the sinner. This power is in His gospel and it reaches down to the lowest depths for the vile sinner and will not stop until he is safely seated in the glory, with and like Christ. Oh, what a power the power of God is! and it is "unto salvation," which here involves the complete salvation - when "we shall be like Him." And if the gospel is for some among all nations it is only received by faith: "to every one that believeth." Knowing about God's gospel is not enough; one must appropriate it to himself by faith - he must accept it as from God for himself as though he were the only sinner.

Now this gospel which is the display of God's power is that which reveals His righteousness. Man had no righteousness for God, but God's gospel brings out His righteousness for man. Fallen man might labor hard and long to produce a righteousness for God, but he could not begin to accomplish so great a thing; therefore, the glorious news of God's righteousness must sound a wondrous note in the ears of him who has none.

Christ went into death for us and there on the cross He fully glorified God about the question of sin; now God is righteous in raising Him from the dead and seating Him on His own right hand in heaven. And God does not stop there, but places the believer in Christ in the same place; he is seated in Him in heavenly places. God is righteous in placing that redeemed sinner in the glory with Christ. God's gospel then reveals God's righteousness, not only in glorifying Christ, but in lifting up the believer in Him to the same heights - it is due to Christ that it should be so. And God accounts the sinner who believes righteous, and he is made the righteousness of God in Him, and Christ Himself is the believer's righteousness.

All this: God's gospel concerning His Son, God's power, and God's righteousness are in sharp contrast to all that went before. Israel was under the law of God, but that was not the gospel; it certainly was not "good news." It said that the man that did not do the things it required should die. In Exod. 32 the law written on the tables of stone was described as the "writing of God" and the tables as the "work of God," but certainly it was not the "gospel of God." And the law did not give a man power, nor could it be said to be the power of God. It only condemned the guilty, and everyone that came under the law was verily proved to be guilty. Even Saul of Tarsus (later known as the Apostle Paul) who was outwardly an upright Jew, found the law brought out what was in his evil heart. He found that the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" only provoked his desires to have, and so condemned him. The law was not power nor did it bring power, except to condemn.

And the law did not bring in God's righteousness. None ever kept the law and so there was not even human righteousness. If a man had kept the law and obtained a righteousness it would have been his own righteousness, not God's. Therefore when it was proved that man did not and could not have a righteousness of his own, God brought out His in the gospel.

But there is another word in Rom. 1 that we must not forget - God's wrath revealed from heaven. (v. 18.) This is not exactly in the gospel but going along with it. If the gospel brought out what was in the heart of God and what was accomplished by His Son, then along with it there came the revelation of the wrath of God. This had not been disclosed in the Old Testament, but now those that neglect or despise God's salvation through His gospel must know that He has wrath for the sinner who will not have Christ. In previous times God had punished certain cities and certain peoples for their iniquities, but in Rom. 1 we read of wrath being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. How solemn! how terrible! this wrath of God must be. Well may the Apostle say to the Corinthians, "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men." If God's gospel is glorious, His power infinite, His righteousness perfect and intrinsic, what must his wrath be! Well may we say to the sinner today, "Flee from the wrath to come," while we know the Lord Jesus as our deliverer from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:10).

God's Object in Our Trials

Ah! has Christ ever touched the quick of your soul in solitude? Do you know the exquisite tenderness of His touch? He does not tear and lacerate. The necessities and trials of saints down here are created by God in order to show them what Christ is for them. If I have taken Him as Lord, I do not expect an easy way. God never meant us to have it as disciples. He takes us into a rough pad; to show what Christ is, and that in it His grace may be able to vent itself. There is a yearning in His heart up there to let this grace be displayed in a poor, needy people down here a longing that His strength should be made perfect in their weakness. Do you know for yourself the grace of that living Christ? Do you know what Christ has to do with you, and you with Him? Do you know yourself as one of a flock that belongs to Him, that He is tending and guarding through the wilderness, and carrying on to glory to be forever with Himself?

G. V. W.

The Good Shepherd Gave His Life

David was a shepherd and had a shepherd's heart. One day, as he faithfully kept his father's sheep, a lion came and took a lamb out of the flock. This stirred David's heart and he "went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him." 1 Sam. 17:35. Thus David risked his own life to save one little lamb of his father's flock. It was helpless against a mighty lion; but David, in the power of God, was mightier and delivered the lamb.

The Good Shepherd, of whom David was but a type, also kept His Father's sheep. He said, "My Father... gave them Me." They too had a mighty foe, the roaring lion, and needed deliverance; this the Good Shepherd was prepared to accomplish, but to do so He had to give His life. The mighty "roaring lion" roared against Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, but He resisted unto blood. There He weighed what it would be to be made sin, what it would cost Him to deliver those helpless, but guilty sheep and lambs. He took the bitter cup as from His Father's hand and came forth serenely to meet an armed mob.

This blessed One had said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." John 10:11. Nothing short of death would meet their need and deliver the sheep; in order to save them He must go all the way into death. This He did on that center cross on the hill called Calvary; in those three terrible hours of darkness He suffered for the sins of the guilty sheep, and then went down into death in order that He might overcome that mighty foe who had the power of death, and deliver the sheep "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:15.

"His be 'the Victor's name'

Who fought the fight alone;

Triumphant saints no honor claim,

His conquest was their own.

By weakness and defeat

He won the meed and crown,

Trod all our foes beneath His feet

By being trodden down."

And now as the blessed result He gives the sheep "eternal life," and He Himself has said, "and they shall never perish." What glorious fruit of the work of the Good Shepherd - eternal life! never perish! He who gave Himself for the sheep has pledged Himself for their safety; that is, He holds them securely in His hand, where none can ever seize them. And more than that: "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man [literally, "no one" - man or devil] is able to

pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." John 10:29, 30. The Owner and the Shepherd of the sheep are one. What security!

Guidance in Service

The question presents itself: In what manner and to what extent can we expect the direction of God in our work? The answer is analogous to that which we have already given with respect to the intervention of God in order to liberate us from dangers. We cannot expect visible and sensible interventions; but we can expect with certainty the care and direction of God by His Spirit in the heart if we walk with Him - to be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" - to be led by the Spirit if we walk in humility (Rom. 8:14; Col. 1; see also Psalm 32:8, 9). I do not doubt that, if we walk with God and look to Him, the Spirit will put in our hearts the special things that He wishes us to do. Only it is important that we keep in memory the Word of God, in order that it may be a guard against all our own imaginations; otherwise the Christian who lacks humility will do his own will, often taking it for the Holy Ghost. This is but the deceitful folly of his heart - first, that it knows them; second, taking it for the Holy Ghost. But I repeat, he who looks with humility to the Lord will be conducted by the Lord in the way, and the Holy Ghost who dwells in him will suggest to him the things which He wishes him to do.

J. N. D.

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: a Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible

HAGGAI

is occupied with the house, and declares that its latter glory will be greater than its first, at the time when He shakes all nations, and therewith encourages them to build, declaring that His Spirit went with them, as from Egypt, and that He will overthrow the - throne of all kingdoms, but establish Christ under the name of Zerubbabel,. as the elect man, as the signet on His right hand.

ZECHARIAH

is particularly occupied with Jerusalem, and so shows the Lord dealing with all nations, having Jerusalem as a center, using one nation to cast out another, till His purposes are accomplished; and then, when the glory has come, establishing Himself at Jerusalem. In the person of Joshua, the high priest, He justifies her against the adversary; He declares He will come, and puts all wisdom, the omniscience of His government, in Jerusalem. He prophesies of the perfection of the administrative order in the kingdom and priesthood, and the judgment of all corrupt pretension to it, which is shown to be Babylonish, and builds the Temple of the land by means of the Branch; judging the hostile power of the world, and using all this to encourage them at that time in building the Temple. Thus far is one prophecy. (Chapters 1-4.)

In the next He takes occasion, by those who inquire whether they are yet to fast for the ruin of Jerusalem, to promise her restoration (only now, for the present, on the ground of responsibility) ; declares He will protect His house against all surrounding enemies; brings in Christ in humiliation, but carries it on to the time of glory, and of executing judgment by Judah upon Greece (Javan), gathering all the scattered ones. In chapters 11-14 we have the details of Christ's rejection, and the foolish and idolatrous shepherd, when He judges all the nations as meddling with Jerusalem, defends Jerusalem, brings them to repentance, and opens the fountain for their cleansing; and then we get, in contrast with the false spirit of prophecy, Christ's humiliation, the sparing of a remnant, when the body of the people are cut off from Judea at the end, with the final deliverance and the sanctifying of Jerusalem by the - presence of the Lord, making her the center of all worship upon earth.

In chapter 13:5, we see Christ, the servant of man, the rejected One of the Jews, and the smitten of Jehovah. Read "for man possessed Me from my youth." It then appears that it was among His friends He had been wounded in His hands; and the great secret of all comes out, that He is Jehovah's fellow, and smitten of Him. Note, where Christ is owned as God, He calls the saints His fellows; and where, as here, He is in deepest humiliation, God calls Him His fellow.

In these books, Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews are never called God's people, except in prospect of the future.

MALACHI

We have here the testimony of the Jews' total failure when restored, according to what has gone before, in spite of God's electing love, which He still maintains; and then the Lord comes, sending a messenger before His face, but comes in thoroughly sifting and purifying judgment, owns the remnant who spake one to another in the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the wickedness, lifts them up, and sets them over the power of the wicked, the Sun of righteousness rising upon them for healing. But at the same time He calls them back to the law of Moses, with the promise of sending them Elijah the prophet to turn their hearts. J. N. D.

Have We Proved It?

If I am walking with my Lord, as the treasure and resource of my heart, how can I have any large or valued possessions down here? And, more than this, I do not want them, for He is both my treasure and resource. We often say, and I doubt not at times truly, that we enjoy Him as our treasure and resource; and yet the moment a slice of part of our possessions here is taken away from us, the poverty of our portion in Him is made evident; and you will find, as you go on, that God in His grace takes us at our word - may I say, His word? - in our souls; and He says to us, "You said your treasure and resource were in My Son; well, be it so. Then surrender every other treasure and resource, and prove the great unbounded excellence of this." He only does it to make good in our souls the true desires of His Spirit in us.

Have Ye Not Read and It Is Written

The following passage will prove that the ground which our Lord took with the scribes, Pharisees, etc., was that they should have known what was revealed in the Scriptures. When quoting Exod. 3:6, "I am... the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," He first says, "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying," Matt. 22:31. "Have ye not read?" He asks. Alas, might not the same be often said to us? When some difficulty or testing time comes, have we read and understood? Have we the light from God's Word which will guide us aright?

Our Lord quoted Hos. 6:6, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," on two occasions (Matt. 9:13 and 12:7), and on both told the Pharisees that they ought to have known the meaning of the words. They had the letter of Scripture, but they did not comprehend its meaning or application. This is a most practical and important consideration for us. For, while we would strongly maintain the value of the very words of Scripture, being inspired, and therefore a divine and unimpeachable foundation for faith, yet, on the other hand, we may have an intellectual acquaintance with the letter, and not understand the meaning or application. To have a true intelligence in Scripture we must be "taught, of God" and instructed by the Holy Spirit, who is given to the believer in order that he may understand the things which are freely given to him of God. "When thine eye is single," says our Lord, "thy whole body also is full of light." Christ, not self, must be our object. If any man desires to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine (John 7:17); God's will, not our own, must be the motive spring. Thus, when there is simplicity and a true desire to learn, God gives the wisdom and understanding needed, and the Scripture becomes daily more precious, for it ever reveals Christ to the soul.

Christ Himself is, in truth, the center around which all circles, from the beginning of Genesis to the last chapter of the Old Testament; and, therefore, we read that He expounded from these very scriptures, "the things concerning Himself." Sometimes He was the subject of distinct prophetic testimony, which referred to Him and to no other; sometimes the communication from God through the inspired witnesses of old took the form of types and shadows, of which He was the antitype and substance. But not one jot or tittle of the law could fail; all must come to pass. Christ was Himself the filling up of the outline traced by the sacred writings of old. He says Himself, "I am come... to fulfill." Someone has remarked that the word here translated "fulfill" signifies that "He came to make good the whole scope of the law and the prophets... He came as the revealed completeness of God's mind, whatever the law and the prophets had pointed out."

Thus our blessed Lord, after the close of His ministry on earth, when risen from the dead, referred His disciples to the words He had spoken, that "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." Luke 24:44.

This was the threefold division of the Old Testament well known to the Jews - Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. All that was written concerning Him - must be fulfilled," for thus "it is written."

Mark, the Lord did not instruct these two disciples on the road to Emmaus simply from His own divine knowledge, apart from the written Word: on the contrary, He made use of the Scriptures, and taught them from the Scriptures; leading them over a wide range, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. What honor He placed on the Scriptures! Then, as we find a little later on, He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. The opened understanding, the divinely given intelligence, was just as necessary as the possession of the Scripture itself; and this we have, as already remarked, by the Holy Spirit, who came down on the day of Pentecost. Further, Christ said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:46-47.

Here He places side by side the prophetic testimony pointing to His death, and what was suitable, as well as absolutely necessary for the remission of sins, for God's glory and the eternal blessing both of His Church and of Israel.

Turning again to the references made by our Lord to the Old Testament, we find that when quoting Exod. 21:17, He commences by saying, "For God commanded, saying," etc., (Matt. 15:4), and when quoting Gen. 2:24, He introduces the quotation with the words, "Have ye not read," etc. "God commanded," and "Have ye not read": how emphatically this might be repeated in Christendom at the present day! Why all the false doctrine and confusion that exists? Is it not due to inattention to God's Word? Why the present confusion among the Lord's people? Is not this to be attributed, in a late measure, to a want of subjection, in heart and soul, to the teaching and guidance of Holy Scripture?

But the Bible is a God-given oracle, carrying His authority, perfectly adapted to every need, every circumstance, and every period of the Church's history. "Do ye not therefore err?" He says to the unbelieving Sadducees. And why did they err? because they knew "not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Herein was the fault - they knew not the Scriptures. Man, when left to the petty reasonings of his own mind, gets into all kinds of folly; he falls into superstition on the one hand, or infidelity on the other. But both these extremes agree in shutting out God's Word. It has been Satan's object in all ages to cut out the Word of God; or, if he cannot do so, to render it null and void. Sometimes he accomplishes this by insinuating doubts, raising the question, Is it even so that God has said? - in our own day this takes the form of "modernism." Sometimes he displaces the Scripture by tradition and the teachings and doctrines of men.

Our Lord Himself answered all such suggestions. He met Satan in person by the all-sufficient word, "It is written." He met the Sadducees, whom we may call the "modernists" of that day, as He also met the Pharisees and scribes - these tradition-mongers of old - by the simple word, "God said," "Did ye never read in the Scriptures?" "What is this then that is written?" He used the written Word to silence every objection and to refute every form of error; and surely if He thus accredited the Scripture, this is enough for all who have a reverence for Him.

The Word of God is "living" and "abiding." It has ever an unchanged freshness and living power for the heart of the Christian. This must be so, for it reveals God in all His infiniteness, His love, His grace, His near and blessed relationship as Father. It gives us, by inspiration, the life, the very words of Jesus Himself, who, as the Word, tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth.

"The Scripture cannot be broken," says the Lord Jesus. Again He says: Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" John 5:46-47.

Here the Lord binds together the writings of Moses (the Scriptures) and His own words; and He ascribes an authority as great, if not greater, to the written Word than to the spoken Word. So it is said in another place,

"They believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." John 2:22.

Even when the dark shadows of the cross were falling on His path, He still used the written Word as that which had marked all beforehand. In quoting Isa. 53:12, concerning Himself - "And He was reckoned among the transgressors" - the Lord introduces the quotation with the words, "This that is written must yet be accomplished in Me." Again, in referring to Zech. 13:7, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," He commences by saying, "for it is written." For Him the Word was everything. It was given by God, it was inspired by the Holy Ghost, it was the guide and resource at all times; it was that of which no part could remain unfulfilled. May God, by His Holy Spirit, deepen in all our souls the value of Holy Scripture, and daily increase our relish for it! - not merely for certain favorite portions, but for all Scripture. We cannot afford to leave aside any portion without loss to the soul. And may He grant to every reader that Spirit-taught subjection of heart and soul which is the true way to possess intelligence in His mind as revealed to us in the inspired volume! What would thousands of devoted men of old - the early Christians, the Reformers, and out many others among the persecuted saints of God in by-gone days - have given to possess an open Bible, and the full liberty to read it, which is ours? Let us see to it that we do not lightly value our privileges, but let us seek grace and power from God to make a good use of what He has so freely given us.

F. G. B.

Hearts Fresh With Heavenly Streams

Are your souls, I would ask, familiar with that grace of the Father in having chosen and accepted you in the Son of His love before the foundation of the world? Do you find in it power that separates you from the world? I believe we are now in a very peculiar stage of its history, the powers of darkness letting loose a vortex of evil of every kind, and many a child of God will be caught in it if not walking with God. Some, like Lot, may have to be dragged up out of Sodom. Not that God will not keep His people, in one sense; but it is not only that, He also wants them to have the experience of what His love is, in such largeness that it will keep their hearts fresh with heavenly streams, fresh in blessed and divine thoughts. They who know all that Father's divine love, have a fountain overflowing from heaven. Are you drinking of it?

G. V. W.

High and Low Tide

When the soul is down, like a ship when the tide is low, it is in danger of shoals and sandbanks; but when the tide is up there are no sandbanks, because the ship is lifted up above them all. Thus when the soul is happy in Christ it will go on peacefully, independent of all the trials we may be called to meet with in our fellow saints... And thus going on in the tide of divine goodness, forgetting everything else, we can walk happily together, being occupied with Christ, and not with each other.

J. N. D.

Him That Is Able

"Him That Is Able

to do..... all that we ask

to do.....all that we ask or think

to do.....above all that we ask or think

to do.....abundantly above all that we ask or think

to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think

according to the power that worketh in us." Eph. 3:20.

The Holy Spirit: the Seal and the Earnest

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30.

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. 1:13, 14.

In these verses we have the Spirit of God presented to us in two distinct ways; namely, first, as the seal which God puts upon all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, as the earnest of the inheritance which the sealed heirs shall possess, ere long.

All true believers are sealed with the Holy Ghost. We must, of course, distinguish between quickened and sealed. The Holy Spirit quickens dead souls; He seals living believers; that is, He is Himself the seal. God does not seal sinners dead in trespasses and sins; He quickens them, leads them to repentance; and when, through grace, they believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ - crucified, risen and glorified at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens - then He seals them by giving the Holy Ghost to dwell in them. Thus He sets His blessed mark on them, until the day of redemption.

It is very important to be clear as to the difference between quickening and sealing. Many persons find difficulty here, but Scripture is as plain as possible on the subject. Take for example the opening paragraph of Acts 19: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" - or rather, "We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was come." "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Here then we have with great clearness and force, the distinction between quickening and sealing. Here were twelve men, who evidently were disciples, and who had received a measure of truth, but not the full truth of accomplished redemption, of a risen and glorified Savior, and of the Holy Ghost as the witness of these grand and glorious facts.

We are not to suppose that these disciples had never heard of the existence of the Holy Ghost. In this our Authorized Version is manifestly defective. What they had not heard was whether the Holy Ghost had come down as the witness and solid proof of the exaltation and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist, whose disciples they were, knew and spoke of the Holy Spirit, so that they must have known of that divine Person; but he did not, could not know, and therefore could not speak of Him as the seal put upon all true believers.

And yet they were true disciples, really quickened souls, but not sealed. They were practically in the condition of the Old Testament believers, or of the disciples during our Lord's life on earth. There was this difference, that the Holy Ghost had come on the day of Pentecost, and had been working for years, not only in quickening but in sealing. Thousands of Jews at Jerusalem, many of the Samaritans, the household of Cornelius, had all received the Holy Ghost; and yet the twelve disciples at Ephesus had not even heard of His descent.

Hence then, it is plain that persons may be quickened, but not sealed. What was true of those Ephesians, years after the day of Pentecost, may be equally true of souls now. How many of the Lord's beloved people throughout the wide field of Christian profession, are in this condition! They do not know what it is to be linked by the indwelling Spirit to a risen and glorified Head in heaven. They are virtually under the law; they do not know the blessedness of settled peace with God; they enjoy not the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free; they are in bondage, filled with doubts and fears. Through legality, bad teaching, or some other cause, they have been kept in ignorance of "the things which are freely given to us of God"; and thus they have been groping on in darkness and distance, instead of enjoying that blessed nearness to God which is the portion of all those who simply believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

However we shall not dwell further just now on the important and interesting distinction between quickening and sealing - the former being the work of the Spirit, the latter His personal indwelling - but shall, ere closing this very brief article, call the serious attention of the Christian reader to the weighty word of exhortation quoted above, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

This word assumes that the Christian knows himself to be a sealed one. All Christian exhortation is based on the fact of our being in the enjoyment of Christian position and privilege. We could not grieve the Holy Spirit if He were not in us; but when we know what it is to have such an One as the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us, making our body His temple, what a powerful motive to holy living! How careful we should be not to grieve Him. How we should watch against every thought, word and act that would be offensive to the divine Guest who has taken up His abode in us! All lightness and frivolity, all unhallowed conversation, all evil speaking, all unkindness, moroseness and irritability, all selfish ways, all worldly-mindedness, must be judged according to the standard of the Holy One by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption. It is no longer a question of what is suitable or consistent for us, but for Him. This makes all the difference. Many a thing might be suitable for us which would be grievous to Him. Our constant inquiry should be, "Will this thing grieve the Holy Spirit who dwells in me?" If so, let us, by the grace of God, judge and reject it with holy decision.

May the Lord enable us to bend our earnest attention to His most precious word of exhortation, so that His holy name may be more fully glorified in our daily life!

And now a very few words on the subject of "the earnest." This is a most precious aspect of the Spirit's office and work. He "is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The inheritance is purchased; the price has been paid. But it is not yet redeemed; for this latter we wait; and while waiting, our God has, most graciously, given us the earnest of His Spirit, so that we are as sure of the inheritance as though we were already in possession of it. The earnest is a part of what we are to get. "Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ" - most

precious words! - "and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

We must carefully distinguish between purchase and redemption. Many confound them and thus suffer serious loss. Our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased the whole universe. He paid the redemption price for the inheritance; but He has not yet laid His mighty hand, in redeeming power, thereupon. Redemption by price is one thing; redemption by power, quite another. In the year 1834, the British Legislature voted twenty millions of money to redeem the slaves in the Colonies. This was redemption by price. But then, notwithstanding the payment of this redemption price, some poor slaves might be found huddled together in a slave ship. What was needed in their case? Redemption by power, in virtue of the price. A British man-of-war might seize the slave ship and let go all the poor captives. This may, in some feeble manner, illustrate the difference between purchase and redemption.

In Rom. 8 we have a splendid passage which we might quote for the reader. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us... For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

As regards the body of the believer, as in respect to the inheritance, the redemption price has been paid, but it is not yet redeemed; "we groan within ourselves." We sigh for the redemption. We wait for the moment of deliverance. "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body [body of humiliation] that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body [His body of glory], according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Glorious prospect! How precious for the weary, suffering pilgrim who feels the burden of his poor crumbling tabernacle! The Lord is at hand. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God will soon be heard, and then mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Till then we are sealed with that blessed Spirit of God who is the earnest - not of His love which we possess, but - of the inheritance for which we wait.

C. H. M.

How Can We Have Settled Peace?

A dead and risen Christ is the groundwork of 'salvation. "Who 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 on 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. (See 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 progeny.

C. H. M.

How Much Would You Be Missed Here?

The Lord lived here, died here, rose here; He ate and drank in this world, but He never was of the world; and so it is and should be with the Christian. Our Lord did not form such a part and parcel of this world as that His appearance in it or departure from it ruffled the stream for a moment. He would not have been missed in the world; and the moment that a Christian becomes an integral part of the motive power which carries on the wheels of the world, all is out of course, as far as his allegiance to Christ goes. A Christian ought to be the means of constant blessing in this world. But how, and of what character? Bearing the testimony of Christ, of his Saviour; but as He never sought His own things - was always doing good, yet doing it as the will of his Father-always acting upon motives that were not of the world, but from above -never uniting with men's plans for the purpose of bettering man, but realizing that the world was God's enemy, and yet that God's love was sending Him into it to do them good: such was Christ, and so should it be with the Christian. A Christian's business is to be the epistle of Christ. So that the one clue and test for what comes before a person, is this: will my doing this or that be acting as an epistle of Christ? But in order to know what is consistent with an epistle of Christ, I must search His ways in the words of the Holy Ghost. There is always light in Scripture to show what is His mind for the present moment.

W K.

If I Sin, Am I Still a Child of God?

This question is constantly puzzling unestablished souls. It arises through a defective view of the infinite worth of the sacrifice of Christ, and His acceptance before God. We would offer a few thoughts upon the subject, which we trust may be helpful to any of our readers who may have this difficulty.

The unconverted sinner sins constantly. Every act, word, and deed springs from a defiled source. We are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9. It is a corrupt fountain, from which a stream of sin flows continually. And that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and remains flesh to the end. (John 3:6.) And "the carnal mind" (or the minding of the flesh) "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8:7-8.

But God in His great love to us gave His Son. Jesus, the Lamb of God, died on Calvary, glorified God, broke Satan's power, and bore the judgment of sin. God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, thereby showing His perfect satisfaction in His finished work. On the ground of that work all who believe are pardoned, justified, reconciled, saved - the children of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons" (children) "of God:" etc. "Beloved, now are we the sons" (children) "of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:1-2.

Now, as it is in the natural relationships of life, so is it in the spiritual. Once a child is born into the world a relationship is established between the father and the child which can never be broken. And once we are the children of God a relationship is established between God and us which is eternal. Being brought into this blessing, God looks for a walk and conduct consistent with the position of favor in which His grace has planted us. Having believed on His Son our sins are all forgiven for His name's sake. (1 John 2:12.) God will remember them no more forever. (Heb. 10:17.) And now we should live without sinning. The Spirit of God, who dwells in the believer, is the power to enable us to live to God, and to cease from sinning. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not" (or, in no way) "fulfill the lust of the flesh." Gal. 5:16. Having believed in Christ, not only are our sins forgiven, but Christ having died to sin, we are dead with Him, and exhorted to reckon ourselves so, and alive to God in Christ Jesus, who lives to die no more. We are delivered from the dominion of sin, called to yield ourselves to God, and to bring forth fruit to Him. (Rom. 6:22, 11-13.) The truth is very simple. I am not only saved from the consequences of my sins, and of being a sinner, what I have done and what I am, but I am saved by divine grace to manifest Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost in all my ways - to live Christ instead of a life of sin. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." 1 John 3:6. A sinner in his sins does nothing but sin; but a child of God is saved to live without it. (Phil. 1:21.) We are responsible to refuse sin, root and branch, and live Christ.

We think we hear some one saying, "That is just what I desire; but there's my difficulty. Sometimes I do not watch, and then I commit sin; my conscience is defiled, and I think I cannot be a child of God at all, especially as the remainder of the verse just quoted, Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not,' adds, 'whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.' " 1 John 3:6.

But this verse gives the characteristic state of a man who lives in sin. A man that sinneth does that which characterizes a sinner. It is a denial of Christianity, in which we have salvation from Sin. In the first Epistle of John we have repeatedly the contrast between the Christian and the unconverted man, the one being characterized by a life according to God, and the other by a life of sin. The whole teaching shows that there is no license in grace. We are saved by grace and for glory, but from sin now; saved from its mastery, to live without it; hence, if we sin, we are practically denying our calling, and the Word touches the conscience and pulls us up at once. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him."

But at the same time, such is God's wondrous grace, that He has made a perfect provision for His children in case we do sin. We ought not to. But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father," etc. 1 John 2:1. We do not lose our Savior. or our salvation, or our relationship. Grace took us up at starting, and grace will bring us through to the end. If God cast us off when, through unwatchfulness, we sin, He would never have taken us up, for then we were doing nothing else. Blessed be His name, we have an Advocate. If a Christian sins it is as a child of God, and no longer as an enemy. And Scripture clearly teaches us that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. But if we fail to judge ourselves, and go on carelessly, we expose ourselves to the governmental dealings of God, because having delivered us in grace, He will not condemn us with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32.)

The impenitent sinner, acting according to his own self-will, will reap eternally the judgment of God. The impenitent child of God brings himself under the government of God now in the world. The penitent child receives a loving Father's forgiveness. It makes all the difference whether we sin as enemies or children. The relationship of child once established cannot be broken; and God defends His erring ones against the foe. God will never deliver to eternal judgment that one who believes on His Son. But just as a man, though not surprised at the conduct of a badly-brought-up boy in the street, expects his own son to behave differently, so God looks for His children to conduct themselves suitably to the relationship in which His grace has placed them. How blessed, as has often been remarked, to find that though God changes His manner toward His children when they sin, He never changes His heart.

"If any man sin we have an advocate." "If." Mark it well. We ought not to. Sin is not Christ. The world is characterized by the one; the children of God should be characterized by the other. But if we sin, God in His infinite grace has made a perfect provision.

Cease then, trembling one, from your foolish doubts, which dishonor God. Every time a child of God raises a question as to his relationship, he raises a question as to the infinite value of the work of Christ, and of the acceptance of His Person: He has become occupied with himself and his worthiness, of which he never had, and never will have, the smallest particle. Rest then in perfect peace, and true liberty of soul, on the authority of the unchanging word of Him who cannot lie, and enjoy the blessed relationship of a child, crying, "Abba, Father."

E. H. C.

Infidelity and Reason Opposed to Faith: Faith and God's Revelation

Feeling as we do the deep solemnity of the present time and the danger which besets the Christian's path on every side, we press upon our readers the immense importance of the Word of God, and implicit subjection to its holy authority in all things. We do not exactly feel called upon to take formal notice of attacks upon it. We look upon all such as the direct and positive work of Satan, who is seeking in every possible way to shake the foundations of our most holy faith, and to pave the way for the march of infidelity and blasphemy, which, as we believe, will ere long darken the whole civilized world. It is surely most appalling to think that the professed pastors and teachers of Christianity should be the very men to rise up and lay impious hands upon the pillars upon which that Christianity reposes. May the Lord have mercy upon them and open their eyes that they may see their folly, guilt and danger, and flee for refuge to that precious blood which cleanses from all sin!

Still, though we do not deem it our place to review or expose infidel books, we cannot refrain from raising a warning cry against the influence of infidel principles. We see in all directions an effort to humanize everything divine and sacred - to bring everything down to the level of man's blind and perverted reason - to exclude all that is mysterious - all that is heavenly and divine - to exalt reason and insult revelation - to shut out God. Yes, beloved reader, this is the enemy's grand effort - to shut out God, and upset God's Revelation. We look in one direction and we see professedly Christian teachers seeking to undermine Christianity. We turn our eyes to another quarter, and we see some daring to approach the profound mystery of the cross, to speculate, as medical men, upon the causes of the death of Christ!

We confess we shudder at the contemplation, and ask, Where are we? What will come next? Is God to be shut out in everything? Must He not speak at all? Is He to be refused a hearing if He utters a word which man's stupid reason cannot understand? Does faith come by reason, and reason by the word of man? It would seem so. The rare and exquisite touches of the pen of inspiration must be tried by the clumsy rules of arithmetic, or the far more clumsy rules of the infidel's moral sense; and the precious sacrifice of the Son of God must be treated more as a subject for a doctor's case-book than as a holy mystery revealed in the pages of the Book of God.

May God preserve His saints in these perilous times! May He fill our hearts with a very deep sense of the solemnity of the present moment, and lead us to keep close to Himself and to His Word! Then shall we be safe from every hostile influence. Then shall we not regard the sneer of the skeptic or the arguments of the infidel. We shall know whence all such things come and whither they tend. Christ will be our enjoyed portion, His Word and Spirit our guide, His coming the hope of our hearts.

A Few Words on Isaiah 53

The Person who is the subject of Isa. 53 is referred to more than forty times in the chapter. He is brought before us in various ways - One that grew up "as a root out of a dry ground."

Of this One, spoken of so many times in these various ways, there is one thing said that is very striking: "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Who is that One? Oh it is that One that grew up in this world before God as "a root out of a dry ground" - "as a tender plant." In Him, God saw every beauty; He was the One in whom, from first to last, God had delight, and from whom continually a sweet savor rose up. What was that savor? It was a savor of obedience - not a savor of legal obedience; that was not the kind of obedience the Lord rendered, but the obedience of love. "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do."

How is it that in this poor, vast world there are here and there a few (though when gathered together there are a good many) that do see beauty in Him, and that do desire Him? - those whom the beauty of the Lord attracts. What has made it to be thus with you and with me and with every other believer far and near? Who gave us the anointed eye, the opened ear? Who gave us the receiving and under, standing heart? We sometimes sing:

"To Thee our all we owe;

The, precious Savior, and the power

That makes Him precious too."

How precious that sovereign grace becomes to us as we go on and learn more of its sovereignty, its righteousness. Through that sovereign grace, it is no longer true of us that we see no beauty in Him that we should desire Him, but we learn how little we see! Perhaps we see little beyond the fact that He is our Savior, but that is beauty, and God gives us in some measure to share His joys and thoughts of Him who grew up "before Him... as a root out of a dry ground."

What an object there was on earth for God when Christ was here! On that object His eye rested, and to that object now His sovereign grace attracts.

There are several things among the many things said about Him in this short chapter, to which really the last few verses of the preceding chapter belong, which tell out His glory in an especial way. One is in those words: "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." How that 'tells out the infinite glory of that blessed One. Here is One, sinless in Himself, this "root out of a dry ground" upon whom God can lay the iniquity of us all.

It is in that way that the memorials of His death bring Him before us, as the bearer of our sins in love to us, and in love and obedience to God His Father. What a theme for praise is Christ, when the eye beholds His beauty, or a little of it; when He becomes not simply an object of faith (that is first), but when He becomes an object of love!

It says in Peter, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." As we sing in one of our hymns,

"Perfect soon in joy before Thee,

We shall see Thee face to face."

How those words refresh and strengthen one. Who can conceive what the perfection of joy and glory will be in His presence! We shall see Him face to face.

May God in His grace make Isa. 53 exceedingly precious to us all.

Israel a New Nation: the Editor's Column

When the British army liberated Jerusalem from the Turks on December 11, 1917, many thought that the time had come for the Jews to have their own land again. Then when the League of Nations gave Great Britain the mandate to govern Palestine, the way seemed open for all Jews to return to their native land. Problems and difficulties beset the British at every turn, however, and their cost ran high, both in lives and money. Many Jews did return to Palestine in those years, but in no sense did it become their own land; and quota limitations have kept many thousands out.

This year, as May 15th arrived, the British surrendered their mandate, and withdrew from the troubled land without honor or praise for all their efforts and expense during 31 years. Thus another milestone in the history of that unhappy land had been marked; another Gentile lord had proved that Jerusalem is a "burdensome stone" (Zech. 12:3).

A few hours before the British mandate ended the Jews announced, at Tel Aviv, the establishment of "the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel." But God's time to make "Jerusalem a rejoicing" has not yet come, and the newly proclaimed State of Israel began in war and turmoil. The Moslem peoples are bent on obstructing the new Jewish State and are ready to wage what they call a "holy war" to that end.

As this is written (on May 25th) reports coming out of Palestine are confused and even conflicting; and by the time this August issue reaches our readers many more changes may have taken place; nevertheless, we may well make some observations.

1. Surely one thing is evident- the "fig tree" is budding. Our Lord said in a word for the Jewish remnant: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." Matt. 24:32. The fig tree is used as a figure of the Jewish nation which for many centuries has been dormant, but now the sap is flowing and it is showing signs of life. This is a necessary forerunner of the great events that are to take place concerning that people and that land during the years of tribulation that will precede the coming of the Son of man in power and great glory. It is not necessary that this sign of Israel's awakening be seen before the Lord comes for us; but if signs of things to take place after we are gone from this world are now being seen, the coming of the Lord is very near.

2. We must not expect a triumphant nation of Israel now, for the "times of the Gentiles" have not yet run their allotted course. They began when God turned His earthly people over to Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 606, and will end when Christ comes out of heaven as the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:11-21). The image described in Dan. 2 is a picture outline of the "times of the Gentiles." It began with the head of gold - Nebuchadnezzar - and will remain until the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Christ coming in power) strikes the image upon its feet and destroys it. The feet that will receive the stroke of judgment represent the last form of the Roman Empire in its future "ten-king" state - the ten toes. Then, and not until then, will Gentile domination and yoke be broken.

A limited measure of success may be achieved by this new Israel, for there must be some form of Jewish government in Palestine (after the Lord has called His Church home) to be ruled over by the apostate king, called the antichrist, or the false prophet. This "man of sin" will make a treaty with the apostate head of the revived Roman Empire for its support and protection for a period of seven years. This future wicked head of some form of Jewish state is called "the king" in Dan. 11:36, and some of his doings are described in verses 36 to 40. Thus again we see things taking shape for events to come after the rapture. There is to be a government of Israel then (opposed by Moslems but supported by the Roman Empire) for which current events are making way.

Dan. 11:1.35 deals with past events; verse 36 to the end of the chapter speaks of the future - the "time of the end." In the former, the history of kings, called "the king of the north" and "the king of the south," is given as it related to Palestine. "The king of the north" was an enemy just to the north of Palestine; "the king of the south" was Egypt, from its location south of Palestine. These two kings were enemies of the Jews and also had frequent quarrels and wars between themselves, with Palestine, lying between them, being used for the battle ground. (When Daniel wrote of these kings it was prophecy, for he lived before them; and so remarkable is the prophecy that infidels seek to prove that Daniel lived later and wrote history.)

In the latter part of the chapter, which takes us on to the future, we find these two kings again in their respective places north and south of Palestine, and 'again the enemies of Israel. Verse 40 says, "The king of the south shall push at him"- the false king of Israel - and "The king of the north shall come against him." Here we find another indication that we are approaching that "time of the end"; for today Egypt is a free nation, lying south of Israel, and opposing the Jews by armed force. The Arab world lying north of Palestine is again invading the land from the north. The Arab world is not yet united under one head, but the people are there north of Israel, and their hostility to the Jew is the same as of old.

In Luke 21:29 where the Lord gives the parable of the fig tree, He adds "and all the trees." Yes, not only is the budding "Israel" an indication of the "time of the end," but the other trees - the "king of the south," the "king of the north," the alliance of Western European nations - all tell the same story: "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." All the actors in the last great attempt to frustrate the purposes of God and His King (Psalm 2) are beginning to be seen in their respective positions.

"O Lord Jesus, how long? how long

Ere we shout the glad song?

Christ returneth;

Hallelujah! hallelujah!

Amen, Hallelujah! Amen."

Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: a Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible

JONAH

is the witness that, though God has chosen Israel, He has not given up His right as a faithful Creator in mercy over all the earth, while those that are connected with Himself must be subject to His power and bow to His grace: otherwise the sense of favor is unfaithfulness and self-exaltation. At the same time we get a type of death and resurrection as the way of blessing.

MICAH

In Micah we have the general judgment of the people, Samaria and Jerusalem, for their transgressions, iniquities, and idolatry, and their rejection of the testimony of God. Hence the whole land is treated as polluted, and no longer the rest of His people, who must arise and depart. He judges the princes and their prophets, brings in the power of the Spirit to judge even the chosen city of the Lord, but announces its re-establishment by Jehovah in grace in the last days; bringing in the siege of Jerusalem by the heathen, in fulfillment of God's counsels, though in consequence of the rejection of Christ, on account of which they were given up; and shows that the same Christ stands as their peace and defense, when the Assyrian comes in, in the last days. The remnant of Israel becomes the people of blessing to, and power over, others, while all evil in it is judged and destroyed, as well as the heathen who have come up against it. Having thus spoken of the restoration in the last days he returns and insists on the righteousness of God's ways, contrasts the attempt at ceremonially pleasing-Him with the practicing of iniquity which He hates, closing with the looking to Him to restore and feed His people as the God who passes by iniquity.

NAHUM

The power of the world, or man as such, put down forever; but with the testimony of the faithfulness of the Lord in the midst of His vengeance, and hence blessing to those that trust in Him and wait for Him. It is still the Assyrian; Babylon is another thing altogether.

HABAKKUK

is the soul exercised by the iniquity of God's people - first, with indignation thereat, and then with distress at their being destroyed by those who are God's rod to chasten them. He then gets the answer of God, showing that He knows the pride of the wicked, and will judge it, and that the righteous man must live by trusting in Him. Lastly, he rises above all to the glorious power of God, exercised in the salvation of His people, so that he trusts in Him, come what will.

ZEPHANIAH

In Zephaniah we get the utter judgment of the land for iniquity, hypocrisy, and idolatry, at the great day of the Lord, and of all the neighboring nations around -everything of man's natural power, Jerusalem among them, because of her iniquity, though distinctly brought out as the special object

of displeasure, as connected with the Lord. The prophecy then singles out the remnant in a very distinct and definite way, calling on them to wait on the Lord, who leaves them as an afflicted and poor people but delivered by the judgments which He executes, and rests in His love over Jerusalem, making it a name and praise among all people. J. N. D.

Continued

To be continued

Judgment According to Works

Some would teach us that the only thing for which men will be condemned is the rejection of the gospel. This is a grave error. Men will be judged for their sins, for their wicked ways, their idle words, according to their works. (See carefully Matt. 12:36, 37; Eph. 5:5, 6; Col. 3:5, 6; Rev. 20:12, 13.) It is fatally false doctrine to teach that people will only be judged for rejecting the gospel. It is a denial of the sinner's responsibility, and furnishes a plea for the indulgence of his sinful desires. It is quite true that the rejection of the gospel leaves people on the ground of judgment, but the judgment will be, in every case, according to man's works.

A Few Words on Knowing God's Will

People would like a convenient and comfortable means of knowing God's will, as one might get a receipt for anything; but there exists no means of ascertaining it without reference to the state of our own soul. Further, we sometimes seek God's will, desiring to know how to act in circumstances in which it is not His will that we should be found at all. If conscience were in real healthful activity, its first effect would be to make us quit them. It is our own will that sets us there, and we should like nevertheless to enjoy the consolation of God's direction in a path which we ourselves have chosen. Such is a very common case.

Be assured that, if we are near enough to God, we shall have no trouble to know His will. In a long and active life it may happen that God, in His love, may not always at once reveal His will to us, that we may feel our dependence, particularly where the individual has a tendency to act according to his own will. However, "if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light"; whence it is certain, that if the whole body is not full of light, the eye is not single. You will say, "That is poor consolation." I answer, "It is a rich consolation for those whose sole desire is to have the eye single and to walk with God; not, so to speak, for those who would avoid trouble in learning His will objectively, but for those whose desire is to walk with God. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." It is always the same principle. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." You cannot withdraw yourself from this moral law of Christianity. Thus the Apostle prays that "ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." The mutual connection of these things is of immense importance for the soul. The Lord must be known intimately if one would walk in a way worthy of Him; and it is thus that we grow in the knowledge of God's will. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." Finally, it is written that the spiritual man "judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

It is, then, the will of God, and a precious will, that we should be able to discern it only according to our spiritual state. In general, when we think we are judging circumstances, it is God who is judging us - who is judging our state. Our business is to keep close to Him. God would not be good to us, if He permitted us to discover His will without that. It might be convenient just to have a director of consciences, and we should thus be spared the discovery and the chastisement of our moral condition. Thus, if you seek how you may discover the will of God without that, you are seeking evil; and it is what we see every day.

J. N. D.

The Last Days: by Paul, Peter, John, and Jude

There are two senses in which the expression "last days" is used in the New Testament. In the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is mention of "these last days." There it is intended to designate this present dispensation. But the expression is also applied to the closing days of this present dispensation. In this way it is used in 2 Tim. 3 "In the last days perilous times shall come"; that is, in the closing season of Christendom. To this season Jude also refers, when he speaks of "the last time" when there should be mockers (v. 18).

Now it is important that we should know what are the features which the Spirit of God describes as attaching to these "last days."

In this Epistle (Jude) we find two distinct marks by which the Holy Ghost has described the closing hour of this dispensation. 1. The spirit of intellectual liberty, or of free-thinking, which rejects the mysteries of God. 2. The prevalence of moral laxity.

In 2 Pet. 3, we are told that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" Here, "the last days" are marked by a spirit of scoffing, and the object of it is one of God's precious mysteries - the second advent, or coming of the Lord.

If we turn to the First Epistle of John, we find the same thing spoken of as the spirit of antichrist, which was already working, and which scorns the mysteries of the truth. "Little children," he says, "it is the last time" (1 John 2:18); and then he describes what characterizes the last time - the denial that Jesus is the Christ - the denial of the Father and the Son.

Now from these two witnesses (Peter and John), we get one very definite character of the last times. They are to be marked by a scoffing and infidel spirit, which mocks at the coming of the Lord, and which denies the great mystery of the Persons of the Godhead.

If we refer to the Epistle of Jude, we shall find it is not these features which are given as marking "the last days," but a fearful state of moral laxity, such as Paul gives us in 2 Tim. 3 It is moral laxity which is spoken of in both these Epistles. According to the testimony by Paul, men are "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud... unholy... incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more [or, rather] than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." This is an awful picture. And remember, it is Christendom that is described. It is not about the heathen world that Paul is speaking. The anticipations of Peter and John and Paul and Jude are about Christendom. They instruct us beforehand that the last days of Christendom are to be marked by a fearful moral or practical condition, as well as by an infidel and scoffing spirit which rejects the mysteries of the truth.

Now you may ask me, What have we to do with these things? Ah! beloved friends, we have to do with them. We ought to know the enemies against whom we have to contend - the forms of

Satan's power against which we have to watch; and it will not do to escape one of the snares, and fall into the other. It will not do to guard only: the mysteries of truth: we must watch over our whole behavior, that we do not slip into the general practical condition of the "last days." It is very likely that both the features described will not attach to the same person. The modern infidel thinking intellectualist may be moral and amiable, while the man of ungodly walk may be the professor of an orthodox creed. Jude does not glance at that of which John speaks.

Now I desire to be practical - to direct your attention specially to one point. When the Holy Ghost takes His rightful direction, He speaks of Christ - of the common salvation. His office is to "take the things of Christ, and show them unto us." But He is in the place of service in the

Church; and therefore, when there is mischief at the doors, He turns aside and exhorts to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." It is not for orthodoxy that saints are here exhorted to contend, but for the holiness of the faith. We are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," against the "ungodly men" who are described as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"; the "ungodly men" who deny - not the Father and the Son, but who deny the "LORD" Jesus Christ. Mark! who deny Jesus Christ, not as a Savior, but Jesus Christ as a LORD; that is, who practically gainsay His authority - who "despise dominion," or lordship - who reject restraints. Jude is not speaking of Jesus as a Savior, but of Jesus as a Lord. His government is the thought in the mind of the Holy Spirit here. We should welcome this as a sound and salutary word. Is it not evil when a saint does not exercise this continual check on his thoughts, his tongue, and his doings? We are not to say our thoughts, or our lips, or our hands, or our feet are our own. They should be understood to be under lordship. We are not to despise dominion.

The Epistle of Jude puts every one of us on a holy watchtower, to watch, not against a spirit that would gainsay the precious mysteries of God (Peter and John's word does that), but against the tendencies of the natural heart to gratify itself. The Spirit of God is active - the Spirit is life - the cherubim were all eyes; and the saint should be all living, holy activity. If Peter put you looking in one direction - watching against the forms and actions of the infidel mind - Jude erects another watch-tower from which we are to look out and guard against the self-indulgent and defiling ways that would reduce the whole moral man - to watch against the spirit that gainsays the lordship of Jesus over the thoughts, the doings, and the goings of His people.

Then he goes on to say, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." Here you observe how wonderfully fruitful in instruction is the Book of God. We get instruction drawn from the history of heaven. The Spirit in Jude gives it to us (v. 6). He then descends the stream of divine history from the beginning, and gathers these various examples to press them on ourselves, to warn us against a state of moral laxity. And mark how He describes these ungodly despisers of dominion. "These are spots in your feasts of charity... feeding themselves without fear." The absence of this "fear" indicates this state of moral laxity of which I speak.

O beloved! I would that this word on which we are meditating might incite us to "gird up the loins" of our mind. Do we imagine that we have a right to take our own way in anything? We have no such right. As has been said, "The moment you do a thing because it is your own will, you have sinned." To do our own will because it is our own will is the very essence of rebellion against God.

He then goes back to the prophecy of Enoch. What is it? Is it a prophecy of the Lord coming to visit those who are under the power of the infidel spirit? No; but to execute judgment upon the ungodly, for all "their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." It is on ungodliness that the judgment is anticipated to fall. And if you and I look around upon Christendom, even now, shall we not see a prevalence of ungodliness enough to provoke the judgment of the Lord?

But let us take this word home to ourselves. May the Spirit apply it to the conscience. If I take my own will as the rule of my actions, and thus "despise dominion," I am (in the principle of my mind) on the road to the judgment of which Enoch prophesied.

O beloved! may we welcome this exhortation. Do you wish the Church of God relaxed in its behavior and moral ways? Is it not to bow to the cross - to the scepter of Jesus? If He be a Savior, He is also a Lord.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith."

There again is the same subject of warning. The saints are urged to build themselves up on their "most holy faith." "Keep yourselves in the love of God." And what is "the love of God" of this passage? It is the love of God of the fifteenth of John. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." It is the complacental love of Christ. Does this make the path of a saint legal? No; it only binds the heart to Jesus, with a new cord, as the fresh spring of our affections - the Object of all our desire.

Then again, "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Does he speak here of the infidel spirit? No; but take care lest the garment spotted by the flesh get around you.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling"; that is, not from the truth, but from the holiness of the truth; for it is added, "and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

In conclusion, let me repeat it, may we welcome this word of warning. Would that it were sounded in the ears of all the people of God. Let them know that we are living in a day of easiness and self-seeking. Christendom is filling itself with a thousand gratifications. Every hour is multiplying the means and opportunities of indulging nature. The lusts of the mind (Eph. 2) are greatly nurtured. Skill of all kinds, and labor too, is taxed to contribute to their indulgence. "The lusts of the flesh" are all akin to this. Oh, may we, in the midst of it all, love the lordship of Jesus! Let us bow to His scepter. Let us kiss it more and more; and instead of saying, "This is my pleasure - that is my will," let us pray that Jesus may reign in our hearts, "The Lord of every motion there."

But again, let me remind you, it is Jesus that is to be our Lord - He who loved us and gave Himself for us - He who has saved His people. And He is to be served, not in the spirit of bondage, or the mere observance of religious rites and injunctions, but in the spirit of liberty and love.- a spirit that can trust Him at all times, and that can take all conscious short-coming and failure to a throne of grace through Him, with happy boldness. O beloved! it would be but a poor return for His love and salvation, to watch in any wise as against Him, and not entirely for Him, for He has "not given us the spirit of fear, but... of love." May we watch, therefore, that He may be glorified in us by free and

happy service now while He is absent, that we may be glorified in Him, when He shall appear to take us to Himself (John 14:3).

A Learnable Lesson

I find more and more that His ways are not our ways or His thoughts our thoughts. But all our blessing consists in our bending ourselves to Him, our ways to His, and counting our thoughts cheap in comparison to His. May God teach us more and more how to do this; for difficult as the lesson may seem, it is a learnable one, and one in which is all our peace and comfort while in the wilderness, to have it firmly in principle at least. When we come home (sweet word), His home and ours, then will every way of ours be conformed to His perfect mind; for we shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Let Us Have Faith in God

How prone we are, in moments of pressure and difficulty, to turn the eye to some creature resource! Our hearts are full of creature confidence, human hopes and earthly expectations. We know comparatively little of the deep blessedness of simply looking to God. We are ready to look anywhere and everywhere rather than unto Him. We turn to any broken cistern and lean on any broken reed, although we have an exhaustless Fountain and Rock of Ages ever near.

And yet we have proved, times without number, that "creature streams are dry." Man is sure to disappoint us when we look to him. "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22. And again, "Cursed be the man. that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited." Jer. 17:5.

Such is the sad result of leaning upon the creature - barrenness, desolation, disappointment - like the heath in the desert. No refreshing showers - no dew from heaven - no good - nothing but drought and sterility. How can it be otherwise when the heart is turned away from the Lord, the only source of blessing? It lies not within the range of the creature to satisfy the heart. God alone can do this. He can meet our every need and satisfy our every desire. He never fails a trusting heart.

But He must be trusted in reality. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say" he trusts God, if he really does not do so? A sham faith will not do. It will not do to trust in word, neither in tongue. It must be in deed and in truth. Of what use is a faith with one eye on the Creator, and another on the creature? Can God and the creature occupy the same platform? Impossible. It must be God - or what? The creature and the curse that ever follows creature confidence.

Mark the contrast. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. 17:7-8).

How blessed! How bright! How beautiful! Who would not put his trust in such a God? How delightful to find oneself wholly and absolutely cast upon Him! To be shut up to Him. To have Him filling the entire range of the soul's vision. To find all our springs in Him. To be able to say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved." (Psalm 62:5-6).

Note the little word "only." It is very searching. It will not do to say we are trusting in God, while the eye is all the while askance upon the creature. It is much to be feared that we frequently talk about looking to the Lord, while in reality we are expecting our fellowman to help us. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his

doings." Jer. 17:9-10.

How needful to have the heart's deepest motive springs judged in the presence of God! We are so apt to deceive ourselves by the use of certain phrases which, so far as we are concerned, have no force, no value, no truth whatever. The language of faith is on our lips, but the heart is full of creature confidence. We talk to men about our faith in God, in order that they may help us out of our difficulties.

Let us be honest. Let us walk in the clear light of God's presence, where everything is seen as it really is. Let us not rob God of His glory, and our own souls of abundant blessing, by an empty profession of dependence on Him, while the heart is secretly going out after some creature stream. Let us not miss the deep joy, peace and blessing, the strength, stability and victory, that faith ever finds in the living God, in the living Christ of God, and in the living Word of God. Oh! let us "have faith in God."

C. H. M.

Little Foxes

Satan with his cunning will surely endeavor to mar the sweetness of communion and worship, probably not with any great temptation at first, but with "the little foxes, that spoil the vines." Some little extra pressure of business, some self-indulgence that takes up the time we might have given to reading or prayer, some anxiety or care brooded over and magnified instead of being cast on the Lord, or even the veriest trifle to distract the mind. Let us then not spare ourselves, beloved brethren, in the matters of the "little foxes." Beware the beginnings of declension.

W. H. S. F.

Living by the Word

In proportion as we desire the sincere milk of the Word, we grow thereby.

There needs the constant drawing from the source of life - the blessed fountain of God's truth. We shall find in it the cordial, the balm, or the medicine suited to our need, and daily food. Its power on the heart brings forth the expression in the life.

Until the Word has its proper place in the believer's heart, there is no 'stability - we are led by feelings, and when these fail, dearth and barrenness come in because we have failed thus to cultivate our strength, drinking in the sincere milk of God's Word. Truth does not keep us -dependence only on Him who is the author of it can keep our souls alive today., It is a trying day for God's people, so little energy and zeal, and worst of all, too much neglect of the study of His precious Word. It only is life and marrow to the soul, a lamp to guide, milk to nurse and meat to strengthen.

Dr. J.L. Cameron on the Lord's Death

It is with great reluctance that we make some observations on reported comments of one, Dr. James Lyle Cameron, in Lisbon, on the subject of our Lord's death on the cross. This Surgeon seeks to prove His "true humanity" by medical analysis of His sufferings and death. It would seem better to ignore his remarks and cover them with silence but for the increasing attempts in many quarters to account for things on a purely natural and material basis. All this is to be deplored and utterly rejected by the child of God; His Word alone is to answer all questions; and where It is silent, so should men be.

Dr. Cameron seeks to account for the Lord's death by attributing it to certain natural causes which he describes. Thus while apparently honoring the Word of God he denies it; he says that the Lord Jesus died as a natural result of crucifixion, while Christ Himself said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." John 10:17-18. Each of the four gospels tells us that He Himself gave up His spirit, and Luke says it was after He had commended it to His Father. Oh, why should men add to God's Word? Why should we not rather bow in reverence and adoration, and acknowledge that He who knew no sin laid down His own life for us after those three hours of darkness. Surely as far as man was capable of it, he was guilty of His murder; he did all he could to take His life from Him, and God will not hold him guiltless. But the fact remains that "Jesus cried with a loud voice" - not the way of one dying on a cross - and delivered up His spirit to His Father. He voluntarily laid down His life; man could not have taken it without His own act.

Again, Dr. Cameron greatly errs in attributing His cry of "I thirst" to certain natural results of crucifixion which would produce an "insatiable torturing thirst." No doubt our blessed Lord did thirst, but in John's gospel we read, "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled saith, I thirst." In John's gospel He is presented to us as the Son of God and accordingly He surveys the whole scene and sees one more Old Testament scripture yet to be fulfilled - "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" - and so says, "I thirst." Let us never lend ourselves to anything that would detract from His deity - that glory that shone through the human veil - while seeking to establish His real humanity. And let us have the unshod foot of deep reverence when we speak of that blessed One in His sufferings and death.

Magnanimity and Its Results: Saul Spared Agag

"Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways!" saith the Lord. Psalm 81:13. It is He alone who knows the loss incurred by the disobedience of His people.

Saul proved a failure. There is something pathetic in the way the Lord addressed Samuel: "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned 'back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments."

There was nothing ambiguous in the commandment given to the king about his dealings with the Amalekites. He was to "utterly destroy" them and their possessions. Many years before, Jehovah had said that the remembrance of Amalek was to be blotted out from under heaven (Deut. 25). Although Jehovah is slow to execute judgment-enters this place with reluctant step-the time was now come. The cup was full. Saul, instead of doing as he was commanded, spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and also spared "the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." Disobedience pure and simple. It was in vain for him to assure Samuel that he had performed the commandment of the Lord-the bleating of the sheep gave the lie to the statement. "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 1 Sam. 15:14.

If in another day the dumb ass spake and forbade the madness of the prophet, so at this time the poor sheep in their innocent bleating convicted the disobedient king, who, instead of judging himself, made excuses, and meanly blamed the people. This was useless, for the Spirit of God says, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep," etc. The falling king pleaded that these latter had been spared to sacrifice unto the Lord-a lame excuse, and he was assured in solemn tones by the prophet, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Saul was here plainly shown to be a complete failure, utterly coming short in laying hold of the mind of the Lord. He had been weighed and found wanting. If previously he failed as to prayer, he then completely failed as to the commandment of the Lord. The prophet reminded him of the time when he was little in his own eyes, and clearly indicated that he was so no longer. His magnanimity, as he supposed, might have been shown in the sparing of Agag. It, however, ought not to take us long to decide what grave results must follow magnanimity being shown to the devil. Moreover, the Lord wants His people's obedience more than their property.

With Saul there was no self judgment. He was a great contrast to his successor. When David was in a strait he said, "Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." 1 Chron. 21:13. There is nothing in this about King David. Nothing! Since Saul had but the approval of the people, little care had he for the approval of the Lord. This is only too plainly seen in the desire he expressed, "Honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people."

Saul, however, was allowed to continue for some time, as many others are. But the link was broken, the die cast, the tree fallen. Rejected of the Lord and forsaken of Samuel, he gradually sank lower and lower. It is possible that some readers may find difficulty in the saying of the Lord that it had repented Him that He had set up Saul to be king, especially when put beside the statement used elsewhere (v. 29), "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent." Neither indeed does He; that is to say, He never repents of His original purpose. When man's responsibility is in question, then the matter is different and easily understood.

God knows everything, but His knowledge does not clash with the responsibilities of men. For instance, God sent the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to cry to the people of that city, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The Ninevites repented, judgment was averted, and the Ninevites were spared. Saul's sparing of Amalek meant that they only lived to plunder and destroy later on (see 1 Sam. 30). So much for the result of his magnanimity!

W. R. C.

Man-Made Peace and Security

Man's dream of "One world" where all the nations live in peace and harmony seems hopelessly and permanently broken; instead of "One" there are now "Two" worlds. The failure of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in London, December, 1947, has confirmed the fears of many that there is no possible way to reconcile the differences between the Eastern and Western powers. They are separated farther than the poles through ideologies and aims.

The failure of the foreign ministers of the four great powers to come to an agreement on settled peace for Germany and Austria may well mark the beginning of the end for the "United Nations." The old "League of Nations" failed and so will its modern successor. When man-made peace and security fails, the Christian need not be discouraged, but heartily endorse the words written by Cowper in 1779:

His purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding every hour."

God is behind the scenes and moving them all toward that eventful hour when the "Prince of Peace" shall reign and truly make it "one world." But in the meanwhile the world is hastening along, like the waters above Niagara, toward the precipice, to be plunged into the chaos of tribulation which must come before the Millennium.

Russia's contentious and bellicose manners will force the nations of western Europe to unite, and most likely with the American powers, who were peopled by western Europeans, in order to hold some balance of power against her; thus will spring into being what Scripture has long foretold - the revived Roman Empire. So great will the united might of this alliance be that people will say "Peace and safety," because they say "Who is like unto the beast (Roman Empire)? who is able to make war with him?" Rev. 13:4. But God also declares that then "sudden destruction cometh upon them,... and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5:3.

The present division of Europe into Russian and Western controlled spheres is very similar to the division that existed in the days of the old Roman Empire; that is, the part that has been kept outside of the "Iron Curtain" just about follows the line that marked the boundary of the Roman Empire in her glory. Surely the coming of the Lord is very near. Fellow-Christians, we may hear that shout at any hour.

Man's Extremity - God's Opportunity: Carest Thou Not That We Perish?

A familiar saying among us is, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." No doubt we fully believe it; but yet when we find ourselves brought to our extremity, we are often very little prepared to count on God's opportunity.

It is one thing to utter or hearken to a truth, and another thing to realize the power of that truth. It is one thing, when sailing over a calm sea, to speak of God's ability to keep us in a storm, and it is another thing altogether to prove that ability when the storm is actually raging around us.

And yet God is ever the same. In the storm and in the calm, in sickness and in health, in pressure and in ease, in poverty and in abundance, "The same yesterday, and to-day, and forever"; the same grand reality for faith to lean upon, cling to, and draw upon, at all times and under all circumstances.

Thus it was with the disciples as recorded in Mark 4:35-41. Let us meditate a little on the passage. "And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow."

Here we have an interesting and instructive scene. The poor disciples are brought to their extremity. They are at their wits' end. A violent storm; the ship full of water; the Master asleep. This was a trying moment indeed, and assuredly we, if we look at ourselves, need not marvel at the fear and agitation of the disciples. It is not likely that we should have done better, had we been there. Still, we cannot but see wherein they failed. The narrative has been penned for our learning, and we are bound to study it and seek to learn the lesson which it reads out to us.

There is nothing more absurd and irrational than unbelief when we come to look at it calmly. In the scene before us this absurdity is very apparent; for what could be more absurd than to suppose that the vessel could possibly sink with the Son of God on board? And yet this was what they feared. It may be said they did not just think of the Son of God at that moment. True, they thought of the storm, the waves, the filling vessel, and, judging after the manner of men, it seemed a hopeless case. Thus it is the unbelieving heart ever reasons. It looks only at the circumstances, and leaves God out. Faith, on the contrary, looks only at God, and leaves circumstances out.

What a difference! Faith delights in "man's extremity," simply because it is "God's opportunity." It delights in being "shut up" to God - in having the platform thoroughly cleared of the creature in order that God may display His glory - in the multiplying of empty vessels in order that God may fill them. Such is faith. It would, we may surely say, have enabled the disciples to lie down and sleep beside their Master in the midst of the storm. Unbelief, on the other hand, rendered them uneasy;

they could not rest themselves, and they actually aroused the blessed Lord out of His sleep by their unbelieving apprehensions. He, weary with incessant toil, was snatching a few moments repose while the vessel was crossing the sea. He knew what fatigue was; He had come down into all our circumstances. He made Himself acquainted with all our feelings and all our infirmities, being in all points tempted like as we are, sin excepted. He was found as a man in every respect, and as such, He slept on a pillow, and was rocked by the sea's wave. The storm beat upon the vessel, and the billows rolled over it, although the Creator was on board, in the Person of that weary, sleeping Workman.

Profound mystery! The One who had made the sea and could hold the winds in His almighty grasp, lay sleeping in the hinder part of the ship, and allowed the sea and the wind to treat Him as unceremoniously as though He were an ordinary man. Such was the reality of the human nature of our blessed Lord. He was weary; He slept; and He was tossed on the bosom of that sea which His hands had made. O reader, pause and meditate on this wondrous sight. Look closely; think deeply. No tongue, no pen, can do justice to such a scene. We cannot expatiate; we can only muse and worship.

But, as we have said, unbelief roused the blessed Lord out of His sleep. "They awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

What a question! "Carest Thou not?" How it must have wounded the heart of the Lord Jesus! How could they ever think that He was indifferent to their trouble and danger? How completely must they have lost sight of His love, to say nothing of His power, when they could bring themselves to say, "Carest Thou not?"

And yet, dear Christian reader, have we not in all this a mirror in which to see ourselves reflected? Assuredly we have. How often, in moments of pressure and trial, do our hearts conceive, if our lips do not utter, the question, "Carest Thou not?" It may be we are laid on a bed of sickness and pain, and we know that one word from the God of all power and might could chase away the malady, and raise us up; and yet that word is withheld. Or perhaps we are in need of temporal supplies, and we know that the silver and gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, belong to God - yea, that the treasures of the universe are under His hand - and yet, day after day rolls on, and our need is not supplied. In a word, we are passing through deep waters; the storm rages, wave after wave rolls over our tiny vessel, we are brought to our extremity, we are at our wits' end, and our hearts often feel ready to send up the terrible question, "Carest Thou not?"

The thought of this is deeply humbling. To think of our grieving the loving heart of Jesus by our unbelief and suspicion should fill us with the deepest contrition. And then the absurdity of unbelief! How can that One who gave His life for us, who left His glory, and came down into this world of toil and misery, and died a shameful death to deliver us from eternal wrath - how can such a One ever fail to care for us? But yet we are ready to doubt, or we grow impatient under the trial of our faith, forgetting that the very trial from which we so shrink, and under which we so wince, is far more precious than gold; for the former is an imperishable reality, whereas the latter must perish in the end. The more that genuine faith is tried, the brighter it shines; and hence the trial, however severe, is sure to issue in praise and honor and glory to Him who not only implants the faith, but also passes it through the furnace, and sedulously watches it therein.

But the poor disciples failed in the moment of trial. Their confidence gave way; they roused their Master from His slumber with that most unworthy question, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

Alas, what creatures we are! We are ready to forget ten thousand mercies in the presence of a single difficulty. David could say, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul"; and how did it turn out? Saul fell on Mount Gilboa, and David was established on the throne of Israel. Elijah fled for his life at the threat of Jezebel; and what was the issue? Jezebel was dashed to pieces on the pavement, and Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. So here, the disciples thought they were going to be lost, with the Son of God on board; and what was the result? The storm was hushed into silence, and the sea became as glass, by that voice which, of old, had called worlds into existence. "And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

What a combination of grace and majesty is here! Instead of rebuking them for having disturbed His repose, He rebukes those elements which had terrified them. It was thus He replied to their question, "Carest Thou not?" Blessed Master! Who would not trust Thee? Who would not adore Thee for Thy patient grace and un-upbraiding love?

There is something perfectly beautiful in the way in which our blessed Lord rises, without an effort, from the repose of perfect humanity into the activity of essential Deity. As man, wearied with His work, He slept on a pillow; as God, He rises and, with His almighty voice, hushes the storm and calms the sea.

Such was Jesus - very God and very man. And such He is now, ever ready to meet His people's need, to hush their anxieties, and remove their fears. Would that we could only trust Him more simply. We have little idea of how much we lose by not leaning more on the arm of Jesus day by day. We are so easily terrified. Every breath of wind, every wave, every cloud, agitates and depresses us. Instead of calmly lying down, and reposing beside our Lord, we are full of terror and perplexity. Instead of using the storm as an occasion for trusting Him, we make it an occasion for doubting Him. No sooner does some trifling trouble arise than we think we are going to perish, although He assures us that not a hair of our head can ever be touched. Well may He say to us, as He said to His disciples, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

It would indeed seem at times as though we had no faith. But oh, His tender love! He is ever near to shield and succor us, even though our unbelieving hearts are so ready to doubt and suspect.

He does not deal with us according to our poor thoughts of Him, but according to His own perfect love toward us. This is the solace and stay of our souls in passing across life's stormy ocean, homeward to our eternal rest. Christ is in the vessel.

Let this ever suffice. Let us calmly rely on Him. May there ever be, at the very center of our hearts, that deep repose which springs from real trust in Jesus; and then, though the storm rage, and the sea run mountains high, we shall not be led to say, "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

It is impossible that we can perish with the Master on board, nor can we ever think so, with Christ in our hearts. May the Holy Spirit teach us to make a fuller, freer, bolder use of Christ. We really want this just now, and shall want it more and more. It must be Christ Himself laid hold of and enjoyed in the heart by faith. Thus may it be to His praise and our abiding peace and joy!

We may just notice, in conclusion, the way in which the disciples were affected by the scene on which we have been dwelling. Instead of the calm worship of those whose faith had been answered, they manifest the amazement of those whose fears had been rebuked. "They feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Surely they ought to have known Him better. Yes, Christian reader, and so should we.

Mercy

If we turn to Exod. 32 we see what mercy is. Israel had made and danced before a calf, their substitute for the living God. But He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Compare Rom. 9:15-16 with Exod. 33:19.) I will! His sovereignty is absolute. Who can say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" They had ignored Him, the living God; they had degraded themselves in worshipping a calf made of the trinkets of the women. Would Israel so succeed in frustrating the grace of God's mercy? No. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." No ground of action save His own mercy is one adequate for God to display Himself fully by, in dealing with men. "I will."

It is a great thing to recognize the individuality of God as One that acts, none being His counselor. Whom did He consult when He created heaven and earth? When He gave the promise, the woman's seed shall crush the head of Satan? Who was His counselor as to the rainbow? or to Israel coming out of Egypt? As to His Son coming into the world? as to His death? His resurrection, the Father's house, the new heavens and the new earth? But if He does as He likes, He has a character of His own that regulates His actions (Exod. 33:19). The first half of the verse says He will make His glory to pass before Moses; the latter part, "and will be gracious," etc., tells of the flowing stream of mercy. But when He comes in chapter 34 to the revelation of His name - that display which is the true revelation of Him - mercy and graciousness are His traits, and characterize all that flows forth from Him. And is not mercy necessarily of God, and of God alone? Who but He could look on me and say, "Thou art the very opposite of Him that I like and delight in, and yet thou shalt have the same portion as He has?" 'Twe'er confounding heaven and hell, 'twe'er mixing night and morning, for any other than the exhaustless God of all resources to propose such a thing. But He knew His resources to be in the Son of His love, and that by His work He could be just while justifying the sinner. Yes; and more too, He could use the ruin and rebellion of the creature as the occasion in which to show forth the virtues and the glories of the Son of His love, and make Him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Beloved, all this is plain; but oh, for the individual testing of ourselves, how far in our ruin, and amid ruin all around, we look straight up to God Himself in heaven, and own that all our springs are in His mercy by Christ Jesus. Such a course makes us draw near to Him, while it makes us abhor ourselves in dust before Him.

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 1 - Psalm 2

There are two great lines of truth in the sacred writings, which, for distinction's sake, may be called Church truth and Kingdom truth. The first is only met with in the New Testament; the second is found throughout the Bible. The former tells us of God's counsels about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about His body, which is also His bride; the latter announces God's settled determination about the government of this world by the Man of His choice with both, the incarnation and the cross are intimately connected. As man, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, but only after His resurrection and ascension was the body formed. (Eph. 1:22-23.)

As man, too, all government of this world will be placed in His hand whom God has raised up from the dead. Thus, the two great features of the first Adam's history before the fall will be found reproduced in the last Adam, the possession of a bride, and the sovereign authority over the earth. The first Adam, untried and unfallen, possessed the one and exercised the other; the last Adam, tried in every way possible, and proved to be obedient to God's Word, will rejoice in the former, and wield with an iron rod the latter.

As man, according to Psalm 8, will the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, blessed for evermore (Rom. 9:5), take the kingdom and rule. As to His divine essence, He is God; as to His person, He is the Son of God; and as to His natures, He is both divine and human. As God, He now sits where none but God could, on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). As Son of man He will sit on His own throne. He occupies now His place on the former. He will by and by occupy His place on the latter. About this it is that our Psalm speaks.

When Adam first trod upon this earth no will was known upon it but God's - every creature obeyed Him - for acknowledging the authority of man (Gen. 2:19, 20), placed over them by God, they bowed to the Creator's will. When the Lord entered the world God's authority was for the most part ignored, and will one day be openly defied (Rev. 17:14). Between God's counsels and the world's desires there is now a wide divergence, as this Psalm, in which we are introduced to both of them, makes plain. All appears in turmoil on earth, so different from that quiet scene in Eden, where each animal passed in review before Adam, and God's creatures received their several names from the man formed to rule over this earth. Here, on the contrary, we have the heathen raging, people imagining a vain thing, nationalities and races alike disturbed, and rulers of all grades disquieted, at the thought of subjection to God's will. Man, created in the image of God, is found rising up against His authority. What a picture does this present of the insubordination of those who ought, from their place upon earth, to have set an example to the whole universe of unhesitating obedience to the Creator's arrangements! Centuries have rolled by since Adam and Eve were in the garden, and each one tells its own tale of God's goodness and mercy to His creatures, and of His unremitting thoughtfulness for all that they require. Doing good, giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness, is the simple recital of the Creator's beneficence (Acts 14:17), and yet commotion is witnessed upon earth in

opposition to the development of His counsels. With different aims for the most part, divided generally by jealousies and conflicting interests, on one point nations can unite; to ward off one issue they can deliberate together. What is it that binds them in one common accord - what common danger do they wish to avert? They take counsel against Jehovah, and against His Messiah. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." God's Word strips off all disguise, and exposes in its nakedness the wickedness of their design. Jehovah and His Anointed, the Christ, are on the one side, and the powers of the world are arrayed upon the other. It is this which can so deeply stir hearts, and bind by the ties of common interests both nationalities and dynasties.

Will they succeed in their efforts? The Psalm answers the question; but answering it before ever the struggle began, makes manifest God's foreknowledge, as well as His unalterable intention. The confederacy could not be formed till God's counsels had begun to develop themselves, but the plans of men are here foretold to warn the world to be wise in time. On earth there may be disturbance - above, all is calm. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD [Adonai] shall have them in derision." What a contrast does this present to impotent rage of God's rebellious creatures. He sits in heaven, and laughs at it. The settled determination of the Almighty can no more be overturned than the throne of God itself. He sits, while below Him men are in commotion. The term used suggests the immutability of His counsels; so that if men cannot restrain His actions, they must bend before the might of His power (v. 5).

We are turned, then, from the council chamber of men to hear what God thinks of it all. He laughs them to scorn; for what can might, intelligence, wit, or combination effect, if opposed to God's settled purpose? Men plot and counter-plot, often the sport of circumstances, never really the controllers of them, and He who sits on the throne on high laughs at the machinations of mortals. Could the Creator be diverted from His long-prepared plan by the rage and opposition of men He would not be God, and we could put no confidence in His Word. But He is God; therefore His purpose is unchangeable. He is Jehovah; therefore His word is unalterable, and on it we can plant our feet, conscious of the stability of our ground. So, to the all men's projects about the government of this world, God has but one answer, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." Whatever else may pass away, this word of our God shall stand forever, a comfort to His people, that neither time nor the world's opposition can produce even a modification of His Word.

Observe the language, "My King," "My holy hill." God appoints the King, and He has a place on earth from which He will never be dislodged. Little thought of by many is that hill of Zion, so long covered with ruins and the remains of former grandeur, but it is. God's holy hill still, and He here claims it for Himself. God, then, whom men will at a future day attempt to exclude from His own world, has a place on earth which He calls His own, and a King who shall one day be firmly seated thereon. Should not this arrest attention and arouse inquiry? Are men satisfied with the present arrangement of things upon earth? Clearly God is not satisfied, for what room is there in the partition of earth by man for the King to have a place, whom God here calls His own? Originally, God set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel (Deut. 32:8). Then there was room on earth among the nations for His anointed one to reign. What room is there now in man's arrangements for such an event? Men have parceled out the world as far as they could, have created counterpoises in the preponderance of influence on the one side, and provided checks against any encroachments on the other, but where have they left room for Him

to come in, Who must and shall reign? The world goes on without Him, and as the opening verse of the Psalm shows, desires nothing better than his prolonged absence - willing to put up with anything rather than to have Him present. What does the reader think of this? 'Tis true, we cannot alter the existing arrangements of nations, for that is not work to which God's people are called. To obey the "powers that be" is our plain duty, where God's claims do not conflict with human enactments; but, in proportion as we enter into God's thoughts, we must look forward. for a brighter day to dawn, and the advent in power of the Lord Jesus Christ to take place. Nothing short of this, as regards the government of this world, will correspond to God's mind; nothing short of it should we desire.

For whom then are we to wait? Who is God's chosen King? Let the Psalm reply - nor the Psalm simply, but a speaker who is now introduced in it, the King Himself, Who tells us about His person, the extent of His dominion, the manner of its acquisition, and the character of His rule - disclosing what no mortal ear heard the Father's communication to the Son, when He entered this world as the virgin's child.

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Of birth in time these words undoubtedly speak; and, while marking this One out as distinct from all angelic beings (Heb. 1:5), they direct attention to One only out of all the myriads of men who have lived and died upon earth, the long-promised Messiah, to whose advent in humiliation the Apostle Paul directly applies them (Acts 13:33). The promise to the fathers was fulfilled when God raised up Jesus. But does not this refer, it may be asked, to His resurrection rather than to His birth? Clearly not. For when the former is treated of, the Apostle defines it thus: "concerning that He raised Him up from the dead," and quotes another scripture with reference to that truth, from Isa. 55:3. The fact is, verse 33 is concerned with the Lord's presence on earth, and verse 34 clears up what would otherwise be an unanswerable objection, how, if He was the Messiah, He should have passed through death. Predicted as God's Son, as well as the virgin's child, how could these statements be harmonized? His miraculous conception explains them. Born of the virgin He truly was, but conceived of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, as the angel Gabriel announced to Mary - "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. It is in this sense, born in time, really a man, but God's Son, that the Father's words are to be understood. And though all believers are born of the Spirit, and to be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty is their title and position likewise, yet of none but Jesus was it or will it ever be true that existence as man upon earth is due to conception by the Holy Ghost. Thus distinguished from all angels, because He is God's Son - distinguished too from all men because conceived of the Holy Ghost in His mother's womb, we are turned from all who have appeared in the world to One alone as answering the description of God's King. The King Himself it is who speaks, and points out what is peculiar to His person.

Born a man, His position in relation to men is only what could have been expected. On the day of His birth Jehovah addressed Him, and promised Him the dominion over the entire human race. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." He must be more than man to have had this communication then made to Him; but as man, born into this world, He is here addressed. All belongs to God, and He promises to bestow it on His Son. What title to earthly possessions can equal this - the free grant from the One who possesses it! The devil offered Him afterward the kingdoms of the world - not

knowing surely that already it had been promised Him by the only One who could fulfill His word. Unconditional, too, is the promise which certainly will be made good. How this tells of the perfectness of the Lord Jesus Christ! Adam, before he was tried, filled the place of head on earth. He fell and lost it. The inheritance was promised to the Lord, to be bestowed on Him whenever He shall ask for it. Here there is no room for any change in God's plans. When the Lord asks, He shall have all this; for though, as a man untried, He received the promise, in Him there was, there could be no failure. How God manifests His delight in this One, called by Him, "My Son!" A dominion, wider in extent than ever David or Solomon acquired, is His by free grant from the Lord Jehovah, His Father. Dreams of universal sovereignty, men have before now indulged in. Attempts to reduce and to retain in subjection large portions of the earth under one scepter have be-en made, and for a time have proved successful; but to none besides His Son has God promised the dominion of the whole earth. All nations, peoples, and languages shall indeed, in the fullest sense, do obeisance to Him; and, differing from all empires that have arisen, His will never pass away. The uttermost parts of the earth, too, are to be His possessions. No frontiers with which men are familiar, as mountains, seas, or rivers, will mark the boundaries of His kingdom, since the confines of the earth alone will limit His possessions on this globe.

The title and extent of His dominion being declared, the character of His rule is next set forth. As He received the authority from His Father, so by Him is the manner of His kingdom determined. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." One thing then is clear - when He wields the scepter none will be able to resist the might of His arm. God has given all nations to Him to reduce them to subjection. To resist successfully His authority will be impossible, for the rod of iron will prove itself too strong for the vaunted power of man. To effect a compromise with Him, or to preserve a position independent of Him, will be out of the question, for as a potter's vessel is helpless in the hands of its destroyer, so will human might be powerless in the presence of God's chosen King. Complete subjection to Him, as the absolute arbiter of their destinies, will be the only condition on which men will live under His rule. No bonds of love, no silken cords of affection will be the connecting link between Him and the nations on earth. The breaking them with a rod of iron tells of their antagonistic spirit; the dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel indicates that the exercise of power is the only means of keeping in check the otherwise unbridled will of fallen and unconverted men. What a change all this will introduce from what is now manifested about the Lord Jesus Christ! Ignorance and unconcern about Him now characterize the world; then He will be known and obeyed, however unwillingly, wherever man shall be upon this globe of ours.

God's purpose about Christ thus unequivocally declared, what remains but to exhort men to submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus. Kings and rulers, at the beginning of the Psalm, are depicted as taking counsel together against Him. Kings and judges, at the close, are exhorted to obey Him; for to obey God, they must bow before His Son. Professed subjection to God, apart from submission to Christ, is mere pretension, which will not be accepted for a moment. To serve Jehovah with fear, and to rejoice with trembling, to kiss the Son lest He be angry; and they perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little, these are the injunctions given them; for life under His rule, with the retention of place and dignity on earth, is all that is here offered to them. Life, be it observed, not salvation, is the portion held out to them. But, though the question of salvation is not raised with these kings and judges, there is a little sentence which is pregnant with

meaning - "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." This suggests the existence of a class different from those just spoken of - God's saints, who have put confidence in God's King. Saints on earth, when He shall reign, who will have passed through trials for His sake, will witness that this is true. Saints in heaven will likewise attest the faithfulness of to His Word. And we know, ere the day of Christ's triumph dawns, that this is so, as we receive with unhesitating confidence the simple statements of the Word. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him now; blessed will they be forever with Him on His throne, beholding His glory, and sharing in the inheritance (John 17:24; Eph. 1:10-14; Rev. 3:21).

But why has He not yet asked for and received the kingdom? Why this delay between God's promise and His petition for its fulfillment? The answer we know, and what answer have we to give? He waits to be gracious. He waits till the number of saints, who are to reign with Him, shall be complete. The dominion is His. The promise of Jehovah to Him, makes that clear, and His present place at the Father's right hand manifests that the One who was on the cross, the suffering Messiah, is also the One who will appear as the triumphant Messiah; and we know, for He has told us, that He will not be alone on His throne. All who overcome now shall have a place with Him then. In the Psalm, which gives the earthly aspect of the kingdom, He recounts God's promise to Him. In Revelation God's relation 2:26, 27, which tells about the heavenly aspect, He gives promises to His own, and lets them know that they shall rule as He will, and the extent of His dominion over all nations shall be theirs likewise; for what God is now doing is this -by the preaching of the gospel of His grace -to gather out souls from the world to be companions of His Son when on His own throne.

Why then need attention be drawn to this Psalm? Because the struggle has begun. Acts 4:24-28 lets us into this secret, and acquaints us with the first actors in the business. Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. From that day to this the struggle has continued; for just two sides, and two only can there be - neutrality in such a matter is only disguised opposition - for he that is not with Christ is against Him. Yet the issue of the conflict is not doubtful. Christ shall reign, and as all Pharaoh's people had to kiss Joseph (Gen. 41:40, margin), so all allowed to live, when He reigns, must kiss the Son. God's determination is plain. He has announced it beforehand, but has not told us when He will make it good. But as surely as Joseph, whom his brethren put out of their sight, became lord of Egypt, so all God's counsels about His Son, Jesus shall infallibly be accomplished. Successfully to resist Christ's authority then will be hopeless, for power arrayed against Him must only end in the complete discomfiture of His opponents (Rev. 17:14; 19:19-21). But now is the time for proving the truth of the closing sentence of the Psalm, to trust in Him, and to be blessed for evermore.

To be continued

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 2 - Psalm 16

The birth of the King having been announced in Psalm 2, we have next to retrace His footsteps as He walked upon earth as a man. Power to be exercised by Him as God's King seems only natural and right, but a position of lowly dependence is one which man would never have assigned to Him.

Yet this was the place He took when upon earth, who will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron, for He was to show what Adam had failed to exhibit - the proper character and position of the lowest in rank of God's intelligent creatures, called by Him, man.

Perfect God and perfect man, what ever be the relative position He occupies, in it He is perfect.

As man on earth, He entered fully into His place, and acted throughout as befits the creature. And this we have traced out to us in the Word, not only in those books which recount His history, but in the Psalm and Prophets, which mark out beforehand the road appointed Him to traverse. Among the Psalms which describe Him upon earth, Psalm 16 must be included. Twice in the Acts do we find it quoted (2:25-28; 13: 35), and both times it is expressly applied to Christ. Peter, taking up the question of David's authorship, points out that he wrote not of himself, but of another. The Psalm is a psalm of David, but the hope it expresses belongs to a Person very different from the youngest son of Jesse. David's sepulcher, existing at that day, proved he did not write of himself. "He is both dead and buried," is all that the Apostle could say of him. He died, was buried, and is risen, is the testimony which he bore to Christ. "David speaketh concerning Him," is the language of the Spirit by Peter, with reference to His own words by David. At Antioch, in Pisidia, Paul, addressing a mixed company of Jews and Greeks, and anticipating the objection that might be raised against the Messiahship of Jesus, because He had died, quoted this Psalm, to show that His resurrection was predicted. David saw corruption, but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Thus at Jerusalem and again at Antioch, it was clearly shown that Psalm 16 had reference to another than the writer - even to David's Son, who is also David's Lord.

Glancing over it, we may see that only one speaker is introduced throughout it. In Psalm 2 we had three; here we have but one, so He, whose hope it expresses at the close, is the same whose dependence it declares at the beginning; for while part of the Psalm any saint might take up, whose walk was conformed to the standard it describes, One only has ever been upon earth, who could apply it all to Himself. Enoch and Elijah can tell of a road to heaven, which passes not through the gates of death; but none of God's saints who have entered death, have passed through it without their bodies being subjected to corruption. For observe, the Psalm speaks not of the state and portion of the unclothed spirit, but of the reunion of body and soul after each should go to their respective places - the former to the grave, the latter to hell, or hades (Sheol). Death, however, is here only in prospect, the walk which preceded it being the subject of the Spirit's description.

Like a lake whose surface is unruffled by the least breath of any disturbing element, reflecting the very color and calmness of the heavens above it, disclosing, too, beauties in its depths, a bright shining object, at once attractive and soothing - such is the character of our blessed Lord and Master as brought out to us in this Psalm, in which we mark no trace of the opposition that He met with from men, nor of the unevenness of the road over which He journeyed. With one exception (v. 4) there is nothing here to intimate the presence on earth of a will which did not, like His, bow to that of God. It is One, as He walked with God, whose footsteps we have here delineated, and just what we meet with elsewhere in the Word, so useful to us who are often so dull of comprehension; we have but one aspect of the Lord's work upon earth given to us in this Psalm to contemplate. The full picture, with every feature in harmony, we get in the Gospels, while different aspects of His life are brought before us in the Old Testament scriptures. The principle of His walk, the

character of His service, the treatment He experienced, the grace and gentleness which He manifested - all these, blended together in the Gospels, are described particularly and separately by the Prophets who lived before the cross. So, while noting His perfection throughout, we may study for our profit the different features of His character, who is both God and man, our Savior and our Lord.

To turn now to the Psalm before us, which gives us the principles of His walk before God - it begins with declaring His dependence, and ends with expressing His confidence. "Preserve Me, O God," is the first utterance. "Thou wilt show Me the path of life," is the closing expression of confidence. How fully then He took the place of a creature, who should ever be dependent upon the Creator. To be as gods, was the bait held out but too successfully to Eve in the garden of Eden; the refusal to leave the path of dependence upon God, characterized the second Man, when tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Yet all the while He was God. The stormy sea obeyed His behest, and was stilled; fishes were brought in abundance to Peter's net, and one fish brought him the exact sum demanded as tribute from the disciple and his Master; the winds, too, dropped at His word; the devils owned His authority; and death released its grasp, when He bade Lazarus to come forth. Power then He had; all nature obeyed His bidding, who took so dependent a place as to say, "Preserve Me, O God: for in Thee do I put My trust." Is it degrading for a man to own himself dependent on a superior being? Is independence of God what the creature may desire? These questions receive a complete answer from the acts of God's Son down here. He was as a creature dependent, and throughout He remained so.

His dependence affirmed, His associates are next described - "My goodness extendeth not to Thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom [in them, not in whom] is all My delight." A position of isolation was not that designed by God for man. Separation from evil doers is to characterize His saints (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10; James 4:4); but a misanthropic spirit was never the result of divine teaching, nor is a pharisaic standard of moral fitness one upon which God looks with approval. As man, the Lord owns a distance between Himself and God. "My goodness extendeth not to Thee." And though the only Man, who from His own holiness might have withdrawn Himself from contact with sinners, He was found in their company, and tells us in the Psalm that in them was all His delight. Man in nature loves the company of the great, and those best known to fame. The Lord Jesus found His delight in the saints (those separated to God) and in the excellent (those obedient to the Word). With others, just mentioned in verse 4, He could have no communion. On earth for God, with those who were on God's side, He could and did consort. Publicans, as Levi and Zacchaeus; sinners, as the woman of John 4; those who had been demoniacally possessed, as Mary Magdalene and the man of Gadara, found themselves at home in His presence. Those from whom a Pharisee would have studiously kept aloof, He allowed to approach (Luke 7). It was this which so puzzled Simon the Pharisee. He thought he knew much about that woman, but the Lord showed that He knew more, and allowed her to touch His feet, and accepted as personal service the expression of her heart's deep thankfulness. With publicans and sinners He would eat; He abode in the house of Zacchaeus, and passed two days with the Samaritans of Sychar. The "friend of publicans and sinners," men in derision called Him, who associated with the saints, and with the excellent. From John's disciples He chose some of His own - those who having been, baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins, owned that a standing before God on the ground of their own righteousness

was a hopeless thing. What then was the reason of this action on His part, so unaccountable to many about Him? The excellent were those who confessed they had sinned; the saints were such as turned from their former ways to follow the Shepherd of the flock. When God made a decree for the waters of the sea, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, the delights of Wisdom were with the sons of men as distinguished from the angelic creation (Prov. 8:31). The fall of man came, and the Lord subsequently appeared upon earth. Then we find it was no longer simply a question between men and angels, but between two different classes of men, the self-righteous and impenitent on the one hand, and the repentant sinners on the other. Unchanged was His delight in men, but manifested under new circumstances. "The saints that are in the earth, and... the excellent," were the classes that He singled out, and drew around Himself. What grace does this bring into notice! Holy, harmless, undefiled Himself, the poor penitents and the sin-burdened souls could find a ready welcome from Him. Men called them publicans and sinners; He calls them saints and excellent. The former expressed what they thought of them; see how God regarded them: so it was fitting that, when addressing God, by such terms should He describe them. What joy to souls, when drawn by grace to Christ, to know God thus regards them, and that He can thus describe them. How entirely their past sinfulness is put out of sight, and how clearly their present character in God's eyes is kept in view. Saints and excellent, such were His companions; such are those with whom forever He will be associated. At the outset of His ministry such were found in His company at the close of His life, one such was with Him, cheered by the dying words of the Savior of sinners, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

His associates having been described, we next learn how He viewed His appointed path. And here we must surely feel, that great indeed is the distance between us and Him, though by grace partakers of the divine nature, and having Him for our life. The description of His associates tells us of His grace; what follows speaks of His perfectness. Others had turned away from God -to seek satisfaction from unhallowed sources (v. 4); He owned that Jehovah was the portion of His inheritance and of His cup, and accepted what God provided. Circumstances, whatever they might be, He regarded as ordered by God, in whom He found His portion, which therefore, was unfailing and unchanging. He, too, maintained His lot. Able by His presence to overawe souls, and by His word to control the course and actions of demons, He did not assert His rights, but left it to Jehovah to maintain His lot. How truly, how fully, He was the dependent One, though alone of men He could say, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." Isa. 50:3. Thus, leaving all in Jehovah's hands to provide for Him - what Adam failed to do - He could say, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." No garden of Eden, as Adam had, was His home upon earth, to delight Himself in the abounding fruits of the Creator's beneficence and power. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, possessing not, as He ministered to others, what the foxes and birds could count upon as their own, a fixed resting-place for His head (Matt. 8:20), and even indebted at times to godly women for the supply of His bodily wants (Luke 8:3), His experience of Jehovah's providential care He has left on record for His people's instruction.

Meek, He was also lowly; for in nothing would He be independent of Jehovah, though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. From His infancy it was noticed that He was filled with wisdom; as He grew up, we learn that He increased in wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52); and when He appeared as a teacher among His countrymen, knowing Him as a carpenter, and believing Him to be the son of

a carpenter, they inquired in astonishment, from whence did He derive it all? (Luke 4:22; Mark 6:2; John 6:42) He tells us in this Psalm, that the source of strength for Him as a man was the fountain of knowledge for Him likewise (vs. 7).

Thus He blessed the Lord who bestowed it; and His will being in full harmony with God's mind, when others were asleep His reins instructed him.

Dependent, meek, lowly, teachable, upon that from which man shrinks He could look unmoved. To death, man's natural end since the fall, He who was sinless looks forward. Having set Jehovah always before Him, He would not be moved; for the One who had upheld Him in life, would bring Him through death; nay, more than that, would not leave Him for any time in it; for God's presence was the goal to which, as man, He was journeying. Elsewhere we find Him contemplating death as that which cuts short all connection with earth (Psalm 102); here He views it as that which lay in His road to God's presence, the aspect in which God's saints can now regard it likewise. Earth is not the only stage on which men will move; so death does not terminate man's existence, nor cut short the saints' enjoyment. It is the portal to another sphere, and, for those who have a portion in heaven, a door to endless joy. Beyond death then He here looked. To be in God's presence was His desire; for the path of life for Him, as for millions of God's saints, lay through the gates of death. Pleasures for evermore He desired, and He points out where they can be enjoyed. How truly He knew man's place upon earth, and shared in the hopes and joys of God's saints. Life beyond death, in the fullest joy, because in God's presence, and there to abide forever, is the closing thought of the Psalm. Across the brief period of time, to that which has for us a beginning, but has no end, called eternity, are we here in thought conducted; from a scene ever changing to God's presence, where all is stable and abiding, our eyes are now turned; the portion indeed of God's heavenly saints, but the portion of His well-beloved Son likewise, who, born into this world, went through it as a man, and passed out of it by death.

Had men according to their own wisdom undertaken to track out the Lord's path here below, how different would their accounts of it have been from what we have here! Each might have seen Him through the medium of their own thoughts, and at best have recorded their impressions about Him; but here we have His own thoughts and feelings laid bare by Himself. And surely, as we take in what He expresses in this Psalm, we get a better understanding of the value and character of the gift which He gave to His own just before departing out of this world to go to His Father - "My peace I give unto you." John 14:27. Here, in a degree unequaled, we have that peace portrayed, and may learn how to share in it, as in Col. 3:15 we are exhorted to let it rule in our hearts. For "the peace of God" we should doubtless there read, the "peace of Christ." Thus we get mirrored in the Word a walk of subjection to God, as exemplified in the Son of the Highest. Far, far, surely most will admit that they walk behind Him who is our life; and often have not the children of God had experience of just the opposite to that peace which He so fully enjoyed, from failing to learn of Him, in whom "There only could God fully trace A life divine below."

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 3 - Psalm 40

Written, as the Psalms were, for the instruction of others, and not simply to record the experience of the one whose thoughts they express, we find at times in the construction of these sacred songs

a methodical arrangement very different from what might have been expected. Of this the Psalm before us is a good example, for, historically speaking, the first four verses have their place at the conclusion instead of at the beginning of the Psalm, announcing as they do the answer to the cry of the poor and needy One, which we meet with in the closing verses. The purport of this arrangement seems plain; for the Psalms were written to encourage God's saints in trial, and to afford suited expressions for the thoughts of their hearts. Now to know that others are in the furnace with the sufferer will show him that he is not alone and may check the thoughts so common under such circumstances, that he is singular in what he has to pass through; but the companionship of others in the trial offers no ground for expecting deliverance from it. Yet this is what the sufferer wants and, thank God, it is what the Word provides. So before reading of the trials which forced the cry of distress from His lips, we learn that He has been brought out of them, and the new song of praise and thanksgiving has taken the place of the prayer for deliverance. Hence others may be encouraged to act like the delivered One when placed in similar circumstances. For the comfort is this, that He has been brought out of all His trials by the goodness and power of His God. Had it been the might of His arm that had gotten Him the victory, His example would only avail for those who possessed the like strength. Any wanting that would find no encouragement for them in the knowledge of His salvation. But that is not the aspect of things we have here. It is the full deliverance of the poor One - of the needy One - who having felt the power of man's opposition, has been saved by the power of Jehovah's arm, and has thus learned what it was to be thrown upon God. This is what God's saints want, and what the godly remnant in Israel will find applicable to their condition upon earth.

Another remark as to the structure of the Psalm will not be without interest. We learn from Peter that the Spirit of Christ was in the Prophets, and guided them in their writings (1 Pet. 1:11); so that the sacred writers, taught by the Holy Ghost, clothed the ideas which God intended should be in the Word, in language suited to express His thoughts and those of God's saints. All that the Lord could say, His saints cannot, for in some respects He stood alone. Certain things were true of Him in one way (vs. 12), and true of His people in another; but many things, to which He could give utterance, His people can take up as true of themselves likewise. On the cross, of course, when making atonement, He was alone. Suffering the consequences of sins He was the sinner's Substitute - the thieves suffering justly, receiving the due reward of their deeds - He having done nothing amiss, yet bearing the sins of others. Sins then, as laid upon Him, He might call His own, but in a sense very different from that in which others must acknowledge them as theirs.

Besides suffering from God when making atonement, He suffered from men as God's faithful witness upon earth. His people can share in this, in their measure; therefore the language He could use, they can likewise, for He has been in circumstances similar to theirs. Now, as we read this Psalm, we must admit that there is one and the same speaker throughout. He who sings the song is the same One who uttered the cry; and He who looks for deliverance is the One who is the subject of prophecy. The Psalm is clearly the utterance of Christ, and part of it (vss. 6-7) refers to Him exclusively. But we learn from Psalm 70, which is nearly the same as Psalm 40:13,17, how God's saints can take up, as divinely provided for them, the language He could use. What is peculiar to Christ in Psalm 40 is not reproduced in Psalm 70; but what a saint under pressure from the opposition of men might express, is given us as His language in Psalm 40, and is put into the mouth of the saints in Psalm 70. Had we only Psalm 40, we might not have been able to draw a

line between language there peculiar to Him, and language common to Him and to others. With Psalm 70 to compare with Psalm 40, we can, on the highest authority, do this; and while marking what applies especially to Him, we can see how really and how fully He entered into circumstances similar to those in which God's saints have been, and may be found; so not only in walking before God, but in His bearing as He suffered from men, is the Lord Jesus Christ an example and an encouragement to God's saints.

Are we wrong in saying that this Psalm applies to Christ? The statement it contains makes the matter pretty plain, and the comment of the Holy Ghost by Paul, on His own words by David dispels all doubt. "In the volume of the book it is written of Me," introduces us not to David, of whom we have no prediction before his birth, but to another, who is the subject of divine revelation. "I come," tells us that He had an existence before He appeared on this scene; for no mere child of man, speaking of his entrance into this world, could say, "I have come." Thus, His pre-existence is implied, and the agreement of His will with the action is announced.

For, though taking human form, the form of a servant, He speaks not as One obeying a command, but as One agreeing to take up a work, and delighting to do God's will. The conclusion which must force itself on the mind from the words of the Psalm is declared to be correct by the statement in Heb. 10:5: "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice," etc. His presence on earth was to be the harbinger of a great change, as His presence here at a future day will inaugurate a new regime. What Israel had brought to God year after year, was not that which He came to offer. Burnt offerings and sin offerings of the herd and of the flock God would not require. The Speaker here was to be the Sacrifice. He was God's Lamb for both sin offering and burnt offering. Obedience to God's will in the offering up of Himself was to characterize Him. "Mine ears hast Thou opened" (or digged) expresses this; for "a body hast Thou prepared Me," which we read in Hebrews, is the statement of the Greek translation - man's paraphrase of God's own thought.

The great burden of the Psalm is the Lord's life of ministry upon earth while, however, looking forward to His death with its consequences, first of opposition from men, and then of deliverance by Jehovah out of all His trials, being brought up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay. Verses 1-3 tell of this deliverance; 4 shows that others may experience a similar one; 5-10 recount the subjects of His ministry; 11-17 give His cry to Jehovah consequent upon the opposition He met with from men.

He preached to the Jews, righteousness, and set forth God's righteousness, faithfulness, salvation, loving-kindness, and truth, in the great congregation (the general assembly of the nation - not the elders and doctors simply). Before the flood there had been a preacher of righteousness. When the Lord appeared, He too preached righteousness, but under very different circumstances. Noah could show men what they ought to do, and warn them of the sure fulfillment of God's word, but the patriarch had nothing to point to as a witness that God was faithful, except previous actions in judgment (Gen. 3-4). The flood attested God's truth, but only when it was too late for man to prove God's loving-kindness and salvation. But the Lord's presence on earth told of God's faithfulness, for the Word had often predicted His advent; and as He moved about from place to place, He declared God's love, and announced His willingness to save.

A preacher of a different class Israel had formerly known. Solomon, the wisest of men, was charged with this duty among his countrymen. He preached of man's follies, and sought to impress

on his subjects the vanities of the things of this life. John the Baptist, at a later epoch, was known as a preacher, proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But differing from Noah, Solomon, and John, the Lord preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God - a message never before delivered by any teacher or messenger from God; for it was not till He, the King, stood upon the earth, that the kingdom, as a present thing, could be preached. By and by on the mountains of Judah, will voices be heard proclaiming the advent in power of Him who Himself preached in lowliness the gospel of the kingdom (Isa. 52:7). The Lord's ministry was, however, different in character from that which will be. On earth - though" in heaven - the only-begotten Son declared the Father, and displayed in His actions and taught by His word what God was. To His disciples He insisted on the need of righteousness (Matt. 5:20) as necessary to enter the kingdom; to Nicodemus He spoke of God's love; before the Pharisees He justified God's ways in receiving sinners (Luke 15); and to the woman of Sychar He made known for what the Father was now seeking (John 4:23). In Galilee He told the multitude of life everlasting (John 6); in Jerusalem He proclaimed the grace which God was offering (John 5: 24, 25); and the full refreshment provided for sinners, whose only needful qualification was to thirst for it (John 7:37). Rest, too, for the weary, He offered (Matt. 11); and the door to abundance of pasture He pointed out (John 10:9) God's grace and man's need He freely and fully preached; but what the results would be to Himself, the Psalm beforehand made known.

Ministering thus among men, declaring God, proclaiming His salvation, He has to turn to Jehovah, and on the ground of His own faithful service await His intervention for deliverance. Had it been the power of the enemy which thus openly assailed Him, none need have wondered; for He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

But the instruments used to kill Him were men on whose behalf He came - manifested, as John also tells us - to take away sins (1 John 3:5). From these, for whom He so patiently and graciously labored, He asks deliverance. They sought after His soul to destroy it; He sought to give them everlasting life. At Nazareth and at Jerusalem men attempted to kill Him, who was God's faithful witness among them, once at the former place and several times at the latter. At last they succeeded, and Jerusalem thus earned the unenviable title of Sodom and Egypt, and the place where our Lord was crucified (Rev. 11:8).

What had He done to deserve this at their hands? He had preached God's faithfulness and God's salvation. He had declared God's righteousness and God's truth. His feelings under this hostility, the result of His ministry, He here lets us understand. He was not as one indifferent to their behavior and insults, or as one conscious of His own strength, looking down from a pinnacle of greatness on the rage and spite of puny creatures. He felt deeply what He passed through, and looked only to the Lord for deliverance. "Innumerable evils have compassed Me about," He has to say, and Jehovah's active interference He asks for as really wanted: "Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from Me, O LORD: let Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth continually preserve Me." "Be pleased O LORD, to deliver Me: O LORD, make haste to help Me." Such words prove what He felt and what He desired; and the opening of the Psalm acquaints us with that which He experienced from God, as the body of it tells us what He experienced from man. He cried, and was delivered. He was heard because of His piety. Impossible was it that a faithful witness should not be delivered, all must admit. But the depth of need into which the faithful and true Witness descended, tells a tale of man's heart, and of His obedience. Heard, raised up, and so delivered,

He exemplified in His own salvation the sure future of those who bear witness faithfully for God in the world which has crucified His Son. And the new song, at a future time to be sung by myriads of the redeemed, the Lord Jesus was the first to pour forth, for the term "new song" has reference in Scripture to the celebration of full and final victory, and that in connection with the kingdom. Israel at the Red Sea (Exod. 15) did not sing it, but their descendants will bear their part in it (Psalm 96; 98), and joyful tones from creation's voice will form the accompaniment to that new song sung by God's ransomed and finally rescued people upon earth. Nor will earth only hear it, for in heaven, around God's throne, the heavenly saints will give expression to it (Rev. 5:9). No angels that we read of have part in this. Those only who have been delivered by God can join in it. The Captain of our salvation first, then all who share in deliverance will sing the new song, for in common with Him they will have proved God's power to help.

Delivered from His enemies, He looks for their destruction (vss. 14-15), the righteous retribution which their conduct deserves. As delivered by God, He owns the godly as His associates, and this too after His resurrection. On earth He found His delight in them; on high He does not separate Himself from them. "Praise unto our God" shows that He is forever a man; and though Himself the only faithful witness who never once failed, He reminds all God's servants that He regards them as in connection with Himself. "Our God" witnesses of this - His voice to us from beyond the grave. By and by the whole universe will see that He is not ashamed to call us "brethren." But now "our God" and "us-ward" speaks to our hearts of this grace; for having once identified Himself with God's saints, He will never separate Himself from them.

Nor is this all. The present effect on others of His deliverance He describes. His feet established, the new song put into His mouth, all that Jehovah has done for Him who waited God's time, and has proved His faithfulness and power, will tell on many hearts, and encourage suffering disciples (v. 3). Results of everlasting importance flow from the Lord's atoning work; results too of great value accrue to God and to the saints from His deliverance out of death. God's power to deliver is seen, therefore confidence in God must be engendered. How great that confidence should be, the following verse sets forth, announcing the blessing of the man (Gr., lit., the strong man) who "maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." Not the poor feeble one only, but the naturally strong man, should learn wherein his great strength lies. Faithful in service, we learn what the true spirit of 'a minister should be. Drawing attention by His ministry to what God is and does, He desires all eyes to be turned to, and all hearts to be occupied with, the Lord Jehovah alone. God's salvation they should love. "The LORD be magnified," they should continually say. To rejoice in Jehovah, and be glad in His God, is what He desires for them, and trust in the Lord, encouraged in others by the knowledge of His deliverance, is the wish of His heart. This should be the result of true ministry, and it is what He looks for. Differing from all other ministers who speak of a work done and proclaim God as the righteous One and the Giver of all good likewise, He, who was in Himself God's gift, and did the work in which we rest, and because of which we give thanks to God, yet seeks not to draw attention to Himself, but turns all hearts to God. Thus the character of Christ's ministry, the consequences of it to Himself, and the spirit which actuated Him, are brought out by the instrumentality of the inspired penman.

A few remarks in conclusion. In Psalm 16 we meet with an atmosphere unruffled. Here we read of opposition and hatred which pursued Him to death; for the former Psalm gives us His walk in communion with God; this latter, His service for God among men. Thus both Psalms are needed to

show us what the Lord Jesus Christ was when upon earth. The former acquaints us with that which was within Him - this, with that which was around Him. Psalm 16 shows us how to walk - this, how to serve, our example in both being Him who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Pet. 2:23); and for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2); receiving a title of which He is indeed worthy, "The leader and the perfecter of faith," (W.K. trans.) a title descriptive of Him, and suggestive to us.

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 4 - Psalm 102

"A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed" (or exhausted) "and poureth out his complaint before the LORD," is the title in the Hebrew prefixed to this Psalm.

A peculiarity about this should be noticed. It is not uncommon to meet with a title affixed to a Psalm, recounting some special circumstances under which it was written. Psalm 3; 7; 18; 30; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 63, and 142 are examples of this; but in each case they refer to some incident in the life of David which furnished an occasion for the utterance of his heart. And though there are in the book Psalms of Asaph, of Heman, and of Ethan, and one by Moses, yet the only composer, whose circumstances are stated as having called forth any of these inspired compositions, is David, the type of the Lord Jesus as God's Anointed, suffering from others before being seated firmly on his throne.

In the Psalm before us, however, while we have the circumstances stated under which it was composed, the name of the afflicted one, with whose trials we are hereby made acquainted, is withheld from us. The question then might be asked, Was the name withheld by accident or by design? By design we must surely agree, for not until the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, was it (we may well believe) generally known to whom the Psalm referred. Then the ellipsis could be filled up with the name of the suffering one, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed forever. Who penned the Psalm by the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost, or what were the peculiar trials of the writer under which this divine effusion was poured forth, we shall never know while on earth.

At what epoch or at what place the sacred penman put on record these wonderful words, are questions we must leave undetermined; and though they are the expressions of an individual that we have not before our eyes, we can very intelligently peruse them by the light cast on the subject from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

This brings out a very interesting point in connection with the structure of the Word of God; namely, the existence of latent truth - truth not apparent on the surface, yet really in the text, which when brought out, all can see was actually there. At times passages of Scripture are applied to individuals and to events with which they have no direct connection. We have an instance in the application by Matthew (chapter 2:17, 18) of Jeremiah's words in chapter 31:15 of his prophecy. Then was fulfilled, says the evangelist, the prophet's words with reference to the sorrow caused by the Babylonish captivity; not indeed that Jeremiah predicted what Matthew relates, but the evangelist could apply the language of the son of Hilkiyah to the general sorrow caused by the

massacre of the infants in Bethlehem.

It is not, however, any accommodation of our Psalm to a purpose foreign to its original intention, which its use in Hebrews suggests; but it is the true meaning of it, which its real Author, the Holy Ghost, there brings out. It is God quoting His own word to bring out the original thought contained in it. If we read the Psalm without the divine explanation, we should say that there was but one speaker throughout it; when we see the bearing of the quotation in Heb. 1, we learn that there are two. From vv. 1-23 is the utterance of the one, the afflicted one; from v. 24 to the end is the response of the other; and from Hebrews we learn that both the one and the other are the Lord God of hosts. Jehovah addresses Jehovah. "I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days: Thy years are throughout all generations," are the words of entreaty from Jehovah as man, addressing the Lord in heaven. "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of Thy hands," etc., are the words of Jehovah in heaven in response to Jehovah on earth, acknowledging that the afflicted One who cries, is indeed the Creator of the universe. Without the quotation in the Hebrews we never should have guessed this. With it, all is clear, and the amazing grace and real humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ is brought out to us.

For, let us remark, He is not here called God's Son, but Jehovah Himself God witnesses of it; God addresses Him as such. He who will not give His glory to another, here admits the eternal existence and creative power of the virgin's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not turned to His works to see who He must be; we stand by and listen to Jehovah's own statement to Him, and hear the wonderful announcement that the afflicted One upon earth is really Jehovah of hosts. A mystery which none can solve, we have here revealed; but though an insoluble mystery, it is a simple truth which we must accept. To explain it is beyond our power; to accept it is the duty of every creature. God owns Him to be God, who could say in truth, "O My God."

Does it seem strange that Jehovah should address Jehovah? We have something analogous to this both in Gen. 19:24 and 1 Sam. 3:21. In the former passage, Jehovah, we read, rained down fire and brimstone from Jehovah out of heaven. In the latter, Jehovah, by the word of Jehovah, revealed Himself to Samuel: Does it appear strange that the Lord Jesus, if Jehovah, should be called the afflicted One? He thus styles Himself in Psalm 40:17. That He is Jehovah, God asserts; that He is in affliction, God declares.

Thus in this Psalm we have the divine and human natures of the Lord Jesus distinctly proclaimed. Distinct they are from one another, but united in one Person; for the One who tells out His affliction, is declared on the highest authority to be the self-existing One. His deity none but God could declare, for who besides God could reveal His eternal existence? His manhood, with death before Him, He sets forth One sees the propriety of this, and it is just what we meet with in Hebrews. In chapter 1 God affirms His deity, and in chapter 2 Christ bears witness to His own humanity. In the former chapter God tells us about His Son, for God alone could pronounce as to His divine essence. In the latter, He speaks in the quotations to God, and thus gives evidence of the reality of His human nature.

He looks forward to death in this Psalm as we have seen in others also. But here we must mark a great difference. In Psalm 16 we see Him looking to be brought up out of death; in Psalm 40 we learn that He has been delivered - raised up from the dead. But here, while we have Him contemplating death, we have nothing from Him about His future - nothing about resurrection.

Viewed as a man we can see the reason for this. Man's proper portion is on earth; so the earthly hopes, the earthly blessings, are all that we have here depicted - those hopes and blessings of which death deprives all those over whom it has power. Viewed as Jehovah, we can see another reason for this. Jehovah abides; therefore resurrection would be quite out of place in a Psalm which sets forth Christ's deity. As man, as Messiah, we have the Lord brought before us. "Thou hast lifted Me up," refers to His Messiahship. Thou hast "cast Me down," shows what He has to expect in accordance with Daniel's prediction, to be cut off, and to have nothing (Dan. 9:26, margin).

What this was to Him we now get set forth. "My days are like a shadow that declineth" (lit., stretched out to nearly its full length); "and I am" (or shall be) "withered like grass." Yet He had not reached the full term allotted to man upon earth, for He adds, "He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days"; and turning to Jehovah, cries, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days: Thy years are throughout all generations." With His feelings as a man we are thus made acquainted, for, really a man, He could feel, and did feel all that man, as man, should feel under the circumstances in which He was placed in grace to us. A sinner dreads death because of the consequences to him after it. A saint may rejoice because of what is beyond it. But man, as man, can only view it as the Lord here does - the cutting off of His days - akin to Hezekiah's feelings, who expressed himself in a similar manner (Isa. 38:10).

We read in Phil. 2:7 that the Lord Jesus made Himself of no reputation (or, emptied Himself), and humbled Himself; the former was manifested in His becoming a man, as a servant subject to God; the latter was displayed in His submitting to death - the death of the cross. Both of these, but especially the first, are exemplified in this Psalm. He emptied Himself - how truly, how fully. Though He is the Lord Jehovah, of whose creative and sustaining power the universe bears witness, He was found as a man upon earth, crying in His affliction to Jehovah. All man's feelings He could and did enter into; and the effect of intense mental suffering, the Word tells us, He learned by experience (Luke 22:44).

Here He describes how His affliction acted on His bodily frame (vss. 3-5), a condition to which man may be subject - to be pitied, yet not to be wondered at; but when it is of the Lord Himself that we read it, we may wonder indeed. Added to all this, He was reproached by His enemies, who were banded together against Him (vs. 8). Nothing then is before Him but death, and that the death of the cross; for though atonement is not the subject of which the Psalm treats, the reason why He was to be cut off is stated (vs. 10). Thus He emptied Himself, and He humbled Himself. He stooped to be a man, and was to die the death of the meanest of men. To this He here looks forward, not as a contingency, but as a certainty.

Thus feeling about it as none but a man could feel, His perfection as man appears in a twofold way. He receives it all as from Jehovah, and is occupied with God's thoughts about the future, as regards the earth, Zion, and the world.

He must die, but it is God who takes Him away (v. 24). He must pass off this scene by His enemies persecuting Him to death, but He regards this as Jehovah's doing (v. 10). Facing death as He here does, He speaks, as has been observed, of nothing about Himself beyond it. Seen upon earth once, when He entered death He passed off it, and the world saw Him no more. "Withered like grass." Born into this world a king (Luke 2:11), saluted as such in His infancy (Matt.

2), proclaimed as such by the multitude on His public entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:38; Matt. 21:5), death seems to have cut short all hopes founded on His Messiahship (Luke 24:21), and effectually to have barred against Him the way to the throne. "Cut off, having nothing," fitly described Him.

Perfect as a man, He is not engrossed with this, but looks forward to what saints will witness and enjoy upon earth after His decease. Death then is not here contemplated for those who shall witness what He describes, and enjoy what He predicts. "I am withered like grass," He says of Himself "But Thou, O LORD, shalt endure forever; and Thy remembrance [or memorial] unto all generations," is His statement about the Lord God of hosts. This at once introduces a sketch of God's plans about Zion, the earth, the destitute, the world, and all who belong to it.

What are those plans upon which He can dwell, to be carried out after His decease? They are far-reaching and comprehensive. The heathen and all the kings of the earth will be concerned in them. Nations and kingdoms will find that they affect them. Zion must be rebuilt, her desolate condition must be reversed, and the Lord must appear in His glory. Then too will it be seen that Jehovah regards the prayer of the destitute, and does not despise their prayer; for the afflicted, persecuted remnant of His people shall rest again finally in their land and in Jerusalem.

But how can this be secured if the enemies of the righteous can make war against them upon earth, and even Messiah Himself be cut off? Upon what ground can they hope that objects and purposes so opposed to this world's interests can ever triumph and be made good? Can righteousness ever gain the ascendancy in a sphere where self-interest is the ruling passion, and hostility to God the prevailing feature? What answer does the Psalm make to this? It does give a complete answer; and what an answer it surely is! All the future rests upon Jehovah's nature and character; "Thou, O LORD, shalt endure forever." Upon this is based by the afflicted One the certainty of the fulfillment of the Word.

Generations may pass but Jehovah abides. Man goes away, but God never changes. To Him then He looks to fulfill all the prophecies about Zion and the world. He, as a man, would be cut off, but Zion's hopes would not fail, for Jehovah ever remains. Let the wicked then triumph as they may - let Satan seem all-powerful - Jehovah's nature assures the saints that not one of His words shall fail of its accomplishment. Of men we may have to speak in the past; as regards their connection with earth, "they have been." Of Jehovah we can always speak in the present - "He is." If we think of the future - "He will be." Therefore He will fulfill His Word. Upon this, His eternal existence, as a rock which time cannot disintegrate, nor the waves of man's opposition uproot, earth's future and Zion's sure blessing can and do rest. What ground this is to take up! He who has pledged His Word will never pass away. So His purpose, who is ever-existing and almighty, shall assuredly be established. This is a consideration full of comfort for the godly, but most solemn for the ungodly.

On Jehovah's immutability and nature His people can lean; and to point this out as equally true for future generations, these words were written (vv. 17-20). Solemn as this consideration surely is, it becomes intensely solemn when we learn who that One is who cries in His affliction, and speaks of the malice of His enemies. He is Jehovah Himself, as we have seen; and God answers His appeal by declaring (that all may be acquainted with it) His eternal existence, and the mighty power of Him whom man despised and even abhorred. Heaven and earth may pass away, but He is, and His years have no end.

What then must those expect who, having crucified Him, refused afterward to believe on Him? What too milk those have before them who persistently stand out against Him? Where He has been dishonored, there will He act in power; and Jerusalem, which witnessed His crucifixion, will rejoice in the exercise of His goodness and avenging power. What will His enemies then receive? On this the Psalm is silent, being beyond its scope. The portion of the children Of His servants, a portion to be enjoyed upon earth, it does relate: "The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee." But of nothing beyond earth does it take cognizance. What a change will then take place! He died; His enemies survived. He will reappear in power and great glory; the children of His servants will rejoice and be blest, while His enemies will be - where? Other scriptures tell us their then condition, and their future portion (Rev. 19:21; 20:5, 12-15).

Balaam, looking forward to the future, exclaimed, "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! He asked a question which was not given to him to answer. To us the answer has been made known.

None of those who now believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will be living upon the earth when He comes to reign; they were caught up previously to meet Him in the air, and will come with Him and behold from above the afflicted One in heavenly glory and power (1 Thess. 4:17; Zech. 14:5; Rev. 19:14).

There is a resurrection unto life, which will be a completed act when He begins to reign. There will be a resurrection unto judgment for the ungodly dead at the close of it (Rev. 20:4, 5, 12, 13).

All who share not in the former must have to do with the latter; and the lake of fire, the second death, must be their portion forever and ever.

This solemn question having been answered so clearly from the Word, why should any, who have the opportunity of sharing in the portion of God's saints, exclude themselves from it? The number of the heavenly saints is still incomplete; the house furnished for the feast is not yet full; and the Lord, by His servants, is still beseeching souls to enter while there is room.

Will those then left behind on earth after the Church has been removed behold these things of which the Psalm speaks? Some will, but none, we believe, will be among that number, who, once having had the offer of God's grace, have resisted it. For of all such, who shall be on earth when He returns to it in power, we read, they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2:12). Will such have another chance? Scripture is clear. Those who share not in the first resurrection at the commencement of His reign will only be raised up for judgment at its close.

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 5-Psalm 22

"Because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath" are words uttered by the Lord in Psalm 102, with reference to the reason of His death. How they can be reconciled with what He deserved, as His walk and His ministry show, Psalm 22 clears up. On the cross He bore God's wrath, but as the sinner's substitute.

That this Psalm treats of Him, the sin-bearer, who died upon the cross to make atonement, the New Testament makes plain. The first words of it were uttered by Him upon the cross, when for the first and last time they were used in all their fullness. The language of the eighth verse was the language of the chief priests to Him as He hung in agony on the tree, unconscious that they only made themselves the mouthpiece to express what David beforehand had declared the Lord's enemies would say. The action described in verse 18, we are expressly told, was fulfilled at the foot of the cross, when the soldiers parted His garments among them, and for His vesture, woven without seam, they cast lots. The first part of verse 22 was accomplished by the Lord Himself on the day of His resurrection, the historical account of which John gives us, and the doctrinal teaching of which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out to us (John 20:17; Heb. 2:12). None, with these facts before them, can doubt of whom the Psalm speaks - no, nor who it is who speaks throughout it; for one Person only, can we say, here speaks for the instruction of God's saints. He, who cries out at the beginning, leads the praises of the redeemed in verses 22-25. He before whose eye the soldiers divided the garments, and whom the chief priests derided with their taunts, describes the grand results for Jehovah which would accrue from His death upon the cross. It was proper, we must admit, that the Lord Jesus should Himself proclaim to men and the universe the glorious results of His agony and death.

What a condition was that to which Messiah, God's well-beloved Son, stooped! God's saints can find comfort in the remembrance, if called to suffer for the truth, that they have part in the sufferings of Christ (2 Cor. 1:5; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:13); but He had to say that in one respect, in suffering for God, He stood alone. "They trusted," He says of saints at a former epoch, "and Thou didst deliver them... But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." It was indeed so when servants of the chief priests buffeted Him, and soldiers of the Roman governor mocked Him. He was made an object of contempt and ridicule for the multitude - every feeling of a man outraged, every right of a man violated. These were ingredients in that cup in which bodily suffering was added to mental trial.

Besides all this, and far deeper than all these sufferings, He experienced what no human language can portray, for no human thought can conceive the agony which drew from His lips the cry with which the Psalm opens, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here, and only here, in the whole Bible, have we any clue to what He must have passed through when dealt with by God as the sinner's substitute; yet it is but a feeble clue after all, for the negative manner of expressing His greatest suffering cannot convey to our minds the positive agony that He then underwent. Just enough is conveyed by the words to teach us that those sufferings were inexpressible, and inconceivable by man, though real, and really borne. For it was not as anticipating something which lay in His path, that He uttered that cry on the cross; but, as having already experienced it, He thus cried out. The extent, intensity, and character of His sufferings, men knew nothing about till just at their close.

Of both suffering from God in making atonement, and suffering from man, the Psalm speaks, but in markedly different terms. Of the former the Lord has to say, "So far from helping Me." Of the latter He cried, "Be not Thou far from Me, O LORD: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me." v. 19. He sought no respite from sufferings needful to be endured to make atonement; He asked deliverance from sufferings from men who took advantage of His condition in grace, and received it. The Lord heard Him and delivered Him. From what formed no needful part of the momentous

work He came to perform, He asked for help, and, we learned, received it; but from that which could, not be averted, if God's will was to be done, and man's salvation to be secured, He shrank not, nor received relief.

"That all was done, that all was borne,
Thine agony, Thy cross, can tell."

The Psalm then divides itself into two parts in verse 21. Throughout the first part we meet with turmoil, discord, rage, and enmity - men attempting and accomplishing all they desired, in putting Him out of the world who was the object of their unrelenting hatred. In the second part we meet with an atmosphere of peace and blessedness. Throughout the first part the Lord is passive, suffering from God, and from His creatures; throughout the second He is active. Men's thoughts, motives, and desires are disclosed in what they did to Him. His thoughts and actions are told out in His own words. But, though in the second part all is peace and quietness, there is no silence. The din of this world's discord had been heard when He hung on the tree, beset by the bulls of Bashan, and taunted in His bodily agony by those who professed to be leaders and teachers in Israel.

All that quieted down by the death of the object of their hatred, the noise of men's opposition - giving-way to the wailing of the women and others who lamented Him. Night set in, and the darkest day which the world had ever seen became a thing of the past. His enemies returned to their homes and to their families, to resume, when the Sabbath was past and the feast was ended, their wonted occupations. His body was laid in the tomb, the stone rolled to the door, and all seemed secure. The guard of soldiers kept watch over the grave of Israel's Messiah. Men had done all they could, pursued Him to the latest hour of His life on earth, and only stopped because death effectually barred all further action against Him.

The silence which ensued on His death He first broke, and thereby showed what was in His heart. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." Not a word of judgment, not a thought of vengeance, only love, and a desire for God to be known, we learn, then occupied His thoughts. Love was manifested in thinking of others, and the desire to make God known was expressed in the resolution to praise Him openly. "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren," (Heb. 2:11, 12) tells us what the Psalm does not - something of the personal excellence of Him who hung upon that cross. "All of one"; that is, one lot or company, as men, He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Marvelous grace, that such a statement should be made in God's Word, connecting together those who were otherwise wide as the poles asunder-the Sanctifier and the sanctified. He first declared it, and the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, enlarged on it. It is not, however, universal brotherhood, embracing all the race, that we here read about. Such a tenet is foreign to Scripture, and only betrays gross ignorance as to God's nature and man's condition. This brotherhood is only predicated of the Sanctifier and the sanctified - terms suggestive of man's condition by nature, which needs that he should be sanctified, as well as of the nature of Him who sanctifies those otherwise unsanctified; for, what a mere man, however holy, could never effect, He does, and provides that they should know it at the earliest possible opportunity.

On earth, before the cross, He had proclaimed in what close relationship to Himself He would regard all those who heard and did God's will (Luke 8:21). To His disciples He had said that He was their Master, and all they were brethren (Matt. 23:8). Now, after His resurrection, He first addressed them as His brethren, being not ashamed thus to describe them. To Mary first (John 20:17), then to the company of women returning in haste from the sepulcher to announce the Lord's resurrection (Matt. 28:10), He entrusted a message to His brethren. To whom were they to deliver it? What class of people could this be? They all knew without a doubt, and carried the message without hesitation to His disciples, who now were His brethren. At that time, therefore, there were those on earth whom He thus owned, and the women recognized them as such. Are there any still? Thank God there are. For all who hearken to God's Word are born of God, and are of that class styled by the Lord as His brethren.

Found on earth in the company of the saints (Psalm 16), acknowledging a common position with them even after His resurrection (Psalm 40), He here announces that they stand in the closest relationship with Him, for His Father is their Father; His God is their God. As God's Son from all eternity, He might have said, "My Father and your Father," without any implication (doctrinally) of having taken human nature; but as a man born of the virgin, He adds, "My God and your God." Between Him and the saints the difference is immense, and must ever remain so; but the relation to God is similar. His words tell of a distinction while declaring the relationship -My Father, My God, your Father, your God.

Now that the relationship is confessed, and the saints declared to be His brethren, we learn what He would make known. He would tell God's name to them. His public ministry ceased when the Jews finally determined to crucify Him. But death and resurrection could not separate Him from His brethren. On the very day that He rose, He was found in their company in Jerusalem. The doors were shut for fear of the Jews, but this could not hinder intercourse between Him and His own. He stood in their midst and taught them the fulfillment, by His death, of the written Word of God. None but His disciples did He then, or afterward, own as the saints of God, or the assembly of God.. The Jews had cast Him out; but outside of Judaism, and apart from the temple ritual, in the room where His disciples assembled, He was found. A company, whom the chief priests and scribes, with the Pharisees and Sadducees would disown, He acknowledged, and to them He declared God's name; that is, what He is, evidenced by what He says and does. The Jews thought they knew about God; His name, however, was to be declared by Christ, and that only to His own brethren. That company, to be afterward known as the sect everywhere spoken against, had a special interest for Him, and has still. To those composing it, He declared what God is; that is, His name. And besides this, in their midst, the only congregation which God could then, as now, own, He was to praise God. How contrary was all this to men's thoughts! Those who seemed but fit subjects for the executioner's weapon, unworthy to live, to proscribe whom and to persecute whom even unto strange cities was an act, it was thought, well pleasing to God, these were the only people, after the Lord's resurrection, among whom He would be found, and to whom He would declare or tell out God's name. "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that He should live" (Acts 22:22), lets us into the thoughts of the Jews about the disciples of the Lord Jesus. And yet it was to this class alone that the Lord Jesus here says He would address Himself, and among them strike the keynote of praise.

The songs of Zion might resound through the temple courts, but the keynote of praise, to which God could now hearken, was struck elsewhere. First struck by the risen Savior, it has never yet died out. From age to age, from country to country, has this song of praise spread, and heaven itself will forever ring with the full, rich melody flowing forth from each one, and the unbroken harmony of countless voices uniting in praise to God and to the Lamb. In the Church, an assembly gathered on new ground apart from Jewish ordinances, the true note of praise was first raised by Him, who came from God and went to God. Praise for the heavenly people was rightly started by Him who belongs to heaven. At the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel, with Miriam and the women with their tumbrels, praised God for their deliverance. In this Psalm, He who is Jehovah, as man, leads the songs of the redeemed.

There is a reason for this. He has suffered and has been delivered; therefore He can sing, leading His people in their songs of worship, because of God's mercy and God's delivering power. As having experienced it, He can sing of it, and thus teach His people the suited language to use before God. He states in Psalm 40 that His deliverance would be an encouragement to others; in Psalm 102, God's answering the prayer of the destitute is to be instruction for a future generation; but in Psalm 22, it is not encouragement for others, nor instruction for a future age, but the suited language for God's saints now, that He would illustrate by His own example.

The deliverer has been Himself delivered; their Savior has known God's salvation for Himself (v. 24). His song, therefore, His people can join in. But here we are taken beyond Judaism to the sheep outside the fold-the two flocks, as we know elsewhere, now made one, composed of believers from among the Jews and from among the Gentiles. Into depths greater than they have ever sunk, Christ has gone down, and from them has been brought up, the witness to them that God answers prayer; the witness, too, by His resurrection, of the perfect acceptance of that work because of which He had to cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

But a time is coming when the praises, led by Him, of the congregation of God's saints, as at present owned by God, will cease to be heard upon earth. Caught up to be with the Lord in heaven, their place and their service will be found no more on this globe. Will praise on earth then forever cease? No; Israel will again be brought forward as God's earthly people, and praise will ascend from the godly remnant of them, manifested as the people that Jehovah has formed for Himself. Who will lead them in praise? The Psalm answers this question. Christ will do it. Again will He strike a keynote, and God's earthly people will respond to it: "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him." v. 25. He alone has been in circumstances similar to those they will pass through; but having gone down into death for them, died "for that nation" (John 11:51), their deliverance is secured, who will have experienced a trial similar to His, anticipating the outpouring of God's wrath-in their case deserved, in His case endured as the substitute and the sin offering.

That we are here on the ground of the earthly people is clear, for the next verse (the consequence of what is celebrated in verse 25) tells of the meek eating and being satisfied, which will only take place when the Lord appears to reign. Contrast verse 26 with verse 24. In the latter we have the consequences of the Lord's deliverance, which saints now can share in. In the former we have what will only be made good to those who shall inherit the earth. Then follows the full result as it effects the whole globe:

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and He is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this."

Thus the counsels of God about the kingdom will be made good; and in this Psalm, which shows us the depths into which the King in His grace descended, we have announced the certain and full accomplishment of all that God has purposed about this earth. Dying on the cross, all might appear lost; so here, where the former is set forth, the latter is also reaffirmed. Not one thing has failed, Joshua could say. "Not one thing shall fail," we can add. All will be done, the kingdom be Jehovah's, and His Son be the King, who is Jehovah; for "the word of our God shall stand forever."

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 6 - Psalm 110

Two aspects of the Lord's death, as delineated in the Psalms, we have briefly looked at; namely, Messiah cut off and having nothing (102); and the Lord making atonement, and its results (22). His resurrection, looked forward to in Psalm 16, is regarded as an accomplished fact in Psalm 40, and His service consequent on it is predicted in Psalm 22. Now we have, a further step in God's revelation about His King, and we learn where He is at present. For, while Psalm 22 takes us back in thought to the past and onward to the future - that is, what has happened and what will happen on this globe - Psalm 110 speaks only of the present and future, and so takes us upward in thought to the Lord's present place at Jehovah's right hand in heaven.

Accustomed, as many perhaps have been, to read the Psalms as isolated compositions, complete each one in itself, they may not have noticed what every student of the Word should mark - that the book is not a collection of odes strung together haphazardly, without reason or method. Each

Psalm has its place in relation to the whole collection, from which, if it were displaced, the symmetry of this divinely ordered book would be marred, and the connecting thread perhaps broken. We may not be able in all cases to trace the connection, but attention to the order and subjects of the different books of the volume (for the whole collection is divided in the original into five books: 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150) and to many of the Psalms in these different books, reveals a plan and an arrangement which has not, perhaps, been commonly suspected. By whom the collection was thus arranged, we are not informed; nor do we know by whom each Psalm was composed.

In places we meet with a series of Psalms taking up a certain line; for example, 44-48; 93-100; 120-134. At other times we have an arrangement inverting what would have seemed the natural order of the subjects, as where Psalms celebrating the Lord's triumphs precede those which make special mention of His sufferings and death; for example, 21 and 22; 68 and 69; 93-100 and 102. In the case of the Psalm before us, we have an example of a different class, its subject being the proper sequel to the thoughts brought out in Psalm 109. In the former we read of the Lord being persecuted by Judas, whose punishment is then predicted. In Psalm 110 we meet with God's answer to man's opposition to His own well beloved Son. Peter applies Psalm 109:8 to Judas, in

Acts 1, though others besides him are clearly spoken of as persecuting the righteous One (vv. 20, 25). The same Apostle quotes Psalm 110 in Acts 2 as prophetic of the Lord Jesus, to whom alone it can be applied.

On different occasions in the New Testament is this Psalm applied to the Lord. The Jews evidently owned that it did speak of the Messiah, for when the Lord appealed to its language as pointing to the irresistible conclusion that the Christ must be greater than David, though descended from him after the flesh, His reference to it met with no disclaimer on their part (Matt. 22:42-46). On the day of Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, applied it to the Lord Jesus, lately crucified, and then risen and ascended (Acts 2:34-36). Paul, when writing to the Hebrews, makes great use of it in reference to the Lord's Person (1:13), His work (10:12, 13), and His present service (5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 28). Of Him then, and of Him alone, it speaks; for who, besides Him, could sit on Jehovah's throne?

Here should be noticed a feature different from any met with in the Psalms already taken up. In each of them the Lord is introduced as a speaker, and in two of them (16, 22) He is the only one. Here He is silent. Not a word, not a whisper, do we read of, that escapes His lips - in perfect keeping with the character of the Psalm, and the place the Lord is here described as occupying. It was fitting that, as Man in humiliation, He should speak to God. It becomes man to do so. It is right that His exaltation should be proclaimed by Jehovah. So God addresses Him, gives Him His place, and by an oath confirms to Him an everlasting priesthood. But, though the Lord Jesus is silent throughout the Psalm, others are not. David, by the Spirit, speaks of Him and to Him (5:7; 2-4). The propriety of this we can all see. "God also hath highly exalted Him" (Phil. 2:9), therefore He reveals it, and men should own it, learning from God, through His Word, what is the only suited place now, in the whole universe, for Him who hung on the cross.

What an answer this is to men's treatment of Christ! They crucified the Lord of glory; Jehovah has placed Him at His side. The One rejected by the world occupies the highest place in heavenly glory. His session there proclaims that He is not an angel (Heb. 1:13). He is, He must be, Jehovah, the Eternal One; for of none but Him who is God could it be written, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." This is a startling fact in more ways than one, for it tells us of His Person, of His work, and of God's counsels.

1. His Person as divine is thus clearly announced, for no mere creature could ever fill such a place. God will not give His glory to another. No creature could ever sit there by divine appointment. On earth, as Psalm 109 depicts, He was poor and needy, the sport of men, the object on which they vented their rage, and one to whom they pointed with the finger of scorn. But no place is too high for Him to fill, who was cradled in a manger, and whose body was laid in that rock hewn tomb. As God, of course nothing could be added to Him; He only returned to the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). As man, He is where man never was before, and Peter quotes this Psalm when speaking of Him as man (Acts 2:34-36). God, therefore, and Man He is. Were He not God, He could not be there. But He who is Man is there - the Man Christ Jesus, made Lord and Christ. As Son of God from all eternity, He sits at the Father's right hand; as man, He has been exalted by the right hand of God (Acts 2:33).

2. As to His atoning work, Paul shows us how this Psalm applies. The Lord has sat down, therefore all ministry at the altar and before the mercy-seat with His blood has ended. His position,

now seated, declares this, in contrast to the daily standing of the priests at their ministrations in the ' tabernacle, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins. But Christ "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever [for a continuance] sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:1; 2 -14. God raised Him from the dead, in token that He accepted Him as the sacrifice; He has sat down, the proof that it has done all that was required. No man, indeed, has seen Him in this position; but Scripture reveals it to us for the joy of our hearts and the establishment of our souls.

3. His present place tells us also of God's counsels. They are unchangeable. The princes of this world in their ignorance crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8; Acts 3:17). God has placed Him by His side, a testimony, indeed, as we have seen, to His Person and to His work - a witness also of the sure accomplishment of the divine counsels. For seated there, until His enemies be made His footstool, tells us for what He waits, a fact needful for all to be acquainted with; for, though absent from the earth for a time, He will yet be firmly established in the kingdom, and rule all nations with a rod of iron. Seated there by God's decree, it is clear that Jehovah has espoused His cause, and as this verse tells us will make good His dominion. God will one day make His enemies His footstool. Do men really believe this? Is the truth of the Lord's present place one to which men in their hearts subscribe?

To be indifferent to Christ argues indifference to God and to His counsels; to be unconcerned about the Lord Jesus must be folly; to oppose Him must be madness. Jehovah has publicly declared that He will make His enemies His footstool. It is not then a kingdom simply that God promises to Him - a dominion which none subject to it can overturn - but that those who have refused to acknowledge Him, and will forever remain opposed to Him in heart, must one day be completely subject to His sway - made His footstool. How complete will be their subjection then! Divine power will make the knee to bend, when the heart has obstinately refused to bow under a sense of His grace. For if such is His present place and future prospect, now at God's right hand, and by and by to be installed in His own kingdom by divine power, what must be His grace and love which moved Him, in obedience to His Father's wish, to become a man, to die for sinners. It is as we learn the excellence of His Person that we discover more of the greatness of His grace.

"From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" is the comment of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as inspired by the Holy Ghost: From the Psalm we learn God's mind, from the Hebrews the Lord's expectation. Thus at the earliest moment, as it were, after He whom man had rejected had been accepted by God on high, was the unchanging purpose of the divine mind, with respect to the kingdom, declared. His enemies; will be made His footstool. Jehovah will do this for Him. With this stated at the outset, the Psalm proceeds to set forth some features characteristic of that time, showing that all on earth even will not be subject at heart, though all must outwardly acknowledge His sway. "The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies." Then Zion will be the seat of government, and in the midst of His enemies will the Lord rule. Observe, we read nothing of the extermination of all His enemies, for He will rule in their midst. Blessing there will be in that day - outward blessing for all - yet some will remain unchanged in heart, and be fitly described as His enemies.

It is true, all acts of evil will summarily be dealt with, but an iron hand will be required to keep in check man's otherwise unruly will. "Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies" gives us a clue to the condition of things that will then be in existence on earth. In conformity with this, we read elsewhere of the children of the stranger yielding feigned obedience (Psalm 18:44; 66:3 margin), and are told of the great outbreak of evil after the thousand years shall have run their course, when the devil will be let loose to deceive the nations. Man's heart, unless acted on by grace, will be just what it is now, when the Lord reigns, though it will lack the power, and in a great measure the opportunity, of doing as it pleases. To this, the dark side, there is however, a bright one. His people (for He will have one) will be willing in the day of His power, offering themselves willingly for His work, as some of the children of Israel did in the day of Sisera's defeat. These He will make use of, wherewith to chastise His and their enemies (Zech. 12:4-8; 9:13; Mic. 5:8-9), endowed as they will then be with the energy of youth.

4. In connection with the conquest to be effected by His people, something further is related, carrying us back in thought to the days of Abraham, the conqueror of the northern power of that day, which, with confederate kings, invaded the land of Canaan and carried Lot captive. Returning from the smiting of the kings (for the term in Hebrew, as well as in Greek, does not of necessity mean slaughter), Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met him with bread and wine (that is, with what sustains and gives joy) and blessed him (Gen. 14:18-20). In this Psalm, in which we have Israel conquering under Christ, we meet for the first time again with a notice of such a priesthood, conferred, we read, on the Lord Jesus, by the oath of God, and which will be exercised in the day of His power after the example of Melchizedek in the days of Abraham, who blessed Abraham, and blessed also the Most High God, thus taking a middle place between them, as surely He who is both God and man can take between Jehovah and Israel, Abraham's offspring. After Abraham's victory, Melchizedek thus met him. After His people shall be willing, in the day of His power, will the Lord, priest on His throne, be seen in the exercise of the Melchizedek character of priesthood.

The Aaronic character of priesthood has to do with the sanctuary, the Melchizedek character with the kingdom. The Psalm, however, speaks not of the Melchizedek character, but of the Melchizedek order of priesthood; nor does it speak of it as a future event, but as an established thing. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." So, while the history of Gen. 14 throws light on the abrupt mention of the Melchizedek priesthood in this Psalm, the Epistle to the Hebrews explains to us the force of the word "order" as used here in connection with it. The Lord's enemies subdued, His people victorious, He, priest on His throne, will bless them, the counsel of peace being between Jehovah and Himself (Zech. 6:13). Now God's people need the exercise of a priesthood Aaronic in character, but Melchizedek in order; then, resting under His protection, all wilderness troubles over, all conflicts ended, like Abraham returning with the spoil, Israel will be able to enjoy the Melchizedek character of His priesthood, with which He will then manifest that He has been clothed by divine appointment.

But will this condition of things endure? The word "order" suggests its continuance, for, as Melchizedek had no successor, neither will the Lord. He "abideth a priest continually" is the divine comment on Melchizedek. He "hath an unchangeable priesthood" is the divine statement about the Lord. Priest after that order implies no successor - a pledge of abiding blessing for Israel - a word of comfort too for God's people now, who, while needing a priesthood to be exercised on

their behalf, Aaronic in character, need also one that cannot fail; in other words, one after the order of Melchizedek. The little word "order" in connection with Melchizedek (whether in the sanctuary or on the throne) suggests a priesthood that does not terminate by the appointment of a successor, thus insuring to those concerned in it all the blessing and comfort of a settled order, and of an intransmissible office.

His conquests having been declared, and His ruling among His enemies foretold, we read now of judgments to be meted out to the rebels in arms against God's authority. Of the wrath of Him who sits at God's right hand, Psalm 2 has made mention; of the manifestation of that wrath, this Psalm gives example (v. 5). And since it forms part of the fifth book of the volume, and the setting up of the kingdom and power has been celebrated in the fourth (93.100), we can understand why the past tense is used when these judgments are spoken of.

The psalmist recounts what God did for His Son after His rejection by the world, and what Christ has done, to whom the kingdom has been given. "The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen [nations], He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries." This refers, perhaps, to Rev. 19:19-21. With mighty power, according to the standpoint of this Psalm, He has been seen to be endowed; for this divine composition views God's counsels as in process of fulfillment. We too read it as partly fulfilled, and partly to be fulfilled. Its place, however, in the volume, as well as its language, contemplates a further development, before the world, of God's plan than can not be effected while the Church is still down here. The conqueror, according to the terms used, has gone forth in power, and His people are willing in the day, which they here own has at last dawned upon earth, that of His power. All has not yet been done which must be done to clear the earth of unruly rebels. But He has taken that work in hand, and is effecting it surely. So, as engaged in it, we learn of His continued dependence on God, who has given such proof of His invincible might. "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall He lift up the head."

What a contrast the close of the Psalm presents to the beginning, only to be understood and the two ends to be harmonized, as we bow to the mystery of His Person, perfect God and perfect man, Immanuel, by whom all God's purposes about the universe will yet be made good!

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 7 - Psalm 45

From Psalms which speak in part of the past and present, we turn next to two which speak wholly of the future. The Lord's present place we learn from Psalm 110, and the deductions to be drawn from such a position, the New Testament opens out to us. There we are directed to a different subject - the reappearance in person of the Lord Jesus on the theater of these events, connected with His humiliation and death.

There is a peculiarity about Him in this respect that is predicated of no one else. In common with thousands, nay, myriads of God's saints, He passed away from this scene by death. But of Him alone it is revealed that, having gone out of the world by that door, He shall stand again in person upon this globe. When He returns to reign, His heavenly people will come with Him (Zech. 14:5; 1 Thess. 3:13), for seated as John saw Him in the vision, on a white horse, the armies of heaven will follow in His train (Rev. 19:11-14), and the saints of the high, or heavenly places, shall take the

kingdom and possess the kingdom forever - even forever and ever (Dan. 7:18). But of none of the heavenly saints, who have gone down into death, is it predicted that they shall tread again on this earth. The Lord Jesus, however, will. On the Mount of Olives, from which, in the presence of His disciples, He went up to heaven, He will again stand; and, in keeping with the circumstances of that day, creation shall acknowledge, by commotion, the presence of her Creator and Lord (Zech. 14:4-5).

Man's place, after he has died, knows him no more. Not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. At Jerusalem He died; at Jerusalem shall He reappear; and the city of the great King shall welcome with acclamations His return in power, moved with a more real and deeper emotion than when the populace, on the occasion of his triumphant entry on the ass's colt, asked of the multitude, "Who is this?" Their question betrayed ignorance of what they ought to have known, and unconcern about Him, without whom their blessings can never be enjoyed. "Ye shall not see Me henceforth," said the Lord, apostrophizing Jerusalem, "till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Concerned she will be then on His return, and will welcome it with gladness (Matt. 23:39), herself to be known henceforth by a new name, Jehovah Shammah; that is, Jehovah is there. Of the associations of the Lord Jesus with Jerusalem this Psalm treats.

How different were the feelings of the psalmist, as he sung by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost about the return in power to Jerusalem of David's Son and Lord, from that manifested by its inhabitants when the Lord entered it in accordance with the terms of Zechariah's prediction. Great indeed was his emotion, as looking through the vista of ages, he described the personal appearance of One whom he had never seen, but with whose Person he will be made acquainted, and whose triumphal progress he will with his eyes behold. "My heart is inditing [or has bubbled up] a good matter." What interest this had for him! Evidently he was full of it. The things he had made about the King stirred his soul to its very depths; and like one whose thoughts are engrossed with his subject, he mentions not the Lord by name, but at first only tells us of one of His titles, as if all must know equally with himself to whom the appellation of the "King" rightly belongs. To the writer, all was plain as, under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, he penned the words which clothed, by divine appointment, the thoughts of the Spirit of God. His tongue was the pen of a ready writer. Thus the words we read are the words he uttered, written down probably by himself, that the inspired prophet and the reader might rejoice together.

Two leading thoughts form the subject of this song - the personal description of the Lord Jesus returned from heaven to earth, and the beauty and adornment of the Queen, Jerusalem, in the days of her restoration to Jehovah's favor. Now she is as the wife put away for her transgressions (Isa. 50:1); then she will be the wife publicly acknowledged, having Jehovah for her husband (Isa. 54:4, 5) and clad in her beautiful garments (Isa. 52:1).

On Zion the King had been firmly set by God's decree (Psalm 2:6); from Jerusalem the word is to go forth (Isa. 2:3); and here we have a description of the metropolis of the whole earth, as the Queen at the Lord's right hand, clad in gold of Ophir (Psalm 45:9). When facing death as man and Messiah in Psalm 102 He looked forward to Zion being rebuilt, and to Jehovah's praise being declared in Jerusalem. Now we see how fully that will be accomplished, and how the words of Isaiah will be fulfilled - "Thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." Isa. 62:12. In the day of her distress she was called an "Outcast... Zion, whom no man seeketh after." Jer. 30:17.

Here she is described as sought out indeed, for the rich among the people are to entreat her favor (v. 12) and the daughter of Tire, that city, the synonym for commercial greatness and wealth, will be there with a gift, the substance of the world being then placed at Jerusalem's disposal.

But not only will earthly wealth flow to her, and temporal possessions be her portion, but what is far more valuable, she will possess an attraction for the King, who is here said to desire her beauty. All glorious within the house, her clothing of wrought gold, brought unto the King in raiment of needlework, surrounded by the virgins, her companions, how changed will her appearance and condition then be from what it was when Isaiah first described her (chap. 1:21.23). God's purposes are unchangeable; therefore He will fulfill His mind about her.

But how can such a change be brought about so that the polluted one, divorced for her transgressions, should become an object of beauty for the King? The close connection between Isa. 53 and 54 suggests the answer. In 53 we have the Lord's atoning work mentioned; in 54 the future glory of Jerusalem is described; and in 55 the grace which can be available for Jews and Gentiles is set forth, for what concerns Jerusalem and men is dependent on that mighty work treated of in 53. Hence we can understand how truly she will be an object of delight to Him whose death has availed for her. For though her filth will be washed away by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning (Isa. 4:4), she will owe all dealings with her for blessing to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. To deepen the sense of God's grace in the heart of the daughter of Zion, and surely in ours too, we read nothing in the Psalm about Jerusalem, but of her beauty and change of condition. Her Lord's joy in her (not hers in Him) is that of which the psalmist makes mention.

An analogy may here be traced between Jerusalem, the wife, and the Church, the bride, the pearl of great price. Both owe their position and relation to the Lord, to His death for them. To possess the Church He died, and to present her to Himself an object of beauty and of delight forever He still labors. To be to Jerusalem a husband, after all her sins and idolatry, He died; but with her Jehovah had relations before the cross, whereas the Church had no existence till after his death. Thus, though there is an analogy, there is also a great difference. Of Jerusalem it is written, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." Isa. 54:7. Divorced once, she will be publicly owned as the wife when the Lord returns in glory. The Church is now only the bride; her marriage has yet to take place. Restoring grace Jerusalem will know, and forgiveness of all her past iniquities. Jehovah's wrath she has experienced, of which the Church, the bride, has known, and will know, nothing. On earth, as the wife, Jerusalem will be enriched with the world's substance, and have the place of pre-eminence above all other cities on the face of the globe, being the joy of the whole earth; yet she will only be the footstool of Jehovah. The Church, however, then above, will be the center of government for the universe, and not merely for the earth - giving light even to Jerusalem below her-for through her crystal walls' the light of the glory of God will illumine continually the city on earth (Rev. 21; Isa. 60:20).

Jerusalem thus described as the Queen, telling of the complete putting away of her defilement, and the full favor of Jehovah again, and that to be enjoyed forever, we have also in this Psalm the personal description of the King as He will appear to men on earth. How He will appear when He comes into the air for His saints, we read not, for that has to do with heaven; but how He will look when earth again beholds Him, the Word of God does reveal to us. His coming out of heaven, Rev. 19:11-16 describes; His personal appearance as King at Jerusalem, this Psalm depicts.

There is, of course, a reason for this. Called here "The King," and rightly so, Scripture tells us that another will arrogate to himself that title, and by that name be known. The prophets Isaiah (30:33; 57:9) and Daniel (11:36) so speak of him, the antichrist of the future for Israel, the false prophet, who will support the blasphemous pretensions of the beast, for apostate Christendom (Rev. 13:11-17). He will claim to be the Messiah, and be received by the apostate portion of the Jews, (John 5:43; Zech. 11:16, 17) so we can understand the importance of the description, personal and moral, of Him who is God's King, that the faithful may be on their guard, and be kept from following an apostate people.

On Christians who know what their hope is, and whence they are to look for its fulfillment (1 Thess. 1:10; Phil. 3:20), the presence of a man upon earth, claiming to be the Messiah, would have no effect. For from heaven He will come for whom we wait, and into the air, not to the earth, will the Lord descend when He comes to take us up to be forever with Himself (1 Thess. 4:17). But to the faithful remnant, who rightly will expect the appearance of Messiah upon earth, the importance of a personal description of Him, whom another will have been impersonating, all must admit. The current will run so strong in that day of abounding apostasy, that, without grace to stem it, the godly will be unable to keep their feet. The feelings of a saint, and his difficulties at that time, we have told us in Psalm 73. "My feet," he confesses, "were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped."

With the usual features of the antichrist, or false prophet, we are made familiar by the New Testament in 2 Thess. 2 and Rev. 13. Self-exaltation or desire to be looked upon as God and working miracles in support of his claim will be characteristics of the false king. Power to put forth in connection with, and under the protecting hand of the first beast, the imperial ruler or head of the Roman earth, will antichrist wield to make all apostatize, and to worship the image of that which Scripture, to show its moral character in God's eye, calls a wild beast, whose only object and aim is the gratification of itself at the expense and injury of others. At that time there will be two beasts, so-called - the one the head of the Roman earth, the other the pretended Messiah (Rev. 13). How different are the features of this horrid beast from those to be displayed in Him whom he will dare to impersonate! Though lamblike in outward appearance, yet his voice will betray his origin and his acts. Deceiving the world will indicate to God's saints his parentage.

Of the true Messiah we have, in Isa. 52:14, a description as He once appeared upon earth - "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." We know how true that was. Isaiah and other writers predicted His sufferings when in humiliation; and we can point to Him alone as the One in whom they were all fulfilled. How correct will this description of Him which we have in the Psalm prove to be, time will show. "Thou art fairer," we read, "than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee forever." When manifested to the world all will see who is the King of God's choice. His personal appearance will mark Him out as the Head to whom all creation is to be subject. Grace, truth, meekness, and righteousness, are characteristics of the King. Oppression, deceit, arrogance, and persecution of God's saints, even unto death, will be features by which antichrist will be known. Comparing the ways of the latter when in the zenith of his power, with the picture given us in this Psalm by the Spirit of the true Messiah, the saints of that day will see that they have still to wait for the One who will correspond to the psalmist's description. The world may be captivated by false prophets and miracles, and many of the returned remnant may be ensnared (Daniel tells us, "the many"; that is,

mass of them), so great will be his influence and apparently convincing his claims; but the true Conqueror and Hope of Israel, the godly among them will still desiderate. What their trials will be, Psalms 52.59 in some measure recount. What the deliverance will be, Psalms 45.48 in some degree depict; the answer to the cry of the afflicted saints is found in Psalm 44. The King is described in 45; God's presence in Jerusalem is announced in 46; the conquest and subjection of the nations to Israel is declared in 47; and the security of Zion from all attacks of her foe is celebrated in 48.

Who then is "the King?" He is a man, the virgin's Son, David's heir, Abraham's seed; He is God also, as verse 6 proves. To Him it can be said, "Thy God," speaking of His humanity, and, "O God" speaking of His deity. Antichrist has never yet been seen on earth; but the Christ has been on this globe. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness" (v. 7), speaks of His character and ways when here in humiliation. Here then we see the end of a life in dependence upon God Meek, He was faithful at all cost to Jehovah; so dominion and might are to be His, nay, are His now, and the world will become part of His inheritance. What a thought for those in trial in all ages, as they read in the Word what the Lord was, and what He will be some day. He was meek and righteous; He will be King, and execute judgment. As in the history of Joseph, so it will be exemplified in that of the Lord, that waiting for God, time ends in deliverance by God's power, salvation by God's good pleasure.

As might, conquest, and dominion will be His in that day (vss. 3-5) so a throne too which endures forever He will have, and the right, as Father of His people (Isa. 9:6) to make them princes over all the earth; for of him, the King, not of Jerusalem, does verse 16 speak. So great, so glorious will be His kingdom on earth; that not as with sovereigns now will His ancestors be spoken of. David and Solomon will reflect no luster on His reign, for men will perceive that He is the fountain of power in Himself. The glory that has been will not be remembered, for the surpassing glory which will then be first and only seen in Him. With glory will be fame. His name will be remembered in all generations; therefore shall nations praise Him forever and ever. A sun we read of here which rises and never sets. None before Him have attained to that pre-eminence, nor will any after Him, for He will have no successor. In the last occupant of David's throne the glory will culminate, but never decline.

The marked difference between antichrist and the Lord we have briefly noticed. The portion of each, when God shall stop the reign of lawlessness and cut short the trials of His elect, the Word also foretells. Cast alive into the lake of fire will be the doom of antichrist (Rev. 19:20); anointed by God with the oil of gladness above His fellows will be the portion of the Christ (v. 7).

But some may ask, what part do we have in all this? Christ's glory and Christ's kingdom do concern us. The Psalm does not touch on the heavenly portion; but it does just intimate the existence of heavenly saints. It speaks of the King's fellows, and we know from Heb. 3:14 who these are. In Psalm 16 the Lord calls them saints; in 22 He speaks of them as His brethren; here they are styled His fellows; in each place the proper term is used for the subject in hand. If He speaks of the class with which He would associate on earth, He calls them saints, separated unto God from the evil around them. When about to leave earth for heaven, He surnames them His brethren that, though deprived of His presence outwardly, they might know the relationship which He acknowledges to exist between God Himself and them. And here, when the day of trial is

looked at as over, and the day of His glory is about to dawn, we learn that those will not be forgotten in the time of His greatness who confessed Him in the days of His rejection. Saints, describes the class morally; brethren, describes the relationship between Him and them; and fellows, declares the association that will forever exist between Him and them. As His brethren, God, who is His Father, is theirs also; as His fellows, the kingdom, which belongs to Christ, they will share with Him.

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 8 - Psalm 72

In the song of loves or delight, as Psalm 45 is called, we have a description of the Lord's personal appearance on His return from heaven. In a Psalm for Solomon (72), which completes the prayers of David the son of Jesse, we learn the character of Messiah's reign - a subject of immense importance for the earthly people who will enjoy the favor of His personal rule. In Psalm 71 we are made acquainted with their wishes, and in Psalm 72 we are taught how God will respond to them. Some of their circumstances, similar in measure to those through which the Lord Jesus has passed, are recounted in Psalm 71, of which verses 1-3 are very similar to the first three verses of Psalm 31; verses 5 and 6, 10 and 11, and 12 correspond very closely to the utterances of the Lord Himself in Psalm 22:9 and 10, 8, 19, and verse 13 to the words of Psalm 40:14. Their wish to be preserved in old age, preferred in Psalm 71:9-18, will be granted most fully, as Psalm 72:14 assures us. A new era then will have dawned upon this earth on which night has as yet only reigned, though we can now say, The night is far spent, and the day is at hand. (Rom. 13:12.)

Casting our eyes over this Psalm, we must own that a revolution will have taken place when that of which it speaks shall be fulfilled - a revolution like none that men have witnessed, a revolution such as the world most dreads, for judgment will have returned unto righteousness, and the reign of the true Solomon will indeed have commenced. God's people, God's poor, so long the object of men's contempt and hatred, will be the special subjects of the King's supervision and care. The poor and the needy, who have had so often to turn from judges and rulers on earth to invoke the aid and justice of the Almighty, will learn that the King in Zion will administer justice for them, and deal with them in righteousness. The helpless will find they have a judge to maintain their cause, and the once friendless will be so no longer.

When David penned these words this halcyon time had not arrived. Of his own day therefore the Psalm does not speak. David was the king and while he lived, what he described could not be enjoyed, for His Son must be the King, actually seated on the throne, and exercising the sovereignty which none but the monarch himself has authority to wield. No delegate deriving authority from the monarch, too old perhaps himself to discharge the duties of his office, could answer to the description here given, nor could David and Solomon together have fulfilled what the royal prophet has sketched out.

One person, not two, is here before us as invested with supreme command; and to fix the readers' eyes on the One whose rule is depicted, the limits of His kingdom are stated in verse 8, the boundaries first mentioned by God when He made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:18), and confirmed by Him when Israel entered into a covenant with Him at Sinai (Exod. 23:31). Again mentioned after the wilderness journey was over (Josh. 1:4), for no failure on Israel's part could

annul God's unconditional covenant with Abraham, the whole land was, however, never subdued till the reign of David, and two only of the kings who have reigned at Jerusalem could affirm that this Psalm states the limits of their dominions; namely, David and Solomon. If then the Psalm has been fulfilled, Solomon is the only one to whom it could apply, for he was the king's son, and he reigned, as 1 Kings 4:21 states, from the Euphrates to the southern extremity of Canaan. But he died, whereas of this King it is stated, "He shall live," (vs. 15); for death will not cut short His days, nor ever terminate His reign.

Bright indeed was the commencement of Solomon's reign, and his name became ever after a synonym for those gifted with more than ordinary intelligence and acquired knowledge; but its end was very different. He began full of promise, like the dawn of a summer's day, with nothing on the horizon to portend the approach of the least cloud to dim the brightness of the sun; but, ere he breathed his last, lowering clouds, ominous of a coming storm, announced the break-up as near at hand of that empire, which David, under God, had formed, and Solomon had enjoyed.

Of whom then does this Psalm speak? No writer in the New Testament has quoted from it to cast the light of a fuller revelation on the words of the Holy Ghost by David. But, if we cannot turn to the New Testament for help, we can appeal to the Old, and there find confirmation' of the thought, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, is the One whose reign is here so beautifully described. To Abraham God had said, just after the offering up of Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. From Gal. 3:16 we learn who the seed was, of whom the angel of Jehovah, who called to Abraham out of heaven, really spoke - "thy seed, which is Christ." To this promise our Psalm refers in the words, "men shall be blessed in Him" (vs. 17); the Holy Ghost, by David, taking up that record, applies it directly to Messiah, which Paul, centuries after, was permitted to explain.

To the patriarch God had spoken of a seed; in this Psalm God speaks of a Person, the king's Son, whom the Holy Ghost in Galatians directly affirms to be the once humbled and crucified, but now risen and glorified One, the Lord Jesus Christ. As David then, referring thus to Genesis, connects the subject of his theme with the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was given, Zechariah, another prophet, writing long after David's throne had been overturned, applies what is stated in verse 8 of our Psalm to the Lord Jesus, as Jerusalem's King. One sovereign, it is true, then reigned over all the country between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt; but, whereas David and Solomon had their throne at Jerusalem, and could speak of their kingdom as on this side of the Euphrates, the king of Zechariah's day spoke of this same country as beyond the river to him, reversing the condition of things as they existed in David's time.

God's word, however, cannot be broken; so His unconditional covenant with Abraham will not be abrogated, as the son of Iddo reminds the returned remnant, retracing the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom, and showing that by not one inch of ground, of which God spoke to Abraham, shall its area be diminished (Zech. 9:10). So, though this Psalm is never quoted in the New Testament, the reference in it to Gen. 22:18, and the quotation from it in Zech. 9:10, make it very clear about whom it was written. And since the Lord, though He has entered Jerusalem on the ass's colt as the King, has not yet occupied the throne in the manner here predicted, it is manifest that we have from the pen of David the Holy Spirit's description of events still future.

The question being settled as to whom the Psalm refers, let us now turn for a little to examine of what it speaks. God's judgments and God's righteousness having been requested for the king's son, what will follow, on their being granted, form the subjects of this inspired composition. As a young monarch, Solomon had asked of God something similar to these petitions (1 Kings 3:9), "and the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing"; and riches, and wealth, and honor were also granted to him. How suited was his prayer, David's prayer for the king's son illustrates, while proving that, though entitled, "For Solomon," it looked on to One beyond him. For Solomon did not plead for the fulfillment of David's request on his behalf, but asked, as we read, for himself for Wisdom and intelligence, conscious of what he needed to govern God's people aright. For it was not a limited monarchy which David established, and Solomon inherited, but a monarchy absolute in its character, and in which all depended upon the king who sat on the throne executing judgment and justice for all Israel. David and Solomon being monarchs of this class, it is clear that He too must be absolute as King when He reigns on earth, who can now sit on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. When He reigns all will depend on Him, as of old when the kings of Judah were faithful, the kingdom prospered, and hence we can understand why all David's desires center in God's gifts to the King, who, receiving God's judgments and God's righteousness, will act as God acts, and peace and order will be the result - peace, not the effect of compromise with evil, but peace in righteousness, so little known, though surely often desired.

Righteousness and judgment thus administered, the salvation of the needy and the destruction of the oppressors will attest to all the new character of the rule established by divine power in Zion, which, so different from what history can speak of, will tend to make men fear God throughout all generations (v. 5). Observe that this is the first effect of His reign, as stated in the Psalm. When this righteous rule is established, God will be feared as long as the sun and moon endure - a condition of things never known before. Then follow the beneficent results of His rule, and the place on earth which powers and authorities will accord to Him - God first, Himself next, for here, as man, the king's son, does He take His place and reign.

Refreshing like the rain to the mown grass will His presence prove, a simile all can understand, reviving and reinvigorating what will have appeared as burned up and withered; for Israel's hopes, which may have seemed vain, will then be fulfilled to the uttermost, His presence introducing and insuring their blessing to all generations. To give them rain is the Lord's prerogative, a standing witness in all ages that He alone is the Creator and true God (Jer. 14:22). Then too will it be proved that He alone can make that descend upon men, which answers to the softening, reviving showers in the world of nature; added to this, the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures.

Every step that we take in this Psalm only brings out in bright relief the contrast of that day to all that has been before it; and greater surely will the contrast appear to those who will have passed through the time of Jacob's trouble just previous to the Lord's millennial reign, having experienced the misery of being under godless power, unchecked for a while in its career of lawlessness and opposition to all that is of God. Then peace, that blessing of which men have often promised themselves a continuance, but always have found that they could not ensure its permanence, will at last be established on this earth, to abide while times and seasons shall run their appointed course.

The King viewed here as Messiah, the limits of His kingdom are announced, whom all kings will serve, made God's First-born higher than the kings of the earth (Psalm 89:27); and those nomad, lawless tribes, whom no government has yet tamed, inheriting the temper and disposition of their ancestor, Ishmael, will yield to Him obeisance, while His enemies will lick the dust. What problems in government will then be solved, but only by Him who is God's King. The unruly and turbulent who now so often baffle the best intentioned monarchs, will find in Him a ruler whose will must be obeyed; and again in the history of Israel will it be recorded that to the One reigning at Jerusalem tribute and homage must be paid by the kings of the earth, all acknowledging His superiority, who will deliver the "needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."

Let us stop here for a moment, and survey the scene presented to us. Satan will have attempted to establish a supreme power, to whom kings will give allegiance, while the nations under their rule will wonder at its might. But after all, Satan's masterpiece, his last great effort before he shall be bound in the bottomless pit, will have results transient only in duration and limited in extent. The boundaries of the Roman earth will mark the extent of that supremacy, which a power outside it (the King of the North) will refuse to admit. Here, however, all kings shall fall down before the king's Son; all nations shall serve Him. And, whereas no deliverance will have been wrought by the beast, full deliverance for those who want it will be obtained and maintained by the protecting scepter of the Christ of God. The poor and afflicted will rejoice in His delivering power; the weak ones and the orphans will experience the strength and shelter of His arm; and the needy, those having a wish which none else can satisfy, will be satiated never more to want. Death for His own will be abolished, and deceit and violence no longer succeed against them.

Compare this, the settled order of things to be introduced by Him, with Psalm 79:1-5. The blood of His servants so often spilled, will be spilled no more. Precious in His sight will be the blood of those then living upon the earth. Peace, which the world under fallen man has never yet fully known, and also immunity for His people on earth from man's oppression and Satan's restless activity, with all earthly powers paying homage to God's King ruling in righteousness - these are features of that day of blessedness and glory, which will abide while sun and moon shall last, throughout all generations; for as all will rest for stability on the King, and "He," we read, "shall live," a settled order of things will be established, such as has never yet been witnessed.

And then, what may appear to be stranger than all, will be seen the complete revolution of feeling in men's minds about the Lord Jesus Christ; for they will pray for His continuance (v. 15), against whom, but a short time previous, the beast and his armies will have been arrayed to keep Him out of His kingdom. The counsels of the rulers against the Lord and His Christ, first developed at the cross, will never succeed. God's purpose about His

Son, in spite of all opposition, will be made good. "Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." And so surely will this be the case that we have portrayed in this Psalm that time of blessedness, as if from the pen of an eye witness. The time of the restoring of all things will arrive, but not without the presence of the central figure and the pillar of it all, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now in heaven, but will return to earth for that era of blessedness and brightness to commence, in which the whole creation will be interested, for earth's fruitfulness (at present restrained by man's sin) will then return. "There shall be a handful [abundance] of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall

flourish like grass of the earth." How many new things will in that day be seen! Where men now look not for fertility, there will it appear; and Christ's name, so often the subject of execration, shall be perpetuated, enduring forever.

With these thoughts the psalmist concludes. Beyond them his desires for the king's Son cannot go, and as on another occasion (2 Sam. 7) he could only find vent for his feelings in worship, he here winds up with a doxology - "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen."

This is a fitting conclusion to so wondrous a theme. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, having been ended, the last tones of his lyre which fall on the ear are those of praise!

An Exposition of Messianic Psalms Entitled God's King

Chapter 9 - Psalm 8 Concluded

"On His head were many crowns" or diadems (Rev. 19:12). These words form part of the description of the Lord Jesus as John in vision saw Him, and as earth will one day behold Him, when arrayed in all the insignia of power with which His Father has invested Him; for no one crown, nor any one title, however exalted, can express all the dignities and the glories which belong to Him.

We learn that John saw seven diadems on the dragon's head (Rev. 12:3), and ten diadems on the beast's horns (Rev. 13:1); but these, while attempting to rival in power and glory God's King, fall short surely, even in number, of the glories which He has conferred on His Son. What the dragon and the beast possessed could be counted, but the glories and dignities which belong to Christ are unnumbered. John tells us He will wear many diadems; and we must add, He is worthy of them all.

In the Psalms already looked at, one of the glories which belongs to Him, that of Messiah, King of Israel, has been considered. In the Psalm before us we have another glory presented, which is His as Son of man; for the names by which He is known are not mere verbal designations or empty titles, but each expresses something definite and distinctive. Christ, Lord, King, Son of man-these are some of His titles in connection with His supremacy. "The Christ," that is, the anointed One, connects Him with God's people, whether the earthly, Israel, of whom He is King, or a heavenly company, the church, of which He is the Head (Eph. 5:23). "Lord" brings to our minds His relation to all intelligent creatures, whether unfallen, saved, or lost (Phil. 2:10-11). "King of Kings" denotes His superiority to all rulers among men; and "Son of man" tells of His headship over the universe, animate and inanimate.

At times in the world's history we have shadowed forth in certain people, placed in authority upon earth, something of the different official positions to be filled, and the dignities to be enjoyed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, David and Solomon were anointed kings over all Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, was a king of kings (Dan. 2:37). Adam was head over all creatures upon this globe; but Adam was neither anointed like David, nor a king of kings like Nebuchadnezzar. In the Lord however, all these glories and offices meet. He will be seen to be what each of the above mentioned was, and all will be centered in His Person, of whom they were in this respect but shadows.

Again, to these three, and to three only, has God ever given dominion over the animals and men; namely, to Nebuchadnezzar, to Adam, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Alike in this, they stand out, however, each one different from the other two. To Nebuchadnezzar God gave dominion over earth and air, for wherever the children of men dwelt, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven were given into his hand (Dan. 2:38), and he was made ruler over them all. With him was set up something new-the image which still stands. As head of it this Gentile monarch had this remarkable place in creation, connected, it would seem, with headship on earth. But great and remarkable as was the dominion given to Nebuchadnezzar, far exceeding that which any other monarch involved in Adam's fall has, or will enjoy, it was, compared with what God gave to Adam, restricted in extent, and limited in duration, though not conditional for its continuance throughout its allotted time on the obedience of the proud builder of Babylon (Jer. 25:11-12; 27:6-7).

To Adam in the garden the Lord God gave the place of head over earth, air, and sea; for, besides earth and air, he had dominion over all in the sea (Gen. 1:28). Unrestricted therefore in extent, as regards earth, it was unlimited also as to duration, though conditional for its continuance (as it afterward appeared) on his personal obedience to God's command. He fell, and no man after him has ever held such a place in creation as he, while in innocence, filled. For what Gen. 1:28 describes is not the position given to men in relation to the rest of created things upon this globe, but the special sphere accorded to Adam as head of this creation, "the figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). A comparison of what God said to Adam, with His word to Noah and his sons after the flood, confirms this. Adam was to have dominion over all creatures, while for Noah and his son, their fear was only to be placed on all animals on earth, in air, and sea; for we miss in the divine communication to the patriarch and his sons the important words "and subdue it," part of the terms of the conveyance of supremacy over earth bestowed on our forefather Adam (Gen. 1:28; 9:2). Now, had the words addressed to Adam been intended for men after him, there would have been no need for Daniel to tell Nebuchadnezzar that the beasts and birds were given into his hand; no, the prophet's communication would have been an insult to the king, as limiting man's dominion where God had not restricted it, for Daniel mentions nothing about the sea. Adam's place then in creation was peculiar to himself, which, when lost through the fall, none of his descendants could regain.

But since Adam enjoyed his place by virtue of a grant from God, and Nebuchadnezzar was invested with dominion by a fresh exercise of the divine prerogative, the Son of man has been appointed to wield the scepter throughout the universe by a deed of the same validity-God's sovereign will recorded in the written Word. And though the simple exercise of the divine prerogative announced to the individual, as in the cases of Adam and Nebuchadnezzar, without any written communication about it, must always have been a sufficient warrant to fill the office of head on earth, God has been pleased to reveal for the instruction of His people and of the world, His counsels concerning the Son of man, that all may learn from Him who is the One whom He delights to honor.

Comparing the grant to the Lord as Son of man with those given respectively to Adam and to Nebuchadnezzar, while it has something in common with each, it differs from both. It is unrestricted and unlimited; in this it resembles that given to Adam. But it is also unconditional as to its continuance, and in this it resembles that given to the head of gold, for the Son of man is to be set over all creation, without limitation as to time, or conditions as to continuance.

Thus, as we pass each type in review, we have to say that the antitype far exceeds each and all in glory and greatness. David and Solomon reigned over all Israel. This the Lord will do; but they never bore the title of King of kings. Again, Nebuchadnezzar could boast of a title sanctioned by God, which Adam had not; but he must yield precedence to Adam in respect of the extent of his dominion on this earth. And Adam, who had a place which no fallen man had or will have, must give way before the Lord Jesus, when the greatness of their respective positions in the universe is compared; for, by the light of the New Testament we, learn to read aright and to give its full value to the statement of the psalmist-"Thou hast put all things under His feet."

Of the Lord then the Psalm speaks, and of Him alone; for whereas Adam could only boast of a supremacy resembling that herein described, though man, he was not the Son of man; and during the time he held his place as head of creation on earth, he could not have understood such a term. Thus, apart from the New Testament scriptures, we can see that David was not writing of Adam, nor of the race in general; but with the New Testament writings before us we are taught to put a definite meaning on the language he used, and to discern a dominion and supremacy here hinted at, the extent of which he was surely ignorant of, as he sang, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet."

Psalm 8 is clearly a millennial Psalm, and brings before us Israel lost in wonder as they behold the development of God's counsels and the display of His wisdom in thus exalting the Son of man. "O LORD our Lord, how excellent [glorious] is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens." The heaven of heavens cannot contain God, as Solomon at a later date declared, yet God deigns to make this small globe-earth-the theater for the display of His wisdom and power; and man, whose normal sphere is earth, He will place in the Person of the Christ over all created things, the hierarchy of heaven included. In connection with this two points are specially brought up; namely, the principle on which God acts, and the great manifestation of it.

The principle on which He acts is this: He uses instruments, humanly speaking, inadequate to effect His mighty purposes in creation. Thus His wisdom and power are both displayed. Were He to act directly, in the greatness of His might, without the agency of any creature, all would behold His power, but His wisdom might not be developed. But He acts in wisdom as well as in power; for, taking up the feeblest creatures and adapting them as instruments for the work that He has in hand, He thereby shows His knowledge of the suitability of the instrument, and His power in rightly making use of it. This He has done and will do. The Psalm (v. 2) speaks of the principle on which He acts, and the little children in the temple at Jerusalem were an illustration of it (Matt. 21:16). He can and does use the feeblest creatures to effect His purpose of stilling the enemy and the avenger. "Our Lord," the remnant will say, acts thus; and the thoughts of their hearts have been prophetically announced, that souls, till the day of Christ's glory arrives, may be led to trust in God. Then the principle enunciated will receive its full and final manifestation by the Son of man, as set over the works of God's hands, destroying all God's enemies.

This leads to the second point. Comparing man, as a creature, with the orbs of heaven, his insignificance and weakness become apparent, and the psalmist might well say, "What is man [Enosh, mortal man], that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man [Adam], that Thou visitest Him?"

For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels [gods], and hast crowned Him with glory and honor." Heb. 2:8 makes plain to whom these words are to be applied, pointing out at the same time, how far the Psalm has yet received its fulfillment. The moon and the stars appointed to rule by night (Psalm 136:9) are far greater than man-the lowest in rank of God's intelligent creatures-yet the Son of man is to appear some day, set over all things, the director and ruler throughout the universe. Made lower than the angels, He will be seen placed above them. Their relation to man now, 2 Pet. 2:11 sets forth; their present service to the saints, Heb. 1:14 makes plain; their former ministrations to the Man Jesus Christ, the evangelists recount (Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43). They have been, and ever will be, God's servants. Their status never alters. They are ministering spirits (Psalm 103:20-21) and will be, doing God's commandments now, and executioners of His judgments by and by (Matt. 13:41-49). Man's status, however, in the Person of Christ, does alter-and, through Him, that of all God's heavenly saints-for the better; for the future habitable world, we learn (Heb. 2:5), is not put under angels, but under man; and the One who is to have the chief place in that economy, appointed thereto by God, is His own well-beloved Son, the Son of man likewise, who, as man on earth, received the ministrations of angels, but as Son of man in power and glory, will send them forth as His messengers to do His bidding. As yet these counsels of God are unfulfilled; but the fact of the Lord Jesus Christ having been crowned with glory and honor, points Him out as the subject of this Psalm, and therefore the destined ruler of the universe.

Thus, as we read it, we learn what will be the thoughts of the godly remnant of the Jews on beholding the development before the world of the divine counsels about Christ, and we must surely own how different is God's written Word from everything else. To read the thoughts of men's hearts when they are not expressed is the prerogative of God alone; and when the Lord did it, His disciples confessed that He must have come from God (John 16:19-31). Here, however, we have the thoughts that will arise in His people's hearts revealed ages beforehand. None could do this but He who forms the heart and knows the end from the beginning. What Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews would do to Christ and His people, Psalm 2 beforehand announced; and the disciples in Acts 4:24-28 bore witness to the accuracy of that prophetic word. What this Psalm expresses will, in like manner, in its appointed time, be made good.

Reading Heb. 2, we are assured of this, being made acquainted by it with that which God has been pleased to communicate to us about the present position and glory of His Son, as well as the great gap in time between verses 6 and 7 of the Psalm. Writing for the earthly people the psalmist enumerates the living creatures on earth, in air, and sea, as subjected to the sway of the Son of man. Instructing heavenly saints, the Apostle acquaints us with the breadth of meaning which lay concealed in those words. Angels elect and apostate, men lost and saved, saints above and saints on earth-all are to be under Christ's rule, as well as all living creatures and all created things. The joy of God's heavenly saints at this, the feelings of the elect angels at the mention of it, as well as that of all living creatures in heaven or earth, and under the earth, and the expression of the earthly people at beholding it, the Word has beforehand announced (Rev. 5; Psalm 95-98). What a place then in the universe has God assigned to Him, who received the ministration of angels in the wilderness when he hungered, and the support of an angel in the garden when in the agony!

But we have more particulars about the Lord Jesus Christ, and His fulfillment of this Psalm, than what Heb. 2 supplies; for both 1 Cor. 15 and Eph. 1 refer to it, the former telling of the gradual

accomplishment of God's mind about His Son, the latter of our special interest in it. The gradual accomplishment we say, for while 1 Cor. 15 declares the purpose for which He is to reign; namely, to put all enemies under His feet, and develops the order in which that will be effected, death being the last enemy whose power He will annul, Rev. 20 which reveals to us the exact duration of His millennial reign, acquaints us also with this fact, that not till after the close of His thousand years rule will death and hades be cast into the lake of fire. That done, He will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, God's purpose having been effected by the

Son of man; that is, the subjugation of all His enemies. Nothing then will escape His eye, or remain independent of His scepter; and the Lord will overthrow all that has held man captive, who, as man, visited different regions of His extensive dominions; for in hades, as well as on earth and in heaven, the path of the Son of man can be traced (Eph. 4:9-10).

On earth where Adam was head, in other parts of the universe where Adam's authority was unknown, the Lord's power will be felt, and God, by Him, be glorified. God will set Him over the work of His hands. But this, be it observed, is not mere exaltation above all created things, but the subjection of all things to Him who was made a little lower than the angels, nothing being left that is not put under Christ, except Him by the fiat of whose will all this is to be effected. To resist the Lord Jesus therefore must end in complete discomfiture. And since men, as creatures, will exist forever, sooner or later they must be subject to the lowly Son of man, for God's purposes about Him will be fulfilled, however long they may be of accomplishment.

Viewing then the world's opposition to God and to His Christ in the light furnished by the prophetic announcement of the divine plans, what can we say of it, how describe it, but as, folly and madness in their most intense form, not to speak of the rebellious spirit it displays, and the mutinous character of its acts? Nothing can defeat the establishment of God's purpose; no power arrayed against the Lord can succeed; for the binding of Satan at the commencement of the Millennium by angelic agency, and his final doom at the end of it, as well as the Lord's victory over death (Rev. 20); tell us of powers greater than that of man, which must finally succumb to Christ.

When the Lord God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden as head upon earth, He brought to him all the animals for His creature to name, standing by, as it were, as a listener, to hear what the man, endowed by Him with intelligence, would call each one as it passed before him in review, thus manifesting His delight and satisfaction in the head which He had placed over that creation. With what delight then will He behold the Son of His love set over all the works of His hands!

For Satan there is nothing in store but judgment, final and everlasting. Not so for man, if he will hearken to God's message (2 Cor. 5:20-21). Shall souls have their part forever with Satan, or with Christ? That is the question for those yet unconverted. The portion appointed for the devil, Matt. 25:41 plainly sets forth. God's counsels about Christ and those who believe on Him have been revealed in Eph. 1:9-14. What they, who shall be with Christ forever, were once, Eph. 2 declares in no dubious language, thus pointing out the class, viewed morally, from which the Lord's "fellows" are drawn, and answering at once the question of a sin-convicted soul, Can I ever hope to be with Him in whom all things are to be headed up, both things on earth and things in heaven?

As Messiah, King of the Jews, the Lord was crucified. Israel's King was rejected and cast out of the world, to return when He shall have received a dominion coextensive only with the universe,

and before whom, as their Lord and Judge, Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas must one day stand. "Your King," said Pilate, addressing the Jews- King of a territory very circumscribed and insignificant in comparison with that empire of which Pilate was a servant and representative. But a dominion more extensive than that of the Caesars, and more enduring than that of any earthly dynasty, will be His who stood at that bar of judgment, and was sent there from to the cross. For a thousand years He will reign, and reign too forever, even forever and ever. How blessed will those be then, and are now, who have obtained in Him a full, a rich, and an enduring inheritance!

Modern Technology Advances: Learning War

The greatest research the world has ever known is now being carried on for the purpose of warfare. There is nothing so important to science and industry today as preparation for war - offensive and defensive - on a gigantic scale. During the last decade man has developed more deadly implements of war than in centuries of the past. The development of the atomic bomb was one of the outstanding achievements, and from it we learn something of the mammoth job of research and manufacture. It required billions of dollars and an organization the size of the entire automotive industry to produce the first bomb.

From the days of bows and arrows, battering rams, walled cities, and iron suits, down through the days of the development of gun powder and cannon balls, men have sought to learn the art of warfare; but not until the stress that led to the last world war has what Scripture speaks of as learning war been such a dread reality. And it is not going to be dropped, for the nations of the world fear not to be in the forefront of the armaments race. Russia has acquired materials and technological skill from Germany and is known to be using them and the best of German inventive ability to catch up, if not to actually lead, in the international race. From the human standpoint this leaves the rest of the world no alternative save to spend more billions and use more man-power to retain the lead. The days spoken of by Joel, "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears:" are still to come. Shortage of iron and steel will again cause nations to melt up their implements of peaceful pursuits in order to make war.

And yet with all the inventions such as the atomic bomb, chemical and bacterial warfare, it will not, as some suppose and others suggest, do away with armies and navies. The very passage in Joel, which brings us down to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment personally, speaks of "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." And at a slightly later date Russia and her satellites will come with great armies, to be destroyed on the mountains of Israel; so great will be the destruction of the armies of the northern powers that it will take seven months to bury the dead. (Ezek. 38 and 39.) Let none be deceived that armies will not be used. God will use that very means to gather the nations together in the vicinity of Palestine to execute vengeance when the Son of man comes as the Warrior-King.

How comforting to read the following words: "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Mic. 4:3.

Mohammedanism: a Roomy Religion

We often hear modern infidels comparing Christianity with Mohammedanism, running down the former and crying up the latter. May it not be on the principle of the African who embraced Mohammedanism because it was such a roomy religion; there was room in it not only for himself, but for all his sins. In Christianity there is no room for sin. The Bible exposes sin; it makes no allowance for sin; it does not excuse sin; but it states what is the only remedy for sin. Mohammedanism tolerates sin; it encourages sin; it presents no remedy for sin, for it teaches no need of a remedy.

"Be sure your sin will find you out."

A. H. B.

Moral Standards Lowered and Results

The moral standards are being lowered each year in this and other English-Speaking countries-the very countries that took the lead in circulating the Word of God and spreading the gospel. Corruption has set in and is growing apace. This, however, need not cause alarm to the children of God for His Word has foretold that such conditions would come.

One brother, well-known among us, has said that the man of the world is governed by his lusts and popular opinion. General disapproval of a certain course or certain actions tends to restrain people; but when lewdness and immorality are accepted as the natural course, or the inevitable, then popular opinion has dropped and the general standard of conduct will go down correspondingly.

Every bit of information about the growing percentage of "unlawful deeds" that is talked privately or published openly increases the rate of decline in popular opinion. Deeds that would have been frowned at, and their doers ostracized, not many years ago, are now accepted and acknowledged without a shock or shudder.

Is God indifferent to all this? No! no! no! He has said that He will judge the doers of these things. The Old Testament gives the account of His governmental dealings with the world at the flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the inhabitants of Canaan, and then of Israel when they followed in the ways of the heathen who before them had polluted the land. And it is common knowledge that the Roman Empire had lapsed into awful, sordid corruption before it fell. "God is not mocked," and men and nations shall reap the just consequences of their wickedness.

Further, God has told us that the moral conditions that prevailed before the flood and before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah will again be general when the Son of man comes in judgment. (See Luke 17:26-30.)

Now, what about the true Christian's attitude toward all this? Is he to accept the lowered and lowering standards around him? Is he to allow in himself, or sanction or condone in others, the customs of moral laxity that are prevalent? Is he to follow a course that leads in that direction? Most surely not. He is called to "holiness," "purity," and "virtue." "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

Christians who are in close contact with the world are in danger. Defiling influences are to be found in the schools, colleges, factories, and offices - in fact, anywhere where the world is met. May we seek to walk with God and guard against any allowance of the first steps of conduct unbecoming for a saint (holy one) of God; for God's standards of holiness have not changed, nor will He accommodate them to the falling standards of popular opinion.

When the Epistles were first written, they were sent to Christians living in the days of the depraved Roman Empire. Was there any accommodation in them to the abysmal corruption of the time? Not in the least! Everywhere the testimony of God is the same:

"God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7.

"Present your bodies... holy... unto God." Rom. 12:1.

"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:17.

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" 1 Cor. 6:19.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Eph. 4:30.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling." 2 Tim. 1:9.

"He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet. 1:15.

"Ye... are... a holy priesthood." 1 Pet. 2:15.

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 Pet. 3:11.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Jude 20.

May we read the Holy Scriptures and have our thinking formed by them; then our standards will not drop with the precipitous decline about us.

Some Mountain Top Scenes: a Short Review

Knowing as we do, how much the place has often to do with the truths unfolded in Scripture, it cannot be without interest to observe some of the scenes that the tops of the mountains have witnessed, both in former times and in the later days of New Testament revelation.

How blessed, for example, to take one's place on Ararat's summit at the moment when the force of the waves of judgment was abated, and the ark, with its precious freight, is at length able to rest in safety; and the dove can be sent forth to return with its olive branch, to tell of peace and happiness once more; and then to learn, by means of this wondrous scene, the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and its blessed results to those who make Him their ark of refuge.

Dear reader, can you say, This portion is mine, and I can see that every billow of the judgment that was rightly due to me has rolled over the head of that precious One that came to be my ark of safety, and now in resurrection He has borne me up and placed me beyond the reach of condemnation? - I can look back and say the time of wrath is over, and the time of peace and happiness has come? - The Holy Ghost bears witness to me of this? - and I can now erect my altar and send up the incense of praise into my Father's ears, while His bow in the clouds tells me of security as eternal as Himself? Surely it is well to ponder this ere we pass on to the not less interesting scene of Gen. 22

The time had come for Abraham's faith to be tested, and God demands his only son from him. How beautiful to see the un murmuring, unselfish surrender of his all to the will of God - his patient journey, his simple faith, and Isaac's willing obedience to, and childlike acquiescence in, his father's will. One scarcely knows which to admire most - the simple trust of Abraham, or the docile willingness of Isaac. We know the story, how, when given up to God, the respite came, and henceforth Isaac is a resurrection child. But how much more precious does this scene become when we regard it as a truthful picture of God's willing surrender of His only begotten Son, and that blessed One's submission to His Father's will. Not three days alone, but three and thirty years did their journey last, and then to find no respite from the stroke of judgment. Not the less painful for the one to inflict than for the other to endure. But love sustained both Father and Son, and together they return to us as witnesses that eternal happiness is theirs who own the Lamb of God's providing.

If we have in any measure apprehended the meaning of the mountain scenes already glanced at, we shall not be afraid to go with Moses to the top of Sinai (Exod. 19) and hear the blessed revelations God had to make to him. He was beyond the reach of the voices and thunderings and lightnings that made the people tremble. He was with God and in His presence at perfect ease. How blessed, then, to hear type after type unfolding the glories and excellencies of Jesus, and to learn in the light the shadows that certainly, though dimly, point to Him that was yet to come. Was there a slave whose devotedness was such that, when his period of service was completed, would not go out free, but in love to his master, wife, and children, remained a slave forever? (Exod. 21) Jesus was the one alluded to.. For our sakes He took a servant's place; and in perfect love, His

earthly service over, devotes Himself to our cause though absent from us; and when He comes again, will not even then remit the patient exercises of His heart in our behalf. (John 13; Luke 12.)

The ark of the covenant, too, has its tale to tell of the glory of His person; the manifestation of the Godhead; the One in whom all fullness pleased to dwell; where mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; while the table of showbread and candlestick speak respectively of the glories of His perfect humanity in connection with His people, and the light He) ever bears on their behalf during the time even of their grossest darkness. Not less do the tabernacle and veil tell of His glories as God manifest in flesh, whether seen as Messiah, Son of Man, or Son of God, or in all the varied graces ever displayed in Him; while Aaron's clothing and appointment not less plainly unfold to us a priesthood of a higher and a heavenly order; and the incense altar and the laver of brass likewise speak of Him who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us, and while He does so, sanctifies us by the washing of water by the Word. Surely this is a blessed mountain scene, and one that well repays a visit of less brief duration than that we have just accorded to it.

Let us pass on now to another place and stand with Balaam and Balak on the high places of Baal (Numb. 23; 24) and hear what God has to say concerning the people of His choice. Peacefully they were resting in their tents below while God and Satan, were waging war concerning them above. Satan had failed to hinder their departure from Egypt, and now he will not suffer them to enter the land without a contest; but, as is ever the case, his opposition only tends to bring out more fully the counsels of God's grace on their behalf. Separated unto God were they, beyond the reach of Satan's power, taken out from the masses of the human family, to be a peculiar people, a holy nation unto Jehovah. Perverse had they been in all their ways and abundant in their transgressions, but a God of perfect love can yet refrain from beholding iniquity in Jacob or perverseness' in Israel. Beautiful to Him likewise were they, as seen in their pilgrim character, grouped in all the perfect order of His own arrangement; and possessed of hopes of which the world knew nothing, no less than the coming of Him, whose scepter should rule the universe until all enemies were subdued under His feet. How blessedly does this fourfold prophecy concerning Israel suggest to us our own position in the sight of God.

The special subjects of Satan's hostility, but the peculiar objects of the Father's care. We, too, are a people separated unto Him - chosen in the Son of His love before the world's foundation. He can see us from the heights of His own counsels and maintain our cause accordingly. Of us, too, it is said, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" for "whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them he also justified." Our standing is not less certain than our calling, and this, blessed be God, not by our works, but because of the purpose of Him that calleth. Then, too, we have our beauty and order in His sight - accepted in the Beloved - the expression to principalities, and powers in heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God, we are seen as the epistle of Christ - known and read of all men; and this, until the promise dear to every one of us is fulfilled, and the hope of our hearts, the bright and morning star appears to change our mourning into gladness, and the tears of midnight into the day-beams of His own presence. Surely the "top of the rocks," the "high places of Baal" are well deserving of our attention, whether as unfolding the privileges of the ancient people of God, or as revealing in figure our own more favored heavenly calling.

Let us pass on to another and a different scene. The days of Israel's prosperity have passed away. Moses and Joshua, David and Solomon, have gone to their rest, and the people's testimony had been less and less apparent for the Lord, though His love for them had in nowise lessened; and though Ahab's wickedness exceeded that of all his predecessors, still the Lord had preserved a witness in the person of Elijah. And now the moment had come (1 Kings 18) to test the people's faithfulness, and Elijah stood alone as the representative for God on Carmel's summit in antagonism to the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 that ate at Jezebel's table. What a scene it is! Like Moses on a former occasion (Exod. 32) he thought only of Jehovah's glory. Having gained strength "in the sanctuary," he is calm and confident when "in the sea," and before all Israel he rebuilds, and according to the due order, the ruined altar of the Lord; and a blessed answer did his faith receive, for Jehovah maintains the honor of His name, and the sacrifice is burned to ashes, and once more the people bow their hearts in the presence of the display of the Lord's majesty. Surely this picture, too, may bring before our minds what God expects of us in the present day. It is true, alas, that collective order has been displaced by admixture with the world and consequent failure in testimony, but only the more brightly to display the tender mercy of God in the faithfulness of the twos and threes that He has gathered around the Person of His Son. They, too, have learned that the secret of power without the camp must come from constancy within the veil, and thus, too their strength in God, they are not afraid to confront the masses that swell the ranks of a profession that is fast ripening into open apostasy. They, too, can own no altar but the Lord, and no circle of unity but that of the one body joined by the one Spirit; and they also have found out the truth of the Lord's faithfulness, and know not merely that their sacrifices are acceptable, but that Jesus, according to His word, is in their midst; and, thus encouraged, they stand their ground as in the place of testimony for Him until He comes again to bring them to Himself in glory.

Not only is the Old Testament rich in mountain scenes of varied interest and instruction, but the New likewise contains its own unfolding of everything that feeds the soul and fills the heart. Take for example the transfiguration scene in the holy mount. What can be alike more beautiful and instructive than this? No longer types and shadows are before us, and saints and holy men of old the principal actors in the scene, but Christ Himself. God manifest in flesh is now the central figure in the picture. Clothed in robes of kingly beauty, white and glistening, the sun itself is the only light that can be found wherewith to compare His glory. He is seen as the world will yet behold Him when He reigns in triumph as the Son of Man. Neither is He alone; for talking with Him, also glorified, are seen two heavenly saints, whose history indicates to us that they typify those who will share His heavenly glories. One had passed through death to be with Christ; the other, was translated straight from earth to heaven, and now they are seen in company with Jesus to foreshadow the vast company of heavenly citizens that, when He comes, will together rise to meet and reign with Him (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Peter and his fellows, too, beholding but not sharing the glory, with equal certainty depict to us the earthly company who will behold though not enter into the happiness of their more privileged forerunners. No wonder, with their Jewish instincts, they trembled as the well known cloud was entered by the Lord and His companions - a blessed indication to us of how we shall not merely share His glory as Son of Man, but be privileged also to behold His glory as the eternal Son of God (John 17:22-24). While until He comes we have the Father's voice to tell us that His beloved Son (and not Moses and Elias) is the One whose Person is to fix our eye and whose word is to attract our ears, and thus secure our obedience.

What a different scene is now before us as we ascend the Mount of Olives with the Man of Sorrows and His disciples. The prince of this world driven away and worsted from the temptation in the wilderness, will now appear again, to try and draw through fear of death God's faithful Son from the path that led to victory. Sorrowful, even unto death, amazed and very heavy was He, as He knelt and fell upon His face in prayer, and so great was His agony as He offered up His supplications with strong crying and tears, that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. His disciples might sleep under the weight of their sorrow, but He continued agonizing, while still perfectly submissive to His Father's will. Well might He suffer, and because of suffering pray, when thus bereft of earthly comforters, an angel only strengthening Him, while yet in perfect communion with His Father, Satan thrust upon Him all the fearful consequences of the position He had taken as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The martyr's, and still worse, the victim's sufferings in utter separation from God, rose up before Him in all their fearful intensity, and hence the deep - and the more deep because of His absolute perfectness - exercises of soul He passed through. At length the conflict ceases, the cup is taken from the Father's hand (John 18:11) and held fast in faithfulness until the moment came to drain it to the bottom. What scenes of interest are these, and how worthy of our deepest study!

But Calvary, too, demands our notice as Jesus once more is seen the central figure of the landscape. Rejected of men, deserted by His disciples, yet in patient love He treads with unfaltering footsteps the lonely road that led to death and judgment. The tears of the sympathizing women; the indifference of the Populace; the scorn of those in authority; the insulting conduct of the brutal soldiery, and the blasphemy of the unrepentant malefactor alike fail to move that One whose perfectness was only more distinctly visible as the pressure from without became the more intense against Him. In calm dependence on His God and Father, though feeling most intensely, and the more intensely because divinely, all that was against Him, yet completely superior to it, He can tell the women of their danger; He can pour out His soul in intercession for His; murderers; He can breathe words of comfort to the dying thief; He can think of His mother's lonely heart, and entrust her to His loved disciple; and, then, God's righteous judgment over, can commend His spirit to His Father's care. Truly this, of all the mountain scenes we have glanced at, is one of deepest moment.

But once more the Mount of Olives, so often the blessed Lord's resort while here, and witness to so many occasions of interest, comes before us, as the place whence He ascended to His present place of glory; and surely here, too, we may pause a little to note what passed at that eventful time. Again and again had He appeared to assure the hearts of His faltering disciples during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His departure to His Father's throne, and now the moment had come for Him to take His leave of them. Then, as ever, was His people's cause His care. Assured they were that His absence should only pave the way for a far higher order of blessing than they had hitherto enjoyed. Henceforth the heavens should be opened to them, and the Holy Ghost should dwell within them, to fill their souls with Him whose Person now garnished the heavenlies as He had before adorned the earth. Henceforth Messiah's kingdom should, as to their thoughts, be merged in the far superior glory of the Son of Man's dominions, while they themselves should take their place as those, and we with them, who form a portion of the mystic man, the body of Christ, the Church of God, the bride. Surely, then, though His departure must cause a blank that His return alone could fill, there was in the measure of blessing

accorded in exchange for what they had renounced, far more than enough to compensate for their apparent present loss. A cloud received Him out of their sight, but soon a present Holy Ghost becomes their Comforter and ours, and fills our souls with the unnumbered glories of the Son of God.

But one more mountain scene I propose to turn to. It is that unfolded in Rev. 21:9; 22:5, where the bride, the Lamb's wife, is seen descending in all her given glory as the Church of God. How beautiful she is, and what a contrast to that which bears her name at present. Her name is Peace (Jerusalem), as with heavenly features, and of God's creation, she is seen descending. His glory is hers. Eternally glorious, the characteristic features of the new man (Eph. 4:24) are seen in her ways and throughout her internal structure; while from her foundations to her gates the precious stones and pearls bear testimony to the fact that she is now God's own reflection; and dear as ever to the heart of Christ (Matt. 13); and best of all, no temple now obscures the unveiled glory of creation's, patriarch's, and Israel's God and our Lord Jesus, but they are seen as the center, and at the same time the light and glory. How refreshing to turn away from the weakness and failure everywhere around us to such a scene as this; and as the Bridegroom tells us, "Surely I come quickly" to reply, "Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

D. T. G.

Some Mountain Top Scenes: a Short Review

Not only is the Old Testament rich in mountain scenes of varied interest and instruction, but the New likewise contains its own unfolding of everything that feeds the soul and fills the heart. Take for example the transfiguration scene in the holy mount. What can be alike more beautiful and instructive than this? No longer types and shadows are before us, and saints and holy men of old the principal actors in the scene, but Christ Himself. God manifest in flesh is now the central figure in the picture. Clothed in robes of kingly beauty, white and glistening, the sun itself is the only light that can be found wherewith to compare His glory. He is seen as the world will yet behold Him when He reigns in triumph as the Son of Man. Neither is He alone; for talking with Him, also glorified, are seen two heavenly saints, whose history indicates to us that they typify those who will share His heavenly glories. One had passed through death to be with Christ; the other, was translated straight from earth to heaven, and now they are seen in company with Jesus to foreshadow the vast company of heavenly citizens that, when He comes, will together rise to meet and reign with Him (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Peter and his fellows, too, beholding but not sharing the glory, with equal certainty depict to us the earthly company who will behold though not enter into the happiness of their more privileged forerunners. No wonder, with their Jewish instincts, they trembled as the well-known cloud was entered by the Lord and His companions - a blessed indication to us of how we shall not merely share His glory as Son of Man, but be privileged also to behold His glory as the eternal Son of God (John 17 :22- 24). While until He comes we have the Father's voice to tell us that His beloved Son (and not Moses and Elias) is the One whose Person is to fix our eye and whose word is to attract our ears, and thus secure our obedience.

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He knelt and fell upon His face in prayer, and so great was His agony as He offered up His supplications with strong crying and tears, that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. His disciples might sleep under the weight of their sorrow, but He continued agonizing, while still perfectly submissive to His Father's will. Well might He suffer, and because of suffering pray, when thus bereft of earthly comforters, an angel only strengthening Him, while yet in perfect communion with His Father, Satan thrust upon Him all the fearful consequences of the position He had taken as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The martyr's, and still worse, the victim's sufferings in utter separation from God, rose up before Him in all their fearful intensity, and hence the deep -and the more deep because of His absolute perfectness - exercises of soul He passed through. At length the conflict ceases, the cup is taken from the Father's hand (John 18:11) and held fast in faithfulness until the moment came to drain it to the bottom. What scenes of interest are these, and how worthy of our deepest study!

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(Continued)

My Sheep Hear My Voice and Follow Me

If there be one lack in souls at the present time more marked than another, it is feebleness of apprehension as to these two great points - hearing and following.

The quietness of communion is but little known, not to say enjoyed, in this busy active day. How truly the moment speaks loudly of unrest and unreality; and how little is known, even among the saints, of that deep, personal, unexpressed joy in Christ.

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

There is a very close alliance, a very intimate connection, between the two attitudes of soul we are considering; in fact they wait the one on the other. It is very blessed to see the producing and maintaining power of hearing and following Christ. In a word, it is Christ. He and He alone is the blessed source and spring of all that has its rise and satisfaction in Himself. To be a good listener, one must be both free and at rest.

Following seems to come in as a consequence of what we have had before us: "My sheep hear My voice... and they follow Me." As it is the Shepherd's voice that is heard and known by the sheep, so it is the Shepherd Himself they follow; He it is who has gone before. In the passage quoted from John 10 we find the blessed Lord, scorned and reproached, leaving the ancient fold of Judaism, and thus going before His sheep, the security to all His own that it was the true way, as well as the authority for the sheep following Him - come what may - their hiding place from danger, and their safe conduct for the way.

It is very blessed to see how it is the knowing His voice here (vss. 4-5), not that they know all the false voices of strangers, but their security is in knowing His voice, and they likewise follow as they know it. My reader, has your heart found One whom you are now following? Is this your one object day by day? It is very blessed to be allowed to serve, but many a one serves in this day who is not following. O for more distinct going forth from all around to follow a rejected Lord and Master, and to esteem it our holiest joy to tread the path He has walked in, rough it may be, but trodden by Himself, who has left His own mark upon every rose and every thorn.

"A little while, He'll come again!

Let us the precious hours redeem;

Our only grief to give Him pain,

Our joy to serve and follow Him."

W. T. T.

Nature Puffed up by the Abuse of the Law

"If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." The law never crushes the pride of man; and man will bear with anything that supposes he can do something. The law works upon the mere nature of man, and puffs him up, unless it be used of the Holy Ghost to slay him in his conscience. Nature perverts it to the notion that it can do something; and people love this, and are the more pleased with themselves. This is what the gospel destroys by the very roots. And hence persons who are uncommonly self-satisfied when put upon the ground of doing great things for God, would be deeply mortified and offended if told plainly that they are not capable of serving Him. How few would bear to hear that they had never worshipped God all their life, and cannot till born of God! They are offended at such a doctrine as this, because it makes self nothing and God everything; it brings before them what an awful peril they are exposed to - lost indeed. If they believed it, they would cry out to God about it, and look to God to give them new life. But as long as men are dealt with on legal principles, the distinction between what is of the first man and the Second is, more or less, merged. Man is addressed as such, and not thoroughly as a sinner, or as a saint; but the two things are confused together, so that souls do not know clearly whether they are saved or lost, whether they are passed from death unto life, or are still under the wrath of God. This is the reason why we find so many, even some who are true believers, frequently suffering from clouds and eclipses. The root of the matter is the abuse of the law. It was what worked among the Galatians, and what has tied and bound with the chain of their sin so many thousands of God's children ever since. Thus it was acting upon their flesh and it made them think themselves to be something, when in truth they were nothing; and if a man does, evidently, as the Apostle adds, "he deceiveth himself." Nothing can be more cutting than the words here...

Another thing to be observed is, that the children of God generally do not understand how the mingling of the law with Christ lies at the root of a thousand difficulties. It is a rare thing now to find a Christian who is not in principle where the Galatians were. We shall not see it only in particular spots, here and there, but in one form or another it is the universally prevalent, the settled, chronic, fatal complaint in Christendom, insinuating itself into men's thoughts and ways, and everything.

Nearness to Christ the Secret of Power

"And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Mark 3:14-15.

We often look at the Apostles as vessels of power taken up by the Lord and qualified by Him for the accomplishment of His gracious and mighty work on earth. And we are right; for they were ordained by Him to preach, to heal, to cast out demons, and thus to illustrate the infinite power of the blessed Redeemer. That He should have possessed such power, that He should have entered the domain of Satan and spoiled his house, is no wonder when we remember who He was. But it is marvelous to think of the Apostles - men - wielding a similar power! They received it from Him in dependence upon Him. They carried His authority and lived on His account.

But while all this is true we are prone to overlook the first great privilege, and that from which all the others flow; namely, that "they should be with Him." They were ordained to this as fully as to the others. The principle thus asserted is that communion precedes service; and this company of the Lord is that which alone fits for testimony.

Now this is exceedingly happy. The blessed Master, in order to make His service a pleasure, calls us first into His presence, and creates us His friends. This is Christianity and the atmosphere of love. "Henceforth," He says, "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends." The idea of slavery is thus precluded, and the service, though intensely real, is perfect freedom. It is the service of love and a pure, holy, happy service therefore. Hence the first consideration on the Lord's part was that "they should be with Him." How can you send a servant to do your bidding if he be not within call? It is necessary that he be at your constant command. You must have him near yourself. Again, how can you familiarize your messenger with your mind and ways if he should habitually live apart from you? Proximity creates acquaintance, and companionship produces similarity; and this is indispensable when accurate witness is to be borne. The ambassador must be in the secret of his government, and the servant of Christ in the sweet enjoyment of His presence.

Moreover, as to power or authority, where else can such a one find this? If the Lord authorize for service He also grants the needed power, but only on this ground, that it is held as in Him alone, and by us as in full dependence on Him. The excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. Mark this - it is "not of us." We are in no sense depositaries of power, but we may be its channel; yet only then as being in company with the Lord. "That they should be with Him... and to have power" (authority). Being with Him (in spirit now) and having power go together. He has most power who abides most in his

Lord's blest company. The nature of the power is not the question. Mighty signs and wonders may not be seen, but he is always a man of spiritual power who walks with the Lord; for with such, communion is the first thing, and service results from that. Such service is, like Mary's ointment, precious to Him, and it fills all the house as well.

J. W. S.

Nothing but Christ

We have an excellent touchstone by which to try all sorts of teaching and preaching. The most spiritual teaching will ever be characterized by a full and constant presentation of Christ. The Spirit cannot dwell on aught but Jesus. Of Him He delights to speak. He delights in setting forth His attractions and excellencies. Hence, when a man is ministering by the power of the Spirit of God, there will always be more of Christ than anything else in his ministry. There will be little room in such ministry for human logic and reasoning. Such things may do very well when a man desires to set forth himself; but the Spirit's sole object - be it well remembered by all who minister - will ever be to set forth Christ.

Nothing Is Added by Either Joy or Sorrow

You must not attach too much importance to your joy... nor to your distress... You can add nothing by joy or sorrow to the perfect work of Christ... If someone has paid my debts, my sorrow at the folly that contracted them or my joy at their being discharged adds nothing whatever to the payment of the debt, though both be natural and just.

J. N. D.

The Pastoral Gift: Publicly and From House to House

The quotation which we have just penned is taken from Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, as recorded in Acts 20. It is a very suggestive expression, and sets forth in a most forcible manner the intimate connection between the work of the teacher and that of the pastor. "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," says the blessed Apostle, "but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house."

Paul was not only an apostle; he combined, in a truly marvelous manner, the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher. The two last named are closely connected, as we may learn from Eph. 4:11; and it is of the utmost importance that this connection should be understood and maintained. The teacher unfolds truth; the pastor applies it. The teacher enlightens the understanding; the pastor looks to the state of the heart. The teacher supplies the spiritual nutriment; the pastor sees to the use that is made of it. The teacher occupies himself more with the Word; the pastor looks after the soul. The teacher's work is, for the most part, public; the pastor's work is chiefly in private. When combined in one person, the teaching faculty imparts immense moral power to the pastor, and the pastoral element imparts affectionate tenderness to the teacher.

The reader must not confound a pastor with an elder or bishop. The two things are totally distinct. Elder and bishop are frequently interchangeable, but pastor is never confounded with either. Elder is a local charge; pastor is a gift. We have nothing about elders or bishops in 1 Cor. 12 and 14, or Eph. 4, though in these scriptures we have the fullest unfolding of the subject of gifts. We must carefully distinguish between gift and local charge. Elders or bishops are for rule and oversight. Teachers and pastors are to feed and edify. An elder may be a teacher or pastor, but he must keep the two things distinct. They rest upon a different footing altogether, and are never to be confounded.

However, our object in this brief article is not to write a treatise on ministry, or to dwell elaborately upon the difference between spiritual gift and local charge, but simply to offer to our readers a few words on the immense importance of the pastoral gift in the Church of God, in order that they may be stirred up to earnest prayer to the great Head of the Church, that He may graciously be pleased to shed forth this precious gift more abundantly in our midst. We are not straitened in Him. The treasury of spiritual life is not exhausted, and our Lord Christ loves His Church, and delights to nourish and cherish His body, and to supply its every need out of His own infinite fullness.

That there is urgent need of pastoral care throughout the length and breadth of the Church of God, few can deny who know what pastorship is, and who are at all acquainted with the true condition of the Church. How rare is the true spiritual pastor! It is easy to take the name, and assume the office; but in point of fact, pastorship is neither a name nor an office, but a living reality - a divinely imparted gift - something communicated by the Head of the Church for the growth and blessing of His members. A true pastor is a man who is not only possessed of a real spiritual gift, but also animated by the very affections of the heart of Christ toward every lamb and sheep of His blood-bought flock.

Yes, we repeat it, "every lamb and sheep." A true pastor is a pastor all over the world. He is one who has a heart, a message, a ministry, for every member of the body of Christ. Not so the elder or bishop. His is a local charge, confined to the locality in the which such charge is entrusted. But the pastor's range is the whole Church of God, as the evangelist's range is the wide, wide world. In New York, in London, in Paris, or Canton, a pastor is a pastor, and he has his blessed work everywhere. To imagine a pastor as confined to a certain congregation to which he is expected to discharge the functions of evangelist, teacher, elder, or bishop, is something altogether foreign to the teaching of the New Testament.

But, ah! how few real pastors are to be found in our midst! How rare is the pastor's gift, the pastor's heart! Where shall we find those who duly combine the two grand and important elements contained in the heading of this paper - "Publicly, and from house to house"? A man may, perhaps, give us a brief address on the Lord's day, or a lecture on some week day; but where is the "house to house" side of the question? Where is the close, earnest, diligent looking after individual souls, from Monday morning till Saturday night? Very often it happens that the public teaching shoots completely over the head; it is the house to house teaching that is sure to come home to the heart. How frequently it happens that something uttered in public is entirely misunderstood and misapplied, until the loving pastoral visit during the week supplies the true meaning and just application.

Nor is this all. How much there is in a pastor's range that the public teacher can never compass! No doubt public teaching is most important; would we had ten thousand times more of it than we have. The teacher's work is invaluable, and when mellowed by the deep and tender affection of a pastor's heart, can go a great way in meeting the soul's manifold necessities. But the loving pastor who earnestly, prayerfully, and faithfully goes from house to house, can get at the deep exercises of the soul, the sorrows of the heart, the puzzling questions of the mind, the grave difficulties of the conscience. He can enter, in the profound sympathy of an affectionate heart, into the ten thousand little circumstances and sorrows of the path. He can kneel down with the tried, the tempted, the crushed, and the sorrowing one, before the precious mercy-seat, and they can pour out their hearts together, and draw down sweet consolation from the God of all grace and the Father of mercies.

The public teacher cannot do this. No doubt, if, as we have said, he has something of the pastoral element in him, he can anticipate in his public address a great deal of the soul's private exercises, sorrows, and difficulties. But he cannot supply the house to house ingredient. He cannot fully meet the soul's individual need. This is the pastor's holy work. It seems to us that a pastor is to the soul what a doctor is to the body. He must be able to feel the spiritual pulse. He must understand disease and medicine. He must be able to tell what is the matter, and what remedies to apply. Alas! how few proper doctors there are! Perhaps they are as rare as proper pastors. It is one thing to take the title, and another thing to do the work.

Christian reader, we earnestly entreat you to join us in fervent believing prayers to God to raise up true pastors among us. We are in sad need of them. There is great dearth indeed, both of teachers and pastors. The sheep of Christ are not fed and cared for. We are occupied so much with our own affairs, that we have not time to look after the beloved flock of Christ. Every moment is swallowed up in the business, of providing for ourselves and our families. It is, alas! the old sad

story - "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." How different it was with that blessed Apostle! He found time to make tents, and also to teach "publicly, and from house to house." He was not only the great Apostle, ranging over continents and planting churches, but he was also the loving pastor, the tender nurse, the skillful spiritual physician.

Let no one suppose that we advocate idleness. The Lord preserve us from any such moral mischief! We believe there is nothing like abundance of healthful occupation. Indeed, the Apostle himself afforded a living example of this, by working with his hands the thing which is good, that he might not be chargeable to any.

But for all that he found time to teach, preach, and pastorize. He had a heart for Christ and for His body, the Church, and for every member of that body. Here lies the real secret of the matter. It is wonderful what a loving heart can accomplish. If I really love the Church, I shall desire its blessing and progress, and seek to promote these according to my ability.

May the Lord raise up in the midst of His people pastors and teachers after His own heart -men filled with His Spirit, and animated by a genuine love for His Church - men competent and ready to teach - "publicly, and from house to house."

C. H. M.

Three Scriptures About Paul and Trophimus

The statement of the Apostle in 2 Tim. 4:20, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick," is a very suggestive one. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was endowed with the gift of healing, and who had healed so many, leaves his friend behind him sick.

When in the Island of Melita, he healed the father-in-law of Publius, the chief man of the island; but here we find he has to leave Trophimus at Miletum sick.

There was a need for this. God in His governmental dealings sometimes lays His children by. The Father finds it needful at times to put forth His hand in wholesome discipline.

It is often very good, very salutary, very necessary, to be left in the condition of Trophimus at Miletum. Nature does not like it, but we may be assured it is healthful. Trophimus had a lesson to learn on a sick bed at Miletum which he could not learn anywhere else, not even as Paul's companion in travel. The solitude, the prostration, the helplessness of a sick bed are often most profitable to the soul. The Spirit of God makes use of such things to teach us some of our most sanctifying lessons. Very often it happens that a time of bodily illness is made the season of much solemn review and self-judgment in the presence of God. How needful are these things, but yet how much neglected amid the bustle of constant travel and intercourse with others!

It is instructive to contrast the position of Trophimus, in Acts 21:29, with his position in 2 Tim. 4:20. In the former we see him in the streets of Jerusalem in company with Paul; in the latter we see him in the retirement of a sick chamber at Miletum. Now, it was his presence with Paul that roused all the bitter prejudices of the Jews, who imagined that Paul had brought him into the temple.

A Jew and an Ephesian in company was quite in harmony with Paul's gospel, but not at all so with Jewish prejudice. At Ephesus, Paul and Trophimus might have walked in company without exciting any suspicion; not so in Jerusalem. For a Jew and a Gentile to be seen together in Jerusalem was regarded as an open insult to Jewish dignity; it was a throwing down of the middle wall of partition, and boldly walking across the ruins.

For this the Jews were not prepared. They gazed upon the two companions with an eye of dark suspicion, and the strange companionship fanned that flame which so speedily burst forth with terrible vehemence around the beloved Apostle of the Gentiles.

Alas! one is disposed to say, that the two friends should be found in the streets of Jerusalem. Those streets were evidently not Paul's appointed sphere of labor. "Far hence unto the Gentiles" was the Master's word. But Paul would go to Jerusalem, and when there he could never refuse to walk in company with an Ephesian. He was too honest for that. He could not, like poor Peter, stand aloof from his Gentile brother for fear of the Jews.

But then, the ceremonies of the temple and the company of Trophimus could never be harmonized. Here was the difficulty. If the institutions of the temple were to be honored and maintained, then why this companionship with an uncircumcised stranger? If Paul and Trophimus

were both enrolled as fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, then why acknowledge in any way the old system of things?

These reflections throw a peculiar interest around the name of Trophimus. It is deeply interesting and instructive just to look at the three passages in which this name occurs.

First, we find Trophimus as one of a band of companions who accompanied Paul into Asia (Acts 20:4). Then we find him in company with the Apostle in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 21:29). And lastly we find him laid on a sick bed at Miletum.

Here the curtain drops upon him. Here he might calmly review the past. Here, too, he might confidently look forward into the future. He could no longer travel through Asia, nor tread the streets of Jerusalem in company with the most devoted and honored of men. He was an invalid at Miletum, and Paul was a prisoner at Rome; but both could, with undimmed eye, look upward to that bright and blessed world above to which they were both hastening, and where they are now safely housed.

Political Campaigns

When political campaigns wax hot and the world is besieged with claims and counterclaims, the Christians who are conscious of their heavenly calling can go on serenely, knowing that men are merely working out "Whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Even though Satan is the god and prince of this world, and is blinding the minds of those that believe not, God is still supreme and is moving behind the scenes to work out his own purposes and counsels. These may not be what men think are best, but we must remember that this world, as it now is, is not going on to a bright future but to certain trouble, the like of which will never have been known before. It is guilty of casting the Son of God out and has not repented of its deed; God's righteous judgments hang over it ready to begin to fall when the true Christians are taken out.

What a mistake it is for real Christians to think that they can improve this doomed scene by political means. When the Lord Himself was here, He did not try to improve it; He refused to be a judge between two brothers, to remove an iniquitous Herod, or to stop a wicked Pilate. He left this world as He found it, except that when He left it, it was guilty of rejecting Him. Can we suppose that we are to do what the Lord did not do? Have God's thoughts about the world changed? He sent His Son into the world to testify for Him, and in the same manner the Son has sent us into the world.

How thoroughly unlike Christ it would be for a Christian to help select or to wield political power. Christ is the heir of this world and we are joint heirs with Him; shall we, the joint heirs, have a place here before the Heir does? We are but followers of the rejected One, waiting for the moment when He will take us home. Our position is much like that of the Israelites who were sheltered by the blood of the lamb in an Egypt under divine sentence, while they themselves were awaiting the command to depart. How incongruous it would have been for those Israelites to be absorbed in Egyptian politics, or to help to improve that doomed land!

The Christian is bound to respect all who are in authority, and to treat them as established by God, but at the same time to pass on as a stranger and a pilgrim. His home is elsewhere; he is but passing through. He is here to represent One who is in heaven - to manifest Christ and His ways, which were always full of grace and truth. It would be as completely out of place for a Christian to mingle in earthly politics as for the British ambassador to Washington to become entangled in American politics.

One writer has translated Phil. 3:20 thus: "Our politics are in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." How comforting! How encouraging! The sense of this should free us from all participation, and even from all anxiety in any political agitation regardless of how or where. Soon we shall hear that shout and be off to meet our Lord in the air. May we be found feeding on Christ the "roast lamb" who underwent the judgment for us, and by whose precious blood we have been sheltered, while we are girded (shoes on the feet and the staff in the hand) ready to depart. (See Exod. 12:8-12.)

The Power of God

Exceedingly blessed is the grace that the Lord is come, the power of God within the sphere of human misery, which extreme as it may be does but make that power evident. If I look around as a man, I am lost. I cannot unriddle the history of the world: abominations in Christendom committed in the name of the Lord; Himself rejected by His people Israel, and crucified by those Gentiles to whom God had entrusted the government of the world; Mohammedanism; heathenism. What kind of a God have you, says the reasoning heart, when it is such a world? But in the gospel I see the Lord came down into all the wretchedness, sickness, sin; and my heart is drawn away from pleasure and sorrow to Him. How beautiful to see heart after heart brought around this One, the only true center, soon to be the risen Head of the new creation, Himself the object drawing out feelings and affections of which. He alone is worthy - Him who by His excellency gives excellency, and by His gracious thoughts toward us produces and draws out gracious thoughts in us. Next, our hearts are fixed just so far as we have an object - fixed according to God when we have Christ Himself before us. How can I love if I have nothing to love? A man is what he feels and likes and thinks. If my soul lives and feeds on that which is most excellent, Christ the bread of God, Christ becomes in a practical sense formed in the heart. In Him - the man Christ Jesus - God has had all His delight, and the display of it too.

J. N. D.

Practical Grace

In Heb. 12, two mountains are spoken of - one that speaks of law, and one that speaks of grace. And it is an important question for our souls, to which one of these mounts we are brought; for, in connection with one, we have to do with God as making demands upon us; while in connection with the other, we have to do with God as acting in grace.

"Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

God had spoken the law to Israel at Mount Sinai, and their responsibility was according to the just requirements of that law. In this they failed, and utterly broke down; and in the days of Eli, the ark - the only remaining link between Jehovah and His people - was taken by the Philistines. At the end of this career of failure, God came in in grace, and chose David the king, who, with his son Solomon, founded the temple on Mount Sion. This was the expression of God's grace to a failing people, when all was over on the ground of responsibility under the law.

And this is the grace according to which God had visited the Hebrew saints who accepted the Messiah. It is the same grace that has taken us up, and that goes on with us day by day. And on this principle only can we get on with God. God acts toward us in grace. This is an immense truth for our souls to grasp; for only as we lay hold of this can we realize the character of our relationships with God and with one another as Christians, and the principles that are to govern us in our ways with one another. Our sins have been purged through the blood of Christ. This is pure grace.

But is not holiness required? Without holiness no man can see the Lord, we are told in verse 14. Is this grace also? The need of holiness surely is not grace; but if God's character. and nature are such that none can be in His presence without holiness, He furnishes it to us in grace, blessed be His name! We have it not of, or in, ourselves; but He makes us "partakers of His holiness," even if He has to chasten us in order to break our wills, and bring us into that exercise of soul in which we can receive all from Him. All blessing flows down from Him in perfect grace, and our place before Him is that of subject receivers.

But now if God acts toward us on the principle of grace, we are to be imitators of Him, as dear children. Grace is the principle on which we are to act toward one another. Do we sufficiently

realize this in our souls, so as practically to act according to divine principles? We find in the beginning of Heb. 12, that we are in the race course, and weights are to be laid aside, and sin which entangles the feet; and then God comes in and helps us by chastening, making us partakers of His holiness. Now we are not alone in this path. There is a company - the whole company of God's people - moving on together toward Him who has finished the course of faith, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, but who will soon rise up to receive His own. With this company we have to do. It is not a mere selfish running where only one receives the prize. We all journey on together, and, as in a flock of sheep, there are the weak and the lame, not to be left behind, but to be helped on. There are "hands that hang down," and there are "feeble knees." How are we to act toward such? The passage is plain: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." This is not the terrible mount that burned with fire; it is the pure grace of God.

On the one hand, grace leads us to minister help to the weak and the faint. On the other hand, it will lead us to be watchful, taking heed to our own ways, lest the lame be turned out of the way. There are lame ones in the flock, and they do not get on well; but the whip would be no remedy for such. We must not act toward them on the principle of Pharaoh's taskmasters with the bond slave children of Israel. This is not God's way. He acts toward us in grace, and helps us in our infirmities; or if He chastens, when needs be, it is "that we might be partakers of His holiness." What should we think of a shepherd taking a whip to a poor, weak, lame sheep? Yet how often is this done among the flock of Christ! The whip instead of grace! Mount Sinai, instead of Mount Sion! God's word is, "but let it rather be healed." It is not that holiness can be dispensed with, and therefore it is written: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Only let us remember, the whip and the burning mount will neither heal nor produce holiness. Grace only can do either; and so it is added, "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." If I lose in my soul the sense of that grace in which God is ever acting toward me, I shall fail in manifesting grace toward my brethren. And who can tell the loss and damage to the saints? Some root of bitterness springs up, and trouble arises, and many are thereby defiled. What sorrow is sometimes caused in the assembly of God, just because some one - a leader, it may be - has failed of the grace of God, and acted in the spirit of the law, rather than the Spirit of Christ! or some one, through greed of gain, has driven a hard bargain, or defrauded his brother! or some word has been unadvisedly spoken, and an evil seed has been sown in some heart, which springs up as a root of bitterness, producing trouble, which passes from tongue to tongue, thereby defiling many; Surely such conduct is most sad, utterly contrary to the Spirit of Christ; and if not unsparingly judged by those who so act, will bring down the hand of the Lord in discipline.

Oh to realize in our innermost soul that we are saved by grace, and stand in grace, and that it is grace every step of the way to the end! and to realize that we are called to live, and act toward one another, in the power of the same grace in which God has acted, and ever acts, toward us.

A. H. R.

Praying to the Holy Spirit

There has been an increasing tendency in some quarters of Christendom to pray to the Holy Spirit. It is even taught by some that both prayer and praise should be addressed to the Spirit of God. Surely this should be proved or disproved in the light of the Word of God; there is no other authority. We do not wish to question the sincerity of the men who say this but only to test their teaching and practice by the Scriptures.

First of all we would guard against anything derogatory to the Holy Spirit, for He is truly God: a distinct Person in the Godhead, and as such would surely be worthy of praise and worship. However, there is no place in Scripture where we are exhorted to pray to or praise Him, nor is there any example of it being done. After the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit was sent down to indwell each believer individually, and to form all believers together in one body, uniting them to Christ the Head in heaven. He is now here to glorify Christ and unfold His things to us.

As for prayer, the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the power of our access to the Father (Eph. 2:18), and the helper in our groanings and prayers so that God interprets our groanings according to the mind of the Spirit dwelling in us. In Eph. 6:18 the word to us is, "praying... in the Spirit," and in Jude 20, "praying in the Holy Ghost." Think of praying in the Holy Spirit! Every word of such prayers would be perfectly acceptable to God as being fully in accord with His mind. How little there is of this in our prayers. We may even begin in the Spirit and end praying in the flesh. We are not, however, limited only to praying and presenting supplications in the Spirit - we should pray always - but it is happy when we do so pray. Then in Phil. 3:3, the better translation is, "we... worship by the Spirit of God." Thus both prayer and worship are to be "by" or "in" the Spirit, but not "to." There is a similar thought expressed when the Apostles wrote the Epistles to assemblies and individuals under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, in that they saluted them from the Father and the Son - the Spirit being the One who dwelt and acted in the Church and sent the salutations. He acted in the sending, but as from the Father and the Son.

Therefore, from the evidence of Scripture it must be concluded that it is unintelligent to address the Spirit of God in prayer or worship. The poet correctly wrote:

"Praises for the Holy Ghost,
Sent from heaven at Pentecost."

Thoughts on Redemption in the Book of Exodus

"Redemption" is a large and blessed word in the New Testament and in the Old Testament too. Redemption takes the redeemed one out of one position and one state and brings him into another.

The character of the second book of the Bible is redemption. In the third chapter we find the blessed God come down in the burning bush, and He says to Moses, "I am come down to deliver." "I have surely seen... and have heard," and "I am come down." Go to the end of the book, 33rd verse of the 40th chapter. There we have God dwelling in the midst of His redeemed people, pitching His habitation among them.

In the 12th chapter, we get the way in which He did it. The first thing was to shelter that people from judgment. That could only be done by the blood of the lamb. The first thing God gives a soul to know, when really exercised, is security from judgment under the blood of Christ; but we must not stop there. Look at the first of Ephesians, speaking of Christ as the Beloved. "In whom" (that is Christ the Beloved) "we have redemption." v. 7. How far does that go? "Even the forgiveness of sins." Now go to the second chapter 12th verse: "without Christ... and without God in the world." "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." That redemption we have in Christ through His blood, brings with it the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. It gives something else too; it takes me out of the old condition and gives me a place of nearness to God Himself. So we must not stop with being secured from judgment.

That blood on the two side posts and the lintel told that death had come in. It told that the stroke had fallen on a victim - a life had been given. There are those who have faith in the Lord Jesus who do not know much about the blood - about being covered. "The blood shall be to you for a token"; that is, something for those inside the house.

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you" has been dwelt upon almost to the exclusion of "the blood shall be to you for a token." God sees the blood, but it is my seeing it that brings me into peace. The blood speaks to the soul inside and wards off the stroke outside. It is the soul seeing the blood for himself that brings into the knowledge of safety.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." To whom was that day, that date, the beginning of months? Nobody else knew anything about it throughout the whole world. It was a particular day - day of redemption.

In the third chapter God had come down, and what brought Him down was the bondage, misery, groaning and oppression of His people. There He appears in the midst of the burning bush. "God called unto him (Moses) out of the midst of the bush." By way of comparison turn to the first of Leviticus. "The LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation." What a contrast! That gives the character to these two books. God comes down to deliver; then after He delivers, He sets His habitation in the midst of His people. Out of the midst of

that habitation He appears and tells them how to approach Him. The subject of Exodus is redemption; the subject of Leviticus is the redeemed drawing near to God, the Redeemer. There is more order in the Word of God than people think. It is not brought together at random.

Numbers gives us the wilderness journey. It is a redeemed people and they are not in Egypt nor in Canaan, but in the wilderness, journeying on to Canaan.

The book of Deuteronomy answers to the judgment seat of Christ. "Thou shalt remember all the way," etc. We will have a rehearsal when we get into our Canaan, and before we have entered fully into it. We Christians have a Deuteronomy before we get into the land too. We are in Numbers. Redemption has brought us into Numbers. We know all the way God has led us since He brought us out of Egypt. It must have been very humiliating as Moses called their attention to all their ways. But as it humbled them, it magnified the grace and goodness of God, and that is what our Deuteronomy will do too.

W. P.

Reflections and Experiences of One Who Had Lost an Only Son

The soul ought not to need it; but still it is conscious that what has happened in the midst of us has given a fresh sense of oneness with the Lord. The thought that one who had been my object for so many years is now in His company as His object, tells me that there is another link between the heart and heaven. One whom I so lately appropriated here, my Lord now appropriates in paradise. In circumstances I am thus nearer to Him; and He is of a mind to have it so. The unjealous love of the blessed Lord allows this.

And this has been much prized by me lately. The Lord warrants our finding mere circumstances a help to our hearts, even in those cases in which He might have said to us, that He Himself was all sufficient. He is a jealous God, I know, and will not allow us to have any other. He is a jealous Savior, I also know, and will not allow us to have any other. But in a great sense, He is not a jealous Friend. He allows other connections and affections to move our hearts as well as Himself. When Paul saw the brethren he took courage (Acts 28:15). Did the Lord resent this? Did He rebuke Paul's experience at that moment as though it had done wrong to Him? Did He tell him that he had His presence before, and that that ought to have been enough for him? No. He warranted His servant thus finding refreshment in the countenance and companionship of brethren. And so to this hour, He is well pleased and only well pleased when our poor hearts are open to like influences.

Yes, He allows all this, and more than allows it. Prayer too, and the sweetness of being alone with Him, are more to the soul than ever. And this He also warrants. He gives our hearts liberty to determine the character of our communion with Him. Let it be, He says, according to your condition. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." This is not the way of a master, or a patron: The patron's pleasure or humor must give color to the scene around him. It was dangerous to sully the presence of the Persian King with sadness. There was danger of death if one had a heavy countenance there (Neh. 2:1, 2). But God's presence gives play to the heart and its condition, whatever they be. If "such things have befallen" us (Lev. 10:19), we need not eat the sacrifices. If we be in a strange land, the harp of God may be hung by our hand, which should have awakened it, on the willows. "Is any afflicted? let him pray."

I have felt the grace of such a word as this. It indulges nature, and makes affliction welcome in the sanctuary. The full acceptableness of our communion with our Lord is not for a moment to be questioned, because the affections of nature are giving it its character.

The recollection of our boy is one of great delight to me, as a witness of the way of God with the soul. And in that recollection (vivid as it will be, I doubt not, for the rest of my days) what a companion for my journey onward has my God given me! But the loss of his presence and his voice is what the like trial alone can teach any to understand. Nothing remains to our hearts now of this joy from our child, but "the echo of it in memory's land." But I ask myself, what is the comfort that I desire to enjoy under this? I believe I can somewhat feel that it is this - that my Father still enjoys that cry of conscious adoption from my lips, as from thousands beside. Our God delights to

have His house and His ear filled with the living witness that. it is children who are under His roof and at His side.

Was not God's hand known in giving Job a family at the beginning? Was not the same hand seen in taking them away as with a stroke? And was not the same hand still traced in giving him another family, and in making his latter end better than his beginning? And so in our little history. It was the Lord who gave us our child some twenty years ago; it was His hand that lately took him from the midst of us; and it was the precious power of His Spirit that has left with us the remembrance of such a work in his soul, as in a great sense makes our latter end, as parents, better than our beginning.

And I have learned with a fresh witness how dear to the Lord is a spirit of entire dependence. For there is nothing in the recollections of my child which so affects me as his state of dependence upon me, and the freedom with which at all times he used me. He wanted me by night and by day. He wanted me to do the smallest and meanest services for him. His helplessness, from the loss of one arm and the disease of the other, was such that I was as a nail or a finger to him, as well as an arm or a hand. But let the service be as trivial or as menial as it could be, he knew his heartiest welcome to it; and without apology used it at all times.

There is nothing to my heart like the recollection of this. I am 40 sure that I can say that. It teaches me afresh to think of my Father. How sure am I at this moment that nothing in His saints is more acceptable with Him than this same ready and confiding use of Him. The recollection that my child needed me in all things, and used me in all things, is the sweetest and tenderest possession of my heart. And if we that are evil understand these affections and joys, how much more our heavenly Father! Our services are due to our divine Master, were they immeasurable in their devotedness and zeal, and acceptable with Him they are. But they are not to His heart what our confidence and use of Him is. To rest in His everlasting, personal love is the highest joy we can afford Him.

J. G. B.

Rejoicing in God and Waiting for Christ: Waiting for Christ

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5.

There are two things that constitute the joy of a Christian while on his earthly journey, presenting an object constantly before his heart. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord; and the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. These two things cannot be separated without loss to our souls; for we cannot have real profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us from this present evil world; if such be the case, Christ Himself will not be the object before the 'soul; nor shall we be able, in the same measure as when looking for Him, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, but on the contrary we shall be enfeebled through the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. We cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without at the same time seeing that the world has utterly rejected Him and that the world is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom; the principles of evil loosening all bonds; and all going on to judgment. Seeing this, the soul becomes oppressed and the heart is sad; but if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul is steady and calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard and the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. We all want this. To walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and moreover a correct judgment of the character of the world never be formed until that crowning sin is apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking for Christ and waiting for Him to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me and for all the Church. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." When He finds His delight, then will you also find yours - He with you and you with Him; because it will then be, "Forever with the Lord."

You may think to find good or to produce good in man; but you will never find in man any thought of waiting for Christ. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated and civilized, but it remains the first Adam still. The last Adam, having been rejected by the world, will never be found there, and it is the looking for Him, the rejected Lord, that stamps its character on the walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I am not yet with the One I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world, tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore the Apostle says in 2 Thess. 1:6, 7: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense... to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, we are not to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! rather let us be victorious every day, remembering that tribulation and conflict come before the rest.

However, when walking with God, there is not so much thinking of combat as finding joy in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul will then be enlarged and more capable of enjoying what

God really is, but the kind of joy I have now is the same as I shall have when the Lord Jesus comes to be glorified in His saints; only it will be greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world who need the love I enjoy, and I desire that they should possess it, because it is the joy of what God is for me. This it is that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict. So that our souls should be exercised both about the fellowship and about the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out toward all who have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need. For if I feel the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, because it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service and to suffer for Christ's sake.

Reply to a Paper Entitled "Heathen Theories": Heathen Theories

The writer seems above inquiry, and filled with Hindu ideas which he attributes to Christians. But it is untrue of the Christian, if it is true of the Hindu, that he regards Scripture "as a single, indivisible, and mechanically inspired book, dictated throughout by the Deity, and from which all human elements are jealously excluded."

Now on the face of the Bible, there is the patent fact that it consists, not of "a single hook," but of an immense "division"; the older in Hebrew with a small part for good reason in Aramaic; the later in Greek when the door of faith was to be opened to Gentiles; the one occupied with God's ways on earth, the other with His heavenly counsels based on the manifestation of His Son, the Lord Jesus, and of redemption. But yet more its contrast is apparent with the impostures of the Hindu and Arabian, in the vast variety of its writers in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, separated by very many centuries of old, but in a brief space for the more recent; yet with absolute unanimity where the same subject is broached. There is therefore in this and in all other ways the reverse of a "mechanical inspiration" in its many distinct but harmonious books; by a legislator and a general, by judges and prophets, by kings and great ministers of state, by priest and herdsman, by known and unknown: again, in the New Testament, by a tax gatherer, and a physician, by fishermen of little learning, and by a tent-maker of great. "Dictated by the Deity" it is not, save in a comparatively small degree in the Pentateuch (chiefly in the latter part of Exodus, and we may say in all Leviticus), and in the later prophets. Nor are "all human elements jealously excluded," but abundantly, considerately, and most touchingly found, as the rule, from Genesis to the Book of Revelation. But it is inspired of God, God-breathed, every part of it - "every scripture," as the Apostle lays down authoritatively. The Lord Himself and the Apostle Paul and Luke often used the Greek translation, not as if it was perfect everywhere but as adequate in its way. No wonder that neither the Veda nor the Koran bear translation, and attain it but slightly for the curiosity of some and of others to refute their vain imagination. The Bible lends itself remarkably to transfusion into all the tongues of men. The grand truth is that God controlled the many writers, notwithstanding their infirmities and allowing each his own style, so as to exclude error and give His Word, who cannot lie and needs not to repent.

W. K.

The Resurrection of Christ: the View in the Gospel of Matthew

The resurrection of the Lord is, we know, a grand central mystery. It speaks of the end of the old creation, and begins the sure, immovable foundations of the new. It has, however, its various results. Some of its power will display itself in heavenly places - some in earthly - some of it will be known in the power that sets the enemy aside - some in the grace that saves the lost, and brings them to God forever.

It is presented differently at the close of each of the gospels.

In Matthew (chapter 28) we have the resurrection in its power over the adversary. The sealed stone and the set watch represent the power and enmity of the world; but the angel that witnessed the risen Jesus, as it were, laughs them to scorn, puts the sentence of death upon them, letting them know that it was hard for them to kick against the pricks - self-destruction for them to resist the Son of God in power.

And this is one great result of the resurrection. It is judgment against the world. It shows that there is direct collision between God and the world, and that God is the stronger, because the world had put Jesus to death, and God had raised Him from the dead - two simple facts which indicate the entire collision between God and man, and that the strength and victory were with God, the result of which facts must be the judgment or doom of the world; and such judgment is here expressed by the angel rolling away the sealed stone and putting the sentence of death on the keepers of it.

But this same chapter shows the resurrection in its results on earth. It puts Jesus in possession of all power, and gives Him a claim upon the discipleship and obedience of all the nations.

This claim, I know, is not now made good, nor is this power now exercised. But it is His, and in the coming millennial days of the kingdom it will be realized. Power which is His by right, as the risen One, will be exercised by His hand then; and the nations of the earth, from the rising to the setting sun, will own Him.

This is very distinct and very characteristic of Matthew's gospel - so perfect is the oracles of God in their variousness, as in their unity. But here you have nothing of the effects of the resurrection upon heaven - no peopling of heavenly places with the redemption and grace which the resurrection has sealed and accomplished.

Some Additional Thoughts on Salt

"For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Mark 9:49, 50.

The general meaning of this somewhat difficult scripture is soon apprehended. It was no longer a question now of following a Messiah on earth, or of the present establishment of His kingdom. Christ was in fact already rejected, and the cross was in full prospect (see Mark 9:9, 11, 30, 32). Rejection therefore would be the portion of His disciples, and consequently the constant and unsparing application of the cross. Everything was to be sacrificed rather than lose entry "into life" and incur the penalty of "the fire that never shall be quenched." It was thus eternity that was now in view instead of the glory of Messiah's kingdom on earth; and hence there was no alternative between eternal gain and eternal loss.

This will account for the distinction between the two classes of verse 49 - the first comprises all men, the second only the true followers of Christ. "Every one" - there is no exception - "shall be salted with fire." That is to say, God will test, and search in order to test, every soul of man by His holiness as applied in judgment; for it is of this that fire is a symbol. Even Christ Himself was so tested, as shown out in the holy fire that fed upon the sacrifices offered to God under the old dispensation. The effect for the sinner will be the eternal fire; while for the believer who is in Christ nothing is lost save the dross. But whether for the saint or the sinner the standard is the same; the former finds the answer to it in Christ, the latter being without Christ will perish.

Then next, "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." None but real disciples of Christ are here contemplated, their lives being looked upon as a sacrifice to God. (Compare Eph. 5:1, 2; Phil. 2:17.) This will be the more readily seen if it is recalled that it is especially in connection with the meat offering, type of the perfect devotedness of Christ to the glory of God in all His pathway (including, no doubt, His death, as in Phil. 2), that salt is mentioned (Lev. 2:13). Now salt is the energy of grace in the soul, linking it in all its activities with God, and preserving it from the contamination of evil. To borrow words: "Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (which grace produces without doubt), but that energy of God within us which connects everything in us with God, and dedicates the heart to Him, binding it to Him in the sense of obligation and of desire, rejecting all in oneself that is contrary to Him... Thus, practically, it was distinctive grace, the energy of holiness, which separates from all evil, but by setting apart for God." A life without the "salt" would degenerate into human grace and amiability, and would thus be characterized by "honey" - that which was absolutely forbidden "in any offering of the LORD made by fire." Lev. 2:11.

We are next told that "salt is good"; that is, "the condition of soul" which is produced by the energy of grace. The activity of grace within begets a state corresponding to its character (see 2 Tim. 2:1). But if the salt, through the lack of watchfulness and of self-judgment, have lost its saltiness, wherewith shall ye season it? It is used for seasoning other things; but if the salt needs it for itself,

there is nothing left that can salt it." When we have lost devotedness to God, together with our Nazariteship (separation from evil), our state is hopeless, unless indeed God once more come in with His powerful grace to restore the soul.

The remedy against the danger is to have salt in ourselves, and to have peace one with another. The more we cultivate true holiness, the more we are apart from all evil, the more we shall be in peace with our fellow-Christians; for it is then that the Spirit of God, being ungrieved, works mightily in us, and enables us also to use all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

What the Scriptures Say About Salt

Salt is of great importance to man. It makes savory what without it would be insipid. It checks the growth of nature in the vegetable kingdom; it preserves from corruption and decay what belongs to the animal kingdom.

Job speaks of its savory properties (Job 6:6). Moses and the prophets bear witness to its power in destroying the growth of nature (Deut. 29:23; Jer. 17:6; Eze. 47:11); and Abimelech's action in sowing the city of Shechem with salt (Judg. 9:45), shows us that Israel was well acquainted with its influence on vegetation. But not less marked is its action on that which belongs to the animal kingdom, preserving that which is subjected to its influence from the corruption to which otherwise it would assuredly turn.

Now as salt acts in the realm of nature, so does grace in spiritual matters. It savors; it checks the outflow of nature from man. It is preservative too in its action from corruption.

Under the law the meat offering was to be salted, typical of the Lord Jesus in His life on earth, in whom grace acted constantly (Lev. 2:13). With all their offerings they were to offer salt. Hence a "covenant of salt" was a term Israel well understood (Numb. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5), meaning that such a covenant should never be broken; no element of corruption should enter into it, for it would last forever. That was the character of the provision God made for the support of Aaron and his house. The Lord's engagement to David and his sons was of that same character.

In the New Testament the figurative meaning of salt, as illustrative of grace in its savoring and preservative action, is met with more than once. The disciples were the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). But, as the Lord reminded them, salt is useless if once it has lost its savor. So they would be of no use as salt, unless grace was really in them. What then man in nature has not, what the earth viewed morally does not possess, that the disciples were, and should be careful to continue to be. They were not merely salt for the earth, but the salt of the earth. And having salt in themselves, the working of nature would be checked, and they would have peace one with another (Mark 9:50). Moreover, that preservative and savoring character of grace would be felt if their speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6). They would know how to answer every man, and no corrupt communication would proceed out of their mouths, but only that which was good to the use of edifying, that it might minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29). Moreover, the preservative character of grace would characterize all God's people, "for every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

But there is another statement of the Lord, preserved only in one Gospel, that of Mark; and that statement, to which we now draw attention, is most solemn in its character, and universal in its application. "Every one shall be salted with fire"; for as salt preserves things in the animal kingdom, so the fire of judgment will act on men. It will not consume them so as to terminate their existence, but burning up all that is perishable of men and their works (1 Cor. 3:13-15), will leave that which never can decay. To have one's works tried by fire is a solemn consideration for God's

saints. To be salted with fire is a dreadful prospect for the wicked. And in connection with these latter, it should be remarked, the Lord brings in, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire" (Mark 9:48-49). Even in things of nature in the animal frame there is a residuum which the fire does not consume. But after burning up all that is consumable, the fire dies out. Now it will not be so in the other world; all that can perish will assuredly perish, but the wicked shall never cease to exist, and the fire will never be extinguished.

Which Shall It Be: Patronage or Fellowship?

There is a vast difference between being a patron of the cause of Christ, and having fellowship with Himself - between patronizing Christianity, and identification with a rejected Jesus. This difference is not generally seen and yet there is a great deal involved in it.

There is something very attractive in the idea of being a patron of the good cause, of being able to contribute largely to the various Christian institutions of the day, of using an extensive influence on behalf of the people of God and the servants of Christ - all this is immensely attractive to a liberal heart and a generous nature. And yet there may be all this without one atom of true fellowship with a rejected, outcast, crucified Lord.

This is a serious reflection. It is not that we want to detract, in the smallest degree, from the value of patronage in all its varied forms. By no means; our object, at present, is merely to suggest to the reader that patronage and fellowship are not the same thing, and an example or two from Scripture will illustrate the difference.

Take the case of Moses in the court of Pharaoh. Look at the golden opportunity which he possessed of exerting his extensive influence on behalf of the people of God. Did he embrace it? Not at all. So far from availing himself of the wide field which Providence had so manifestly thrown open to him, he actually abandoned it altogether, and flung himself into the very bosom of the despised and oppressed people of God. Instead of using his influence for them, he openly identified himself with them. If ever a man occupied a position in which he could act as an extensive patron of the cause of Christ, Moses was the man; but instead of exercising the patronage and so getting a name for himself, his heart sighed after fellowship which only led him into reproach, sorrow, and shame. He might have enjoyed the smiles of a monarch, the luxury of a palace, and the splendor of a court, and all the while have done large service to the cause of the Hebrews; but he gave all up, in order to identify himself with those people in the depth of their degradation and in all the toils of their wilderness course.

Such are the striking facts of the history; let us look for a moment at the inspired commentary thereon. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of -sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26.

From this passage we learn that what Moses did, he did by faith. We might feel disposed to condemn a man for giving up such a fine field of usefulness plainly opened up to him by a chain of most remarkable providences; but the Spirit of God declares that Moses did this by faith; and hence we have this most important truth that Jesus values fellowship with Himself far more highly than the patronage of His cause. He thinks more of earnest, devoted identification with His Person, than of the most liberal outlay in connection with His work.

It is well to see this. God has called us into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, and we should seek to know this. It is our high privilege to be identified with a rejected Lord and Master; and shall we refuse this, even though it be on the attractive plea of using our fortune and influence in patronizing Christianity in its varied institutions? If our Lord had said to the rich ruler in the tenth of Mark, "Go, use your riches for Me; put forth your extensive influence for the furtherance of My cause in the earth," we may safely imagine the young man departing with alacrity and self-complacency. But when He told him to let all go - when He said, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor,... and come, take up the cross, and follow Me," he went away sad. No doubt he would have found it far easier and more agreeable to nature to patronize Christ's cause than to have fellowship with His Person. But O Christian reader, it is the latter that Jesus values. If I love Himself, I shall keep near Him, and His cause - His interests - His people -His work --and His workmen, will be dear to my heart. On the other hand I may scatter thousands in the various fields of Christian effort, in the schemes of benevolence and philanthropy, and all the while never taste the sacred reality of fellowship with Jesus Himself. His own words are, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." May our hearts' desire be to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." May God's Spirit enable us really to understand the difference between being patrons of Christianity and companions of a rejected Christ!

The Shepherd's Voice or Shrewdness? Which Will Keep Us

There are tests of holiness, of truth, of respect for the Word of God, which enable a "sheep" to discern the voice of the Good Shepherd. It may not be able to say what another's voice is; but till it recognizes the voice of the Good Shepherd, it fears to follow. A stranger will they not follow, because they know not the voice of strangers.

(He who) has no such safeguard must judge the thing himself, for himself, by his own acuteness. If the pretender is cleverer than he, he is deceived. How often is this the case! Nay, in many cases he is predisposed by false motives toward error and deceit; for unholy motives and deceit coalesce. At any rate he has no safeguard but his own acuteness; and he may easily fall. Now the godly, serious, simple-hearted man has. If it is not what his soul knows as truth, or according to it, he does not receive it. No new truth ever upsets old truth, but builds upon it - they mutually confirm each other. How many shrewd ones received false Christs! How many simple ones refused the Judases and Theudases, and received Christ! How many clever shrewd men have received the most monstrous imposture ever palmed on infatuated man - that of Mormonism! A simple-hearted believer escapes because he has got what guards him from the motives which lead a man to receive it... The capacity of shrewdness to escape is not... what places a soul in safety.

J. N. D.

The Shepherd's Voice or the Voice of a Stranger

John 10 has special instruction for us at this moment. It is said, "They (the sheep) know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers."

The great and important matter is that "They know His voice." Beautiful and divine order is here; and a necessary effect of this is that they do not know the voice of strangers. What then? This is not all that is said, for (first), they will not follow the stranger; and (second), they will flee from him.

No animal is more foolish, as well as more feeble, it has been said, than the sheep. And thus the Lord by this figure would show us ourselves, and, blessed be His name, Himself too.

They only know it is not His voice; and thus everything is settled for them. They do not argue about the claims or the statements the voice makes. If it waxes louder and louder, it only makes them flee the farther and the faster from it. It is their wisdom to hear the Shepherd's voice; no path for them but what it points out; no food for them but what He gives; no love for them like His.

How does all this apply to the troubles and difficulties of these last days? How, my reader, has it helped you in them? And where will you be found, if the Lord leaves you yet awhile to tread the wilderness? Oh, the grace that cares for us notwithstanding all. Jesus is the same (Heb. 13: 8), His voice is still to be heard; His sheep are His still. H. C. A.

Some Helpful Words on Psalm 32: Three Grand Realities

In this lovely psalm we have God presented to us in three ways. First, we have Him as our Justifier; second, as our Hiding-place; third, as our Guide. These surely are "Three Grand Realities." Nor is it merely that God provides us with justification, security and guidance, though even this were rich and abundant mercy and goodness; but there is far more than this - He Himself has become our Justifier, our Hiding place and our Guide. Wondrous provision! Such is the moral grandeur of redemption - such is the way in which the God of all grace has met our need. If God Himself is my Justifier, I must be perfectly justified. If He is my Hiding-place, I must be perfectly hidden. If He is my Guide, I must be perfectly guided.

Let us then, as guided by the light of holy Scripture, and in dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, proceed to consider, in the first place,

GOD OUR JUSTIFIER

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Oh! the blessedness! Transgression forgiven - sin covered. There is deeply imbedded in man's religious mind the thought that he has to meet God as a judge - that he, as a sinner, has, in some way or another, to satisfy the claims of a righteous judge who will deal with him about his sins and exact the very last farthing. As the dying gypsy exclaimed when told that he was standing at the very portal of the eternal world, "What! must I gang afore the Judge wi' a' my sins upon me!" Tremendous inquiry! If I have to meet God as my judge, it is all over with me. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2.

Hence therefore a soul looking at God as a judge may be filled with terror, inasmuch as he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" You cannot meet God as a judge. Condemnation must be the issue of a meeting between a righteous judge and a guilty sinner.

But, thanks be to God, He wears another character now. He is a righteous justifier. Yes, a justifier of such as cannot meet Him as a judge. God must be righteous in whatever sphere He displays Himself Whether as a judge or a justifier, He must be just. But in this day of grace, during "the acceptable year," "the day of salvation," He is revealing Himself as "a just God and a Savior" - a righteous Saviour God. What a character! What a stupendous triumph of redeeming love! What an answer to Satan! What a balm for the convicted conscience and stricken heart! A Savior-God! It is the very title which suits a lost sinner. It brings God near to me in the very condition and character in which I find myself.

If God is a Savior, it is precisely what suits me as lost. If God is a justifier, it is exactly what I need as guilty. None but a lost sinner can have to do with a Savior-God. None but a guilty sinner can have to do with God as a righteous justifier. Nothing can be simpler. It places salvation and justification on a basis as simple as it is solid, and as solid as it is simple: God reveals Himself as a Savior; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is saved. God reveals Himself as a justifier; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is justified. He is saved and justified according to the perfect standard of God's revelation of Himself. It is impossible to stand on more solid ground or occupy a more unassailable position than this. To touch the believer's salvation and justification is to mar the integrity of God's revelation.

And let the reader remember who it is that God justifies, for this point is only second in importance to the question of who is the justifier. Whom then does God justify? Is it good people? Where are they? Is it those who have done their duty? Are any such to be found? Is it those who have fulfilled the law? Such would not need His justification, seeing that "the man which doeth those things shall live by them." If therefore a man could fulfill the law, he should have no transgression to be forgiven, no sin to be covered, and hence a Savior-God - a righteous justifier - is not for him. This is obvious. A man who has wrought out a legal righteousness does not want an evangelical one. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." There was no use in His dying to get us righteousness if it could be had some other way.

Whom then does God justify? Hear it! He justifies the ungodly. Yes; such is the veritable language of holy Scripture. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. 4:4-8.

Here then we get our answer, full, clear, distinct and conclusive. Two characters are placed in contrast; namely, "him that worketh," and "him that worketh not," and this contrast completely upsets all man's thoughts. It never could have entered into man's mind to conceive that righteousness was to be had without working for it - that God would justify the ungodly. And yet this is the very doctrine of Scripture. If man could get righteousness by working for it, then clearly it would not be divine righteousness, for the simplest of all reasons, that this latter is to "him that worketh not." If God reveals Himself as the justifier of the ungodly, then it is a sheer denial of the revelation for man to come before Him in any other character.

If I, as a sinner, bring my duties to God, I must meet Him as a judge, for surely He must judge my duties to see if they are all right. But if I bring my sins to Him, He meets me as a justifier with a full and free forgiveness and an everlasting righteousness. The peculiar glory of the gospel is that it reveals God as the righteous justifier of poor ungodly sinners.

This is a marvelous truth. And if it be asked, as surely it must, by every exercised conscience, on what ground does this grand reality hold good? the answer is as clear and satisfactory as the most anxious soul can possibly desire.

It is this - God, as a judge, dealt with my sins at the cross in order that God as a justifier might deal with me at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus. The death of Christ therefore forms the

ground on which God can righteously justify the ungodly. A righteous judge condemned sin on the cross that a righteous justifier might pardon and justify the guilty. What a profound mystery! Well may angels desire to look into it; and well may sinners, whom it so blessedly concerns, bless and praise Him who has counseled, revealed, and wrought it all for them through the accomplished atonement of Christ.

GOD OUR HIDING-PLACE

It is a remarkable fact that so long as the sinner is at enmity with God he is at peace with himself; at peace with the world; at peace with the devil; but the moment he is brought into full peace with God, he is at war with himself, with the world, and with the devil. Hence, no sooner do I know God as my justifier than I have to cope with a host of spiritual enemies, within and around.

This makes me conscious of another need; I want a hiding-place into which I may retreat at all times, nay, rather out of which I may never venture to show myself. Now, God is this Hiding place. "Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." What a difference between the condition of the soul here and in the third and fourth verses! "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

What a contrast between the "roaring" of a sin-burdened soul fearing judgment, and the "songs of deliverance" of a justified soul, hidden in God! And yet it is far better to roar in disquietude of spirit, than to cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. True anxiety is vastly to be preferred to a false peace. But the believer has neither the one nor the other. His anxiety has been hushed into truthful repose by the knowledge of God as his justifier and hiding place; and therefore instead of the roarings of disquietude, he can sing songs of deliverance. Blessed exchange! Instead of crying out, "Oh! the wretchedness!" he can sing aloud "Oh! the blessedness!" "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place."

These are some of the "songs of deliverance" with which a Saviour God compasses about His justified and hidden ones. Would that we were more filled with them! Alas! that we should be more characterized by murmurings and complaining than by songs of triumph. Surely, if we would but ponder our mercies and blessings more deeply, our songs would be more abundant. Who have such reason to be glad as those who are justified by, and perfectly hidden in, God?

But we must close this paper by a brief reference to the third point in this lovely scripture; namely,

GOD OUR GUIDE

This we may truly say is a grand reality. Yes, and we want it as we pass along through the labyrinths of this wilderness-world, in this day of perplexity and confusion. We want a guide and God has undertaken to fill that office for us. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." What precious grace! It is as though our God would meet us at each stage of our path and manifest Himself in the very character in which we need

Him. When bowed down with guilt, and roaring in disquietude, our bones waxing old, and our moisture dried up, He shines before us as our justifier - our Savior-God - pardoning our transgressions and covering our sins. When surrounded by hosts of spiritual enemies who would crush us in a moment, He opens His bosom to us and invites us to find in Himself a retreat and a hiding-place from them all; so that instead of feeling ourselves compassed with foes, we are compassed with songs. And finally when called to pass through scenes of confusion and perplexity, He, in infinite grace, stands before us and says, "I will guide thee." What grace! What nearness! What intimacy!

And mark the way He guides. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." This as we know is the most tender, delicate, and affectionate description of guidance. We must be very intimate with a person and very near him in order to be guided by the movement of his eye. It is a far more refined and exquisite sort of guidance than the movement of the hand or the sound of the voice. I must be gazing directly into a person's face in order to catch the glance of his eye; and I must be intimately acquainted with his wishes and his ways in order to interpret the glance and act upon it.

O that we entered more fully into all this! Would that the guidance of our Father's eye were ever sufficient for us! Would that we could just place our hand in His and, gazing up into His countenance, be ever guided by the movement of His eye! Then would our path be clear and safe, simple and happy. We would not, like the impetuous "horse" or the obstinate "mule" require the "bit and bridle" of circumstances; but through communion with His mind we should know His will. How often we are at a loss as to our path! How often are we ill at ease! And why? Because the guidance of the eye is not understood. We ask God for guidance in reference to movements which He does not want us to make, and as to paths in which He does not want us to tread. "I don't know which way to turn," said someone lately to a Christian friend. What was the reply? A very simple one. "Don't turn at all." Just so. If you don't see your way as to moving, it is very obvious you should stand still.

May all the people of God be enabled, by His Spirit, to walk as justified ones, to abide in their Hiding-place, and follow their Guide!

Some Words of Encouragement and Warning

When the outward props of divine order in the assembly are taken from us, and those who are to the front in the fight are no more, everything is apparently gone; but in reality to faith there is no lack. "The LORD your God," said Joshua, "He it is that fighteth for you." v. 10. Leaders may depart; and it is a blessed thing to consider the end of their conversation, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Yes, nothing is lacking where there is faith; and where it is wanting everything decays, as happened with Israel and the Church.

Henceforth, if the people were to maintain themselves at the height of their privileges, they must realize in their own souls, and in their entire lives, that power of the Spirit which led them on to victory in the person of Joshua. "Be strong and of a good courage," He had said to Joshua in chapter 1:6, "for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them." There lay the power for victory, and now Joshua says to the people, "Be ye therefore very courageous." v. 6. This is realization in the soul.

Now how will this spiritual strength show itself in the people? In obedience to the written word, "to keep" - and this is inseparable from practice - "and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." To obey thus, the people had not only the power of God's Spirit with them, but they had before their eyes, a man, Joshua, on whom the same things had been enjoined, who had followed to the end in the pathway of obedience, and who could say with Paul, "I have kept the faith." But we, dear readers, have before us the true Joshua, the perfect model, the author and finisher of faith.

Notice too, how Joshua, like Paul, has a full sense of the changes which his departure would bring about. It would be the introduction of a new order of things. Decline would surely set in, as they both knew, but like a thread through a labyrinth, an infallible guide, they commend the Word of God: "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace."

Ah! it is the Word which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance, but above all to sanctify us. It was from neglect of it that Israel sank by degrees to the level of the idolatrous nations and 'their abominations. See in verse 7 how imperceptible, and at the same time slippery, is the downward path; first they come among these nations, forgetful of separation from the world; then they make mention of the name of their gods; we become familiarized with the ruling principles of the world; then we cause to swear by them; it seems natural that others should acknowledge them; then we serve them, and finally bow down ourselves to them; a downward path truly!

But there are other means of retaining their blessings besides obedience to the Word, and to these Joshua directs their attention. The second is cleaving to the Lord (v. 8); the heart and affections must be set on the Person of Christ. Do you often think, beloved, of that verse in Psalm 63? "My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me." Do we not feel - there is a heart which has given itself wholly to the Lord, and is able Acts 20:32: to tell Him so? for these are not

experiences which one would display before the world. It is a soul captivated by the beauty of its object, entirely surrendered to Christ, and discovering a power in Him to lift it above every difficulty, and preserve it from all danger. "Thy right hand upholdeth me." It is the same in our chapter (vss. 9-10); in cleaving to Him, the people experience the strength of Jehovah. Oh! may we in our troublous days realize more of this close cleaving of soul to Christ; may we have hearts that seek and desire naught save Himself, which do not make a show before the world of their feelings or of their consecration to God, which do not say, "I am rich... and have need of nothing," but which say to Christ in the silence of His own presence, and in accents which His ear alone can hear: "I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me, and also on account of Thy matchless beauty; O inimitable Pattern, some traits of whom, however feeble, I would fain reproduce! My soul followeth hard after Thee."

Thirdly we find vigilance. "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God" (vs. 11). We have to be watchful over our hearts, so as not to tolerate the ofttimes subtle entrance of lusts which weaken our affections for the Lord, and by means of which He is replaced by objects unworthy of being compared to Him, and which oblige Him to judge us (vss. 16-22). "Flee also youthful lusts," says the Apostle. "Be ye... sober, and watch."

H. L. R.

Something More Than Salvation: the Saviour Known and Loved

Read Luke 7:11.50

In this passage two scenes are brought before us. In the one we find the Lord enters the city of Nain, and in the other He is a guest in the house of the Pharisee. The meaning of the word Nain is "beautiful."

It is a beautiful place to which the Lord comes; but what is then presented to Him? The saddest picture which earth could offer! He meets at the gate of the city a widow who had lost her only son. This was the filling up of sorrow. Greater you could not find. We can hardly estimate the desolation of a widow in those days. There was no provision made for them as now; and here was one, not only a widow, but one who had lost her only son, on whom her heart naturally fastened, and who had grown up to be her stay. He was dead, and she was left utterly desolate. What a commentary on the beautiful things of this earth! Here was a beautiful place, but what misery of heart in it; and the Lord comes to it only to find there the greatest human sorrow!

Elisha had found the same terrible contrast at Jericho. The "men of the city" say unto him, "Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught and the ground barren." There was a positive attraction in the place itself; but then there was dearth and barrenness in it. The earth is like Jericho and Nain. That there is beauty in it I do not deny, but I say also there is death in it; "the water is naught, and the ground barren." 2 Kings 2:19.

The blessed Lord came to declare God's thoughts about man, and here we find Him in this place, called "beautiful," before a case of sorrow that, humanly speaking, was irreparable. What could you or I do in such a scene? What was all the beauty of the place to the widow when her last link to earth was gone?

But God had visited His people. Here was One who had come to destroy (not death only, but) "him that had the power of death... and to deliver them, who through fear of death were their entire lifetime subject to bondage." Well, it is He who comes to relieve the sorrow and desolation of this scene at Nain. His word is, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up... And He delivered him to his mother."

Let us look now at the other scene. The Lord's fame had gone abroad. The "rumor of Him went forth throughout all Judea." And in verse 36 we find Him a guest in a Pharisee's house. He is now revealed as the Savior. In this day we hear a great deal about salvation, but I want more than salvation; and I have more; I have a Savior!

What is the difference? you may ask.

Why this - even that I have the Person who wrought the salvation. Many a one who is not yet sure of the forgiveness of sins is more devoted than some who say they are. One is theoretically right but practically wrong; the other is practically right but theoretically wrong. Not one of the apostles, before the death of Christ, would speak with assurance of the forgiveness of sins; and yet how

devoted they were. And why? They had got the Person.

It is the Lord's Person that is left out in the preaching of this day, while His work is proclaimed. If any sovereign of a country gave himself for me, would it not be far above any benefit he could confer?

Well, in Christ I have got the blessed One Himself - not salvation only, but a Savior. Simeon had the Savior in his arms (Luke 2). Nothing really satisfies the heart but a knowledge of the Person who has conferred the benefit. It is this that gives rest to the soul - security. I have love itself, the whole of His heart; and my necessity becomes the opportunity for the display of the love. Love is not exhausted by giving expression to itself, and GOD'S love is not happy till it has removed every hindrance to the expression of itself, and met my every need. Then only can it fully enjoy itself. The woman who touched His garment was made whole, but she had no sense of security till she knew the heart of the One who had healed her - till He made her to know "I have done it, and that with all my heart." Then she got the knowledge, not only of salvation but, of a Savior (Luke 8).

Now it is just this which we get in this scene in the Pharisee's house. The report of the Lord had gone abroad, and this poor woman, when she knows where He is, comes to Him; for she says, I have got a Savior. Then mark! she comes to Him; she is drawn to Him; she was a sinner; she wanted a Savior; she knew that He sat in the Pharisee's house, and she was awakened to the sense of what He was in Himself.

How different was it with the Pharisee! He too had heard the rumor of this wondrous One who had brought in life when there was death, and he invited Him to his house. But mark the reception! Thus it is with many of the religious people of this day; they accord Him a certain reception, but there is no real link to Him. But this woman, who was a sinner, feels the magnitude and gravity of what he has wrought; and it is Himself, the Savior, that is before her mind, though she knows nothing about the extent of the blessing.

The Lord knows all about her history and state; and He says, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

Now, this is just what characterizes a true reception of Christ. She has found out that He is the Savior; and how does she come to Him? Prepared to make the most of Him. She can do nothing else; she is taken up with the Person of the Lord; she is indifferent to the sneers of the Pharisees, and undeterred by her own wretched condition; she thinks only of making much of this blessed One. She was very ignorant, and as yet knew nothing of the forgiveness of sins, but she was regardless of everyone but Himself. He is her Savior, and her heart is so captivated with Him, that the one purpose of it is to make much of Him, at the expense of herself and everything else. Great love can make no account of self. To make much of its object is its one thought, and there is no effort. She "stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

The Pharisee received Him into his house, but had no thought of all these attentions, and in his heart he condemns her; but no matter what might be said of herself, her purpose was fixed; there was One before her to whom her heart was bound.

By an unseen process this woman is led to Christ; she is absorbed with Him. Like Jonathan to David, her soul is knit to Him, and the Lord takes it into account because He knew it was love. It is not a question of the amount done; it is the manner of the attention, the minuteness of it; and He marks the contrast between her and the Pharisee, and says, "Thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment."

You may know the forgiveness of your sins, and yet your heart may not be bound to Him as it should be, and you may never have stepped out of your way for a moment to declare that He is the object of your heart, One so worthy in your eyes that the very thing that would distinguish you, is the very thing you would give to distinguish Him. Ah! if your soul has apprehended what Christ has wrought for you, your whole life will declare it. The order and depth of conversions are proved by the measure of the apprehension souls have of Him.

It is one thing to be saved, to have salvation, and another for your soul to be in immediate contact with your Savior. He has been lifted up as the brazen serpent. Have you looked and lived? If you have looked at Him, you cannot help loving Him; and, like Jonathan, your heart requires of you that its love should find expression without an effort.

We meet with conversions in the present day in which there is little evidence of affection to Him, no sense of who He is, or of His being personally an object to the heart. It is merely a question of happiness, or rather, rest of conscience. People are asked, "Are you happy?" I ask, Have you found Christ?" And if you have, the distinguishing mark of your possession is that you delight in Him.

Neither do I believe it can be a happy conversion where forgiveness is everything. It is the one who is forgiven much that loves much; and where there is but little devotedness to Christ there is little sense of what He has done. How often we are allowed to get into doubt, trouble, sorrow, just to bring to our souls the wonderful blessing of finding Christ our Object; when we have found Him it is easy to give up everything for Him, nay it is pain to keep anything back from Him. Simeon, with the Babe in his arms, says, Everything for me is bound up in this Child; I don't want anything more. Peter forsook all to follow Him. Was it sorrow to him? It would have been far more sorrow if the Lord had forbidden him to do so. The man that was delivered besought Him that he might be with Him (Mark 5:18). Zacchaeus wants to see Him, and so this poor woman goes straight to Him; He is her Savior. Paul says, He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." Can you say, "He has done it for me"? This it is that occupies you with the Person; this is the mark of a true reception of Christ. If you have believed the testimony to His work, your heart ought to be occupied with the One who wrought it.

A devoted heart is only one that has discovered the worth of Christ; and no one can be devoted until he has discovered it. It is not a question of time or attainment; the immediate and necessary consequence of this secret being divulged to your heart is to make it true to the One to whom it is so deeply indebted. Love makes much of its object, and counts it not self-sacrifice. Self drops off when my Savior becomes the one object of my heart.

Special Notice to Our Readers

With this issue, the magazine known as "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN" since January, 1911 becomes "CHRISTIAN TRUTH for the household of faith."

There has been much exercise before the Lord as to making this change in a periodical which we believe has had His blessing. We do feel that the new title more aptly expresses the aims and scope of this publication. By enlarging and rearranging it we have increased the reading content by approximately 45%; this will enable us to include certain valuable articles written by men of God in the past. These articles have been out of print for many years, but contain rich ministry for the present day.

We purpose to continue to speak frankly on current matters and problems through "The Editor's Column," and will seek, with the Lord's help, to bring the light of the Word of God to bear on such subjects.

The recent arrangement of questions and answers will be continued. We hope this will stimulate a greater interest in searching of the Scriptures.

The new and nominal subscription rate of \$1.00 per year will not cover the actual cost of publishing and mailing, unless - as we hope and rather expect - there is a substantial increase in our subscriptions.

We desire the prayers of our fellow-Christians for wisdom and guidance in both the editing and publishing, and for the Lord's continued blessing on this work. We truly desire that through the pages of this periodical the children of God may be helped by ministry "to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

THE PUBLISHERS January, 1948 THE EDITOR

Successional Religion

"And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon Him with the elders, and spake unto Him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest Thou these things? or who is he that gave Thee this authority?" See Luke 20:1-8.

It is ever apt to be thus in an evil day. Worldly religion assumes the sanction of God for what exists, its permanence and its future triumph. It was so in Israel; and it is so in Christendom. Prophets then held up the fate of Shiloh to the religious chiefs who reasoned from the promises of guaranteed perpetuity of the Temple, its ordinances, its ministers and its system in general; and those who warned like Jeremiah found bitter results in the taunts and persecutions of such as had the world's ear. They denied God's title to tell them the truth.

And now a greater than Jeremiah was here; and those who stood on their successional office, and those who claimed special knowledge of the Scriptures, and those of leading influence in the counsels and conduct of the people, demanded His right to act as He did, and its source.

No wonder they felt the solemn testimony of approaching ruin to all that in which they had their importance; but there was no faith, no conscience toward God. They therefore turned away from the consideration of their own ways and responsibility to the question of His title. W. K.

Suffering With Christ

"If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His. It is not suffering for Him; for all Christians do not. But all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature. This suffering flows from possessing life in Him while passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him; and the indwelling of the

Spirit, instead of hindering this holy sorrow, is rather the spring of energy both in keen apprehension and deep feeling of every way in which Christ is dishonored, and in meek endurance of all by which we may be tried according to the will of God. Hence, if this place of suffering in the world, as it now is, be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory.

Summary of Events of the Year

The events of this past year have been so numerous that their importance is apt to be overlooked. Perhaps never before have so many history shaping events taken place in one year, and all of them pointing in one direction: the coming of the Lord and the end of this age. It is well that we should take cognizance of these things and thus be reminded that the days of our earthly sojourn are rapidly nearing their end; and if the end is that near, "What manner of persons ought [we] to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Surely if the reality of our departure were laid hold of we would be less concerned with earthly matters and want to learn more of him with whom we are so soon to spend eternity.

During the year Great Britain left India, which was then divided into two separate nations. Prophetic teachers have long expressed the thought that the British would have to leave India; in fact, from prophecy it seems apparent that there is little room in the coming era of trouble for more than a Western confederation (the Roman Empire being the focal point of all Western civilization), the confederacy of Moslem nations north of Palestine (the King of the North-the enemy of the Jews), and Russia and her Satellites as described in Eze. 38 and 39. If Britain were to retain her control of India and at the same time become an integral part of a Roman Empire there would be a conflict of spheres and zones of influence.

Russia pushed forward during the year and made immense gains in Europe, but (temporarily at least) has been halted by united Western pressure on about the line of the old Roman Empire. It seems likely that she will be held at about that point, but that the breach between East and West will continue. The threat, however, that Russia poses has crystallized Western opposition; and under this threat the union of Western European nations (although still in swaddling clothes) has been formed. The idea of such an alliance has taken hold of men who are thus being prepared for the coming events.

Jerusalem passed from the hands of Britain to those of the United Nations-just another change in Gentile lords, which Gentile control must continue "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." But perhaps the most astounding event of the year was the formation of the nation of Israel. Many of us have expected developments which would open the way for an apostate Israel to accept the Antichrist -the false prophet-but the suddenness with which the new nation came into being surprised many. There it stands today ready for the Antichrist. What an answer the Jew is to all infidel reasonings! After centuries of scatterings, persecutions, and forced mixing with other peoples, the seed of Jacob has emerged as separate and distinct as before the days of Nebuchadnezzar-over 2500 years ago.

The assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, the United Nations mediator in Jerusalem, added extra emphasis to the truth that Jerusalem is still being trodden down of the Gentiles. He and his party were riding through that city as visible evidence of Gentile control. It also brought home to another nation-Sweden-that Jerusalem is "a burdensome stone."

Another unusual event that perhaps should not be overlooked was the formation of the World Council of Churches, at Amsterdam. It was said by some to be the greatest Protestant event since the Reformation. But at this point we should remind ourselves that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." That great ecumenical conference is but sad proof of the tendency of Christendom; all is heading toward the last stage of the professing church-"rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Combination, amalgamation, federation, or union is the aim of men today in almost every line, but in ecclesiastical matters it is always accomplished, through indifference to Christ. At the Amsterdam meeting, modernists-those who hold false doctrines, and deny the deity of Christ and His atoning death-joined hands with some who were perhaps true but misguided Christians. May we remember the words of our Lord to Laodicea, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." Rev. 3:15, 16. Any religious combination that sacrifices allegiance to the glory of Christ and the truth of God is evidence of indifference -lukewarmness-which is so hateful to Him who is Holy and True.

So then, whether we view the events of the year as showing the preparatory stages of the nations, or the trend in the professing church, all indicates one thing; namely, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Surrounded by God

"Kept by the power of God" 1 Peter 1 :5

"The Lord will go before you." Isa. 52:12.

"The glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward." Isa. 58:8.

"The LORD is round about His people." Psa. 125:2.

"Underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:27.

"His banner over me was love." S. Sol. 2:4.

Taking the Lowest Place

In Matt. 20 the Lord takes occasion to explain the sentiments that become His followers, the perfection of which they had seen in Himself. In the world, authority was sought for; but the spirit of Christ was a spirit of service, leading to the choice of the lowest place, and to entire devotedness to others. Beautiful and perfect principles, the full bright perfection of which was displayed in Christ. The renunciation of all things, in order to depend confidently on the grace of Him whom we serve, the consequent readiness to take the lowest place, and thus to be the servant of all - this should be the spirit of those who have part in the kingdom as now established by the rejected Lord. It is this that becomes His followers.

Observe the way in which the sons of Zebedee and their mother come to seek the highest place, at the moment when the Lord was preparing unreservedly to take the very lowest. Alas! we see so much of the same spirit. The effect was to bring out how absolutely He had stripped Himself of everything. These are the principles of the heavenly kingdom; perfect self-renunciation, to be contented in thorough devotedness; this is the fruit of love that seeketh not her own - the yieldingness that flows from the absence of self-seeking; submission when despised; meekness and lowliness of heart. The spirit of service to others is that which love produces at the same time as the humility which is satisfied with this place. The Lord fulfilled this even unto death, giving His life as a ransom for many.

J. N. D.

Television

We are living in an age of wonders. God is allowing men to accomplish great things; in fact, man is daily doing what, 50 years ago, some would have said God could not do, and if the Bible had mentioned these things, some men of those days would have scoffed the more.

Radio is one of the great wonders of this generation. Man can send his voice around the world; he can speak or sing in one place and have millions of people listen while sitting in their own homes, and yet have no wire connecting them.

And now: TELEVISION. By its means not only voices can be transmitted but animated pictures can be sent over the air and reproduced where men please.

Men who say (or at least act as though) God cannot see or hear them in their sins, can accurately reproduce their own deeds, either at once or hold them until some later date. And shall not God "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing"? Eccl. 12:14.

"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" Psalm 94:9.

The good done by radio has been extolled many times: it has carried messages of distress from ships at sea and thus saved many lives; it has warned people of floods and tornadoes and enabled many to escape death; it has disseminated forecasts of weather conditions and so saved tremendous crop damage; and even the gospel has gone out by its means. But there is another side to all this: the great enemy of man - Satan - has used the radio most extensively. He has adapted it to his nefarious schemes to lure unsaved people on to a Christless death and eternal damnation. It has been one of his most artful modes of lulling to sleep those who should be aroused about sin, death, and judgment to come. He, as the god and prince of this world, has equipped radio with such a variety of entertainment as to satisfy almost any temperament or disposition - yes, even to religion. Alas, alas, while some preach the gospel over it, it has dispensed much religious poison - from the false cults to rank modernism that denies the authority of the Word of God, the deity of Christ, and His atoning death,

In addition to luring the unsaved on to their doom, radio has robbed the beloved saints of God of much joy in Himself and occupation with Christ. It is obviously impossible to enjoy the world's radio entertainment and Christ at the same time; instead, it robs the soul and clutters the mind with the "leeks, onions, melons, and garlic" of Egypt, thus spoiling the spiritual appetite for the "manna" - Christ, the bread from heaven. And many dear saints have been ensnared in religious error of one kind and another through laxity in taking heed to what they hear.

And now: TELEVISION. The prince and the power of the air, who is also the god of this world, is now ready to sell people on installing television sets in their homes. It has long been said that the eye takes in more than the ear, so now men will be able to see as well as hear entertainment from the world. As the manufacture of television sets goes into mass production, and they are offered

for sale in more and more places, a word of solemn warning needs to be sounded. Fellow Christian, is it not true that no conceivable interest of Christ or His kingdom can be served by a television set being in the home of a heavenly man? What would the Apostle Paul say, who pleads by the Holy Spirit - "set your affections [minds] on things above"?

Have we not all allowed much of the world and its influences to creep into our houses? Has not the world an insidious influence on our lives, to our shame? Has not Christ been robbed in the measure in which He has been displaced in our thoughts and affections? Surely television can do nothing but further delude the lost and rob the saints. For a Christian to have one in his home is to open his home to the world; it will bring the world's shows, games, prize fights, and numerous other things into the home. Christians, beware of the lure, for if allowed, it will bring into your home what you would not go to see. Things and places that your spiritual intelligence would shrink in horror from would then be available, at the turn of a switch, to you and your household - "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." Matt. 6:33.

Temptations in the Wilderness

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward ahungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." Matt. 3:17; 4:1-11.

The temptation was needful to the introduction of the Lord into His ministry.

If the work which now lay before Him be redemption, if He be about to repair, yea, more than repair, the mischief which the first man had wrought, and which all other men had but witnessed and perpetuated, so must He personally stand where the first man, and all beside, had failed. Hence the temptation. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The Spirit, who had descended and rested on Him at His baptism, in a bodily shape like a dove, now puts Him forth to withstand the serpent, who is also the roaring lion; for the dove-like ministry of grace to sinners is one with the full defeat of man's destroyer. Jesus came to save sinners and to destroy the works of the devil.

Accordingly, Jesus in the very outset and as introducing Himself to His work, withstands Satan. He proves Himself to be impregnable. Eve surrendered God's word to the serpent; Jesus withstands him by it. No attempt of the enemy prevails. The Holy Thing that had been born is still as holy in full manhood as He had been in the virgin's womb. He proves Himself not to be in the common defeat and captivity. He leaves Satan without any title against Him; and thus He binds him.

And this binding of him is the first great action of our Deliverer with our destroyer.

He then comes forth at once, to enter his house and spoil his goods.

In the due season He will be his Bruiser, as well as his Binder and Spoiler. He will bruise his head on Calvary.

Then, in the [future], he will cast him from heaven (Rev. 12).

Then He will put him into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20).

And finally, He will cast him into the lake of fire (Rev. 20).

These are the ways of our Great Deliverer with our adversary; and these ways He here begins in the wilderness of the temptation. How simple, and yet how glorious! How perfect in order, as well as mighty in action, from first to last! No one binds or bruises Satan but Jesus the Son of God. Samson typifies Him as the Stronger Man entering into the strong man's house to spoil his goods; and all the saints will have Satan bruised under their feet in season; but Jesus the Son of God bound the strong man, and bruised the head of the serpent. These works were all His own, and His only.

And all this was introductory to His ministry. As having fulfilled all righteousness, whether under the law of Moses, or under the baptism of John; as owned and ordained of the Father, in whose eyes the feet of this Messenger were to be more than beautiful; as endowed by the Holy Ghost, and as the Binder of the strong man, the Son comes forth to fulfill His course.

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil... And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about." Luke 4:14, 1-2.

Jesus owned as Son of God, and that too in connection with the human family, as Adam had been (Luke 3:22, 38), Satan could not allow. He could not let this claim be revived without contesting it; for through his subtlety the first man had lost his dignity. God had created man, and in His likeness made him; but man had begotten children "in his own likeness," defiled as he was, and not as a race worthy of being called "sons of God." But Jesus had now appeared to re-assert in man this lost dignity. The devil must therefore try His title to it; and with this purpose he comes now to tempt Him, saying, "If Thou be the Son of God." This was a crisis between the anointed Man and man's great enemy. And surely Jesus stood, stood in the loftiest attitude of a conqueror.

Everything that had surrounded Adam, the first man, might well have pleaded for God against the enemy. The sweetness of the whole scene, the beauty of that garden of delights with its rivers which parted hither and thither, the fruits and perfume, with the willing service of ten thousand tributary creatures, all had a voice for God against the accuser. But Jesus was in a wilderness which yielded nothing, but left Him "ahungred," and the wild beasts were with Him, and all might have been pleaded by the accuser against God. All was against Jesus, as all had been for Adam; but He stood as Adam had fallen. The man of the dust failed, with all to favor him; The Man of God stood, with all against Him. And what a victory was this! What complacency in man must this have restored to the mind of God!

To achieve this victory Jesus had been led up of the Spirit into this place of battle, for His commission was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). He stood now as the champion of God's glory and man's blessing, in this revolted world, to try His strength with the enemy of both, to make proof of His ministry, and to the highest pitch of praise He is more than conqueror.

But He was conqueror for us, and therefore at once comes forth with the spoils of that day, to lay them as at our feet. He had been alone in the conflict, but would not be alone in the victory. He that soweth and he that reapeth must rejoice together. It was an ancient statute of David that he that tarried by the stuff should share with him that went down to the battle. And it was a decree worthy the grace of "the beloved." But a better even than David, One not only of royal, but of

divine, grace is here; and accordingly Jesus the Son of God comes forth from the wilderness to publish peace, to heal disease, to meet all the need of those who were the captives of this enemy, and to let them know that He had conquered for them.

This tells us the character of the blessing which we sinners get from the hand of the Son of God. We get it as spoils of conquest. By sin we have forfeited all creation blessing. All such was once ours in Eden, but we lost it there; and now all blessing is the fruit of the victory of Jesus. All this gives the heart assurance while enjoying it, for we read our title to it while we take it. The Blesser has entitled Himself to bless, for He has won the blessing before He confers it. We therefore know our right to be blessed by Jesus, as surely as Adam knew his to be happy in Eden. And what doubt could he have had? It is not stolen waters that we drink, nor bread eaten in secret that we feed upon, but meat won from the very jaws of the eater, and sweetness gathered from the strong. This is the character of the blessing which the Lord is giving to us sinners. It is His own well-earned spoils. And such do we get here. Full of the Holy Ghost (v. 1), He met the devil in conflict, to withstand and overthrow him; full of the Holy Ghost still (v. 14), He meets sinners with blessing, to heal and to save them. And, since this day in the wilderness, He has been on Calvary with him that had the power of death, and there by death destroyed [annulled] him; He has come forth in resurrection, again to part His spoils with sinners all the world over; and with certainty of heart we survey and enjoy the glorious blessings.

But where is the sinner to value the blessing and to array himself with the spoils of the conquering Son of God? That is the question, the only question, now. Man has no mind for the blessing and cares not about a victory and its spoils, in which the god of this world has been judged.

Thou Gavest Them Me

I have had deep delight in the thought of the Father giving us to the Son; to Him who was the object of His eternal delight and love, and to be associated with Him in this, being such a priori in the divine thought and counsels. The Son has done all that was needed to place us there righteously, though according to infinite love and grace, but in doing it He has done all that perfectly glorified the Father, and that too as God Himself (John 17); and then, He associates us with Himself "My Father, and your Father... My God and your God." And He tells us that even the world shall know that we are loved as He is; and this secured, in that, while this love is in us by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, Christ Himself is in us; the power of life and nature and capacity to enjoy it; and proving His love by His suffering, as passing knowledge. What a place to be put in, and what love to know! Our special relationship as presented to Himself is another thing.

J. N. D.

To Him That Overcometh

It must be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus, to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love, to find that He has approved our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us? even in the Church to be thought nothing of? - that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name" which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it?

Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favor, but seeks honor (as we do) of one another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you - which would you prefer - the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond - The latter. Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will -carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

To Those Who Know the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ

It Is the Happy Portion of Every Christian to Know the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Man by Nature Knows Not This Grace; His Every Thought Is Foreign to It. Sin Made Man a Coward, and a Stranger From God, and His Innate Thoughts Are That God Is a Hard Master. He Is, as the Poet So Aptly Expressed It, "A Stranger to Grace and to God." Grace Is Not Only Unknown but Unwanted. It Is Strangely Sad That Man Should Be So Desperately in Need of Grace and Yet Be a Total Stranger to It, While All the Time the Heart God Is Yearning to Show Grace

But there are those who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious"; they have touched, as it _ were, the hem of His garment and found an exhaustless river of grace flowing forth. Every true Christian knows the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"; he may not know much of its soundless depths, but unless he knows that grace he is lost, in his sins, and on the road to the pit. So then, we may divide mankind into two classes: those who know that grace and are saved, and those who do not. He who knows it can joyfully sing those well-known words:

"Grace is the sweetest sound

That ever reached our ears;

When conscience charged and justice frowned,

'Twas grace removed our fears."

Thus the Spirit of God, by the Apostle, addresses these words to us: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor.

8:9. Each child of God is embraced in "ye know." And fellow- Christian, what grace it was that opened our poor blind eyes and hard hearts to lay hold of His grace - grace that met us where we were in our dire need. And note whose grace is here spoken of: "our Lord Jesus Christ." Him whom we have owned as our Lord - that One to whom we belong.

And has it been a hardship? far be the thought. The Apostle spoke very affectionately of "Christ Jesus my Lord." The beloved Apostle was an old man in prison for his Lord's sake when he wrote those words to the Philippian saints; was his service hard? no, Paul gloried in it, he loved it.

Then take the next word of this verse - "Jesus" -and see what memories it brings to our hearts. Yes, "Jesus the name we love so well!" The name of that blessed One who came from heaven and trod the pathway on earth.

How we delight to trace His footsteps in the Gospels - every step showing divine perfection on earth, and yet He was truly "a man.

It is the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, "God has made that same Jesus... both Lord and Christ." Christ means "anointed." He is God's anointed One. He is now seated in heaven at God's

right hand, and God views us who know His grace as being in Him there. Oh, what a place of favor! All our blessings are in Christ. Yes, dear Christian, we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but how are we to gauge that grace? read on:

"though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."

First we must ask the question, How rich was He? Such a question plunges us into thoughts of His glory that amaze and astonish.

His riches include all His glory in deity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Can we poor finite creatures comprehend that? No. Go back before Genesis 1, go back before the world was, back as far as the mind can go, and when you get there, He "was" there, and He "was God." "All things were created by Him and for Him."

There is no single exception; all was created by Him and for Him.

Go through the Word of God and you will find many verses which tell of His riches. He speaks through Isaiah the prophet, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." Yes, He "was rich.";

not as man saw Him in His pathway on earth. Here He was with the poor, and according to men's standards, He was poor. We never read of the Lord having had a piece of money. He came into the world in the stable of an inn. He was laid in one man's manger, and when He was to leave the world, He was placed in another man's tomb. Surely when Scripture speaks of His having been rich, it refers to all that He had before He became a man.

Then we see Him becoming poor. If His riches excelled all, so His poverty was greater than all. From the very highest, He went to the very lowest. From the "form of God" to the "form of a servant" and "the likeness of men." Down, down, down He came and did not stop until He had gone to "death," and lower than that - "the death of the cross." Lower He could not go;

higher He could not have been.

The "cross," that death reserved for the lowest, for slaves and the meanest of criminals - such was the Roman thought of death on a cross. And what was the Jews'

thought? It was formed by Scripture, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

And when we think of the shame, ignominy, and suffering of the cross, let us not forget those three awful hours of darkness, when the sun refused to shine -from 12 noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It was in those three terrible hours that the blessed Lord Jesus was made sin for us --

"What shame, what grief, what joy we prove That He should die for us!

Our hearts were broken by that cry -Eli, lama sabachthani?' "

It was the bearing of our sins Li His own body on the tree that forced from His blessed lips those awful words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Such then, dear saints of God, is the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" in coming from the highest height to the very lowest depth;

and why? "for your sakes." Does not this touch something in your heart and mine? Yes, for our sakes He came where we were;

for our sakes He became a man and went into death and there was made sin-"the Just for the unjust."

Our condition was so bad that such a great descent was necessary to pick us up; nothing short of such coming down would have met our case, Yes, "Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop, Thence is all Thy people's hope."

And was His grace only displayed in coming all the way down to where we lay in order to cleanse us from our sins? No, no, no;

that would not have been "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ "

His grace will not stop until it has us with Him in glory-"that we through His poverty might be rich." He came from the highest to the lowest and He lifts us up from that low place, where He found us, to the heights of heaven.'

There we shall be, not as beggars, not as strangers, but there with and like Himself, far above angels.

We cannot comprehend the riches that He had, nor the poverty to which He came; and we cannot fully know the pit we were in, nor lay hold of the glory that shall be ours. Yes, that "we through His poverty might be rich." Well may we add the words of the poet, "Thou wast poor that we might be Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee."

A Trip to the Unfailing Physician

Mark 5:25.34; Luke 8:43.48

The daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, lay dying in her father's house. Everything that could be done for her had been done, but nothing could stay the relentless waves of death, which rolled onward as if resolved to quench the light of that fair young life. Will then the father and mother of the damsel have to part with this dear child of their affection? It must be so, unless Jesus would come and raise her up; and happily for them Jesus was at hand. Jairus goes to Him, beseeches Him to come and bid his daughter live; and the blessed Lord, ever gracious, ever ready to answer the cry of need, would go and rescue this child from the gates of the grave, and place her again in her parents' bosom. On His way to the ruler's house much people followed and thronged Him, and among them there is one to whose state and actions the pen of the inspired evangelist now abruptly turns our attention.

For twelve long years she had been sick, and her case, like that of the ruler's daughter, baffled the skill of the medical men. Physician after physician was consulted, and fee after fee paid, till all that she had was gone, and she was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. Oh those weary twelve years, during which the heart of this suffering woman had been beaten about like a shuttlecock between hope and despair - one day thinking she was gaining strength, the next day finding she was not; one physician given up and another tried, but all alike impotent to do her any good, until poverty and a long unbroken series of disappointments bade her hope for health no more, but prepare for the final issue - the coffin and the grave.

What a picture have we here of the sinner's condition! How it speaks of that incurable disease - sin - from which humanity everywhere is suffering, and of the anxious but fruitless efforts of many a soul to find spiritual health and healing. Yes, sin is an awful reality; and death and sorrow and crying and pain and tears are the bitter fruits of it in this world, and how infinitely more sad and solemn its results in the world to come. And this cruel and malignant foe has made a prey of every heart, and manifests its presence and its power in man's insubjection to God, in lawlessness, for "sin is lawlessness." It is a terrible thing to be a sinner, and the fact that all have sinned does not lessen the terribleness of it any more than the power of cholera to kill would be lessened by every individual in the country being seized with it together. "All have sinned." Alas! alas! that it should be so.

Many are the means which well intentioned persons have devised to repress or at least -check certain forms in which sin shows itself. There are societies for the promotion of temperance, of social purity; societies for the circulation of wholesome literature, and for the suppression of vice; but all such agencies, when they have accomplished their highest measure of good, leave the sinner's state before God untouched. The sore healed upon the surface frets underneath; the chained demoniac is a demoniac still; the rotten ship is not made sound by being painted on the outside. Stanch the bleeding wounds of humanity as much as you may, man remains a sinner, and the question for each is, What do you purpose doing in reference to your having sinned against

God?

If you set yourself earnestly to work, determined to lead a better life in every sense of the word, in what way would that make your condition less hopeless than it is? If a man is deeply in debt, his circumstances are not improved by his resolve not to add to his indebtedness. If in the future he pays cash for all he buys, that does not liquidate his former debts - the past remains, and it is written that "God requireth that which is past." Eccles. 3:15.

It is the natural impulse of the heart to have recourse to many physicians. No one likes to regard his case as hopeless. No one likes to believe himself lost as far as his own efforts go. When the prodigal's last penny was spent, and no man gave unto him, he did not begin at once to think of his father's house, nor determine to return thither. He will seek to mend his broken fortunes somehow; anything rather than go back in poverty and rags, and own the sin and shame and folly of his ways. But if God is dealing with your soul, it is to that point you must be brought, and the longer you fight against it, the longer will your misery last. If you still resist, God will suffer you to go, on till your last cent is gone, and your last interview with the physicians is over, and what will you then do? Poor and without strength, sick and ready to die, to whom will you then turn?

The woman of our narrative had come to this when someone told her of Jesus. What her informant said we know not, but it is easy to imagine how hope sprang up afresh within her heart - hope which maketh not ashamed - as she heard of One whose power had never been known to fail. Here was a new Physician to whom the poor were as welcome as the rich, and from whom healing virtue flowed at the first touch of those who felt their need of Him. To Him then she would go, and go at once; so gathering her garments about her, she straightway mingled with the great crowd in the street.

Little by little did this afflicted soul elbow her way through the throng. Hope gave her fresh strength, and her faith led her to dare what otherwise she would have shrunk from; for, as men speak, the crowd was no place for her. But she said, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole," and this was no small matter for one who had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. Silently and unobserved she drew near, and stretching out the hand touched the hem of His garment. The act was weak, but how rich in its results! The simple touch of this feeble woman ended in her perfect cure. What she had sought in vain all those long years now came to her in a moment, not as the reward of incessant labor or almost endless research, but the happy fruit of a faith that brought her into personal contact with Jesus.

Nor is it otherwise today. The sinner that comes to the Savior does not remain unblessed. The serpent-bitten Israelites lived when they looked on the serpent of brass; and the conscience-stricken jailor at Philippi was saved the moment he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation tomorrow might do very well for any who are sure of living till tomorrow, but for those who know the uncertainty of human life a present salvation is required. This is what God presents. Salvation now, free and everlasting, is found in Christ for everyone that believes. The soul that believes in Him is saved, everlasting life is his, into judgment he shall never come, he has already passed from death unto life. (John 5:24.)

And this dear, timid woman, having received healing, would now return home as unheeded as she came. Little did she think that her faint touch had been noticed by the Savior; but it was happy for her that it had. So with his question and His look He called her from the clustering crowd. Fearing and trembling she came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Everything was out. She who had secretly obtained the blessing is now in the presence of the Blessor, and what will He say? Will He blame her boldness in coming to Him as it were by stealth, and censure her lack of courage in not asking for healing in the open day? Far from that - He calls her to His feet that she might know the heart of Him whose power she had already proved. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." She can now go back with the blessing confirmed in her possession, and her spirit rejoicing in the One who had blessed her thus.

When the soul has received eternal blessing from Christ, it is well that there should be a firm confession of His name. It was due to Him that this one should declare "before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately." Who can tell the effect of this personal and public testimony? By it the faith that was ready to falter may have received strength, and some hearing of what Jesus had done may have hastened to tell of Him to others whose case was as hopeless as hers.

Another point may be noticed. Numbers may flock around Jesus and touch Him but at the touch of faith alone the healing streams flow forth. It is only when such a touch is given that the Savior can say, "Somebody hath touched Me." And has this no voice for those who crowd around Christ, so to speak, in places where His name is named? There they like to go as their going gives a tone to their respectability, which would not be complete without it. Moreover, it quiets the conscience and rocks it to sleep in the cradle of self-complacency. But alas! how few among the many who handle the externals of religion have touched the hem of His garment in faith and in felt need!

How few know Him savingly, yet not to know Him thus is not to know Him at all.

"And didst Thou feel the gentle touch

Amid the noisy rabble throng;

Knowing that need of Thee had drawn

A weak one, that rude crowd among?

With sickened frame, and trembling heart,

She crept unnoticed through the throng;

And, sheltered 'neath those healing wings,

She found, at once, her burden gone.

Her need was answered - and unseen

As she had come, she hoped to go,

Alone to love that healing One

Whom soon she'd as Messiah know.

But no - the words 'Who touched My clothes?'

Gave birth to thoughts which none could tell:

She had spent all -had naught' to give -

And trembling at His feet she fell.

She knew Him not. 'Be of good cheer'

Threw peace, and joy, and 'light around;

As rainbow-drops from heaven descend In grateful showers on thirsty ground.

Her fears dispelled, she sees Him now

Her God and Savior, looking love:

He'd been her hope of comfort here,

And now her hope of joy above.'

How to Perform True Service: True Service

True service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten, then the service is defective; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth. The body is of Christ, and He loves it as He loves Himself, and every one who would serve it, will best learn to do so, by knowing His heart and purposes toward it. In a word, it is Christ who serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands." If we are not derivative and communicative from Christ, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit; and after all, the service is not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of Christ; and if He be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect, in our minds, Christ from our service; and this, much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. Whether in reading or praying or speaking, how seldom (if we judge ourselves) do we find that we act simply as toward Christ, and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feeling affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him!

"Thrice happy he who serveth

The Lord with heart and soul!

Whose purpose never swerveth,

Who loves the Lord's control.

With single eye - unfearing -

With simple, child-like faith -

The Master's accents hearing;

He doth whate'er He saith.' "

The Truth in Action

The Word of God should not only be a check on our thoughts, but the source of them, which is a far deeper thing. We see it in Christ, the only perfect One. He only could say, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." "Thy word have I hid in Mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." There is a preserving power in the Word, to keep the feet from sliding, which those only know who receive the truth in the love of it. Merely having the Word hid in the memory and mind will not do. There is no preserving power in that. There must be the action of the truth on the heart and conscience, separating from all defilement - otherwise its preserving power cannot be experienced.

The Two Worlds

What an unworldly chapter, if I may so express myself, this is! At the opening of it believers are taught not to let their condition in the world avail itself or make profit of the fact that they are believers-brethren in Christ. The believing servant is instructed to be still a servant in the honor that he owes his master, and not in any wise to avail himself of the fact of his brotherhood in Christ with his master. This, in itself, is an excellent admonition and worthy indeed, as this chapter speaks "of God and His doctrine."

Thus, in the progress of this same chapter, those who have and those who have not the wealth of this world are severally exhorted to be unworldly, letting go this present world and grasping the world to come, or eternal life, by the one class being liberally active and by the other being thoroughly content.

These are good and suited words, admonitions, and exhortations on the subject of unworldliness.

But beside this, or in the midst of this, there is a striking commentary on the two worlds-the present, or man's world-the future, or Christ's world-and this too in connection with the Lord Jesus Himself.

In the present world, Timothy is exhorted to fight the good fight of faith, to flee the desire of being rich, and to cherish the graces and tempers of the Christian character; and he is exhorted to keep this commandment as "in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

But this exhortation tells us, or reminds us, that Jesus when in this world, was a confessor. He was such a One in the presence of the Roman Governor. He there disclaimed this world. "My kingdom is not of this world," He said to Pontius Pilate. This was a part of His good confession. He surrendered everything He might have had, or could have had, in man's world. The prince of it had nothing in Him. But God "who quickeneth all things" has prepared a world for Him. He gave up this present world, and God will make Him His representative in power and majesty in a future world. He Himself, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, will put forth this good Confessor as the Holder and Representative of His dignities and authorities as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

There is something very excellent in this, very fine and admirable indeed. The present world was the scene that witnessed a poor humbled Confessor at the peril of His life standing to answer for Himself in the presence of the powers of it; the future will be the scene where this humbled Confessor shall shine as the glorious reflection of God in majesty and authority all the world over.

The Well of Bethlehem: a Drink of Water From the Well

2 Sam. 23

"And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" Such was the breathing of David's heart - a breathing which met with a speedy and hearty response from three members of that devoted and heroic band which flocked around him in the cave of Adullam. "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." There was no command issued. No one in particular was singled out and commissioned to go. There was the simple utterance of the desire, and this it was which afforded the opportunity for genuine affection and true devotedness. Had there been a specific command given to any one, it would merely have afforded an occasion for ready obedience; but the utterance of a desire developed that ardent attachment to the person of David which is so lovely to behold.

And mark the actions of David in this most touching scene: "Nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it." It was a sacrifice too costly for any save Jehovah Himself, and hence David would not permit the sweet odor of it to be interrupted in its ascent to the throne of God.

How little did those three mighty men imagine that their act of loving devotedness should be recorded on the eternal page of inspiration, there to be read by untold millions. They never thought of this. Their hearts were set on David, and they counted not their lives dear unto them so that they might gratify him or refresh his spirit. Had they acted to get a name or a place for themselves, it would have robbed their act of all its charms, and consigned it to its merited contempt and oblivion. But no; they loved David. This was the spring of their activity, and they proved that he was more precious to their hearts than life itself. They forgot all in the one absorbing object of serving David, and the odor of their sacrifice ascended to the throne of God, while the record of their deed shines on the page of inspiration, and shall continue to shine so long as that page endures.

Oh! how we long for something like this in reference to the true David, in this the day of His rejection. We do greatly covet a more intense and self-sacrificing devotedness as the fruit of the constraining love of Christ. It is not by any means a question of working for rewards, for a crown or for a place, though we fully believe in the doctrine of rewards. No! the very moment we make rewards our object, we are below the mark. We believe that service rendered with the eye upon the reward would be defective. But then we believe also that every jot or tittle of true service will be rewarded in the day of Christ's glory, and that each servant will get his place in the record and his niche in the kingdom according to the measure of his personal devotedness down here. This we hold to be a great practical truth and we press it as such upon the attention of the Christian reader. We must confess we long to see the standard of devotedness greatly raised among us, and this can only be effected by having our hearts more entirely consecrated to Christ and His cause. O

Lord, revive Thy work!

The Well-Watered Plains

Satan tempts the saints to imitate Lot when they ought to imitate Abraham - to have earthly affections in place of heavenly affections.

People say, What harm is there in the well-watered plains of Jordan? Are not they also a gift of Providence? I answer, The Devil planted Sodom in their midst.

What is done in the flesh is not to the glory of God; it may, thanks to His powerful intervention, turn in the end to His glory; but so far as concerns us it is worth absolutely nothing.

Western European Nations

The outlines of the shadows being cast by coming events are becoming more and more distinct. Never before have men been so willing to take measures to bring about a union of Western European nations. The obstacle to all such federations has always been the national pride which refused to accept anything that looked like an encroachment on national sovereignty. This trait is inherent in nations; and it is obvious that only circumstances of extraordinary gravity would induce any nation to sacrifice its full independence to a common league. Men have to be prepared for such radical changes by degrees. They have to be made willing by the awful consequences of remaining alone and aloof. This transition in the thinking of the people of the Western European nations, and to a large extent in the United States, has been brought about by the growing menace of Russia.

The subjugation of Eastern Europe to Soviet aggression had been conceded and discounted, but the suddenness of Russian expansion by the coup in Czechoslovakia and the preliminary steps to the same thing in Finland has brought the Western peoples to the realization that there is no real ground for smugness, nor any real basis for supposing that her conquests will stop at the so-called "iron curtain.", Russia has become more than ever power-conscious; and there is no single nation in Europe strong enough in itself to resist her encroachments which lead to eventual domination. Now, brought abruptly to see that France, Italy, or some other nation may next feel the bear's claws, men are awakening to see that the only safeguard of the anticommunist nations lies in a Western union plan; that is, a defensive political and military alliance among themselves, and with the United States, which will be capable of halting Soviet expansion. Russia cannot through diplomacy, be persuaded to stop; the only thing that will stop her is a closely knit organization which will be strong enough to back its word with superior force. Thus the Russian threat is preparing men to be ready, in self-defense, to unite in what Scripture has long foretold - a revived Roman Empire. It seems evident from Scripture that Russia will be stopped at about where she now is; and it is at this point that the Western Nations have come to the conclusion that their safety lies in union. No mention is made in prophecy of a conflict between Russia and the Western Powers; therefore it is not unlikely that the formation of a coalition formidable to Russia will be sufficient. (We must guard against being prophets; and at this point we add the comment that there may be things which will intervene between now and the, prophetic events.)

Surely the coming of the Lord is VERY near. We had not thought to see this much before the coming of the Lord, and now only a circumstance and a few weeks time would be necessary for the "ten kings" to become united. When the time comes, God will "put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Rev. 17:17.

Why Shouldn't Christians Play Cards?

"Will you please print in your magazine why Christians shouldn't play a game of playing cards?"

Answer: This question has been asked and answered hundreds of times. The one who is now penning this answer is himself no stranger to the lure of the playing card. But when the grace of God came into his heart to deliver from this present evil world nearly fifty years ago, the playing cards passed out of his life along with light and trashy literature, the theater, and the club.

No spiritual minded confessor of our Lord Jesus Christ could sincerely raise the question as to the inconsistency of card playing for the saints of God. We have only to think of the abhorrence of the idea of trying to fit our blessed Lord into fellowship with such carnality, to see its gross contradiction to His Spirit.

Is it not a matter of common knowledge that every saloon, gambling hall, jail, gangland, and brothel is a natural habitat for this noxious weed-card playing? To give it, then, a permissive sanction in the believer's life is to close both ears and heart to the ringing warning of 2 Cor. 6:17, 18:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

C. H. B.

The Word of God and God

Have you ever noticed the transition from the Word of God to God Himself in the fourth chapter of Hebrews? Notice the twelfth and thirteenth verses:

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature. that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

It is the living Word of God that reaches down into the conscience of men. There is nothing like it! It penetrates and judges all before it. It carries its own credentials. Men may seek to defend the Word of God, but their puny efforts are not needed. It has stood all the assaults of generations and remains the same living and operative Word of God as before. It has power to touch the inner being of a man today as much as it had a thousand years ago. It is sharp - it cuts. How do you know it? Sit down quietly and read it, allowing it to do its work, and you will find out. If a man were to cut you with a knife, would you need any proof that the knife would cut? No, you would have it. Just so, the Word of God proves itself and brings a person consciously into God's presence, for behind the Word of God is God. He is the One with whom we have to do. No human being can escape having to do with the living God. How good it is then to have His Word search us and by its action bring us before Him.

P W.

A Word to Those Who Have Gone Down to Shechem: Arise, Go up to Bethel

The words which stand at the head of this paper contain in them a great practical truth to which we desire to call the reader's attention for a moment or two.

It has been well remarked by some one that "God, in His dealings with us, always keeps us up to the original terms. This is true; but some may not exactly understand it. It may, perhaps, savor of the legal element. To speak of God as keeping up to certain terms may seem to militate against that free grace in which we stand and which has reigned through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Many, we are aware, have a kind of horror of everything bordering, in the most remote way, upon the legal system; and we may say, we most fully sympathize with such horror. But, at the same time, we must take care not to carry that feeling to such an extent as would lead us to throw overboard aught that is calculated to act, in a divine way, upon the heart and conscience of the believer. We really want practical truth. There is a vast amount of what is called abstract truth in circulation among us, and we prize it, and would prize it more and more. We delight in the unfolding of truth in all its departments. But then we must remember that truth is designed to act on hearts and consciences, and that there are hearts and consciences to be acted upon. We must not cry out, "Legal! legal!" whenever some great practical truth falls upon our ears, even though that truth may come before us clothed in a garb which, at first sight, seems strange. We are called to "suffer the word of exhortation"-to listen to wholesome words-to apply our hearts diligently to everything tending to promote practical godliness and personal holiness. We know that the pure and precious doctrines of grace-those doctrines which find their living center in the Person of Christ, and their eternal foundation in His work-are the means which the Holy Ghost uses to promote holiness in the life of the Christian; but we know also that those doctrines may be held in theory, and professed with the lips, while the heart has never felt their power and the life never exhibited their molding influence. Yes; and we frequently find that the loudest and most vehement outcry against everything that looks like legality is sure to proceed from those who, though they profess the doctrines of grace, have never felt their sanctifying influence; whereas those who really understand the meaning of grace, and feel its power to mold and fashion, to purify and elevate, are every ready to welcome the most pungent appeals to the heart and conscience.

Still, the pious reader may desire to know what is meant by the expression quoted above; namely, "God always keeps us up to the original terms." Well, we understand it to mean simply this, that when God calls us to any special position or path and we fall short of it or wander from it, He will recall us to it again and again. And further, when we set out in the profession of some special principle of action or standard of devotedness, and swerve from it or fall below it, He will remind us of it and bring us back to it. True, He bears with us patiently and waits on us graciously; but "He always keeps us up to the original terms."

And can we not praise Him for this? Assuredly we can. Could we endure the thought of His allowing us to fall short of His holy standard, or to wander hither and thither, without uttering a word to urge us on or call us back? We trust not. Well then, if He does speak, what must He say? He must just remind us of "the old terms." Thus it is, and thus it has ever been. When Peter was converted at the lake of Gennesaret, he forsook all and followed Jesus; and the last words that fell on his ear, from the lips of his ascending Lord, were "Follow thou Me."

This was simply keeping him to the original terms. The heart of Jesus could not be satisfied with less, and neither should the heart of His servant. By the lake of Gennesaret, Peter set out to follow Jesus. What then? Years rolled on; Peter had many a stumble; Peter denied his Lord; Peter went back to his boats and nets. What then? Peter was thoroughly restored, and when, as a restored soul, he stood by the side of his loving Lord, at the sea of Tiberias, he was called to listen to that one brief, pointed utterance, "Follow Me"-an utterance embracing in its comprehensive grasp all the details of a life of active service and of patient suffering. In a word, Peter was brought back to the original terms-the terms between Christ and his soul, and between his soul and Christ. He was brought to learn that the heart of Jesus had undergone no change toward him-that the love of that heart was inextinguishable and unalterable-and because it was so, it could not tolerate any change in his heart-any decline or departure from the original terms.

Now we see the same thing precisely in the history of the patriarch Jacob. Let us just turn to it for a moment. At the close of Gen. 28 we have the record of the original terms between the Lord and Jacob. We shall quote it at length.

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Here then, we have the blessed statement of what the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob undertook to do for Jacob and for his seed- a statement crowned by these memorable words, "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Such are the terms by which He binds Himself to Jacob, which terms, blessed be His name, have been and will be fulfilled to the letter, though earth and hell should interpose to prevent. Jacob's seed shall yet possess the whole land of Canaan as an everlasting inheritance; for who shall prevent Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God Almighty, from accomplishing His promise?

Let us now hearken to Jacob. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil

upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel.... And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

This much as to Bethel and the terms entered into there. God pledged Himself to Jacob; and though heaven and earth should pass away, that pledge must be maintained in all its integrity. He revealed Himself to that poor, lonely one who lay sleeping on his stony pillow, and not only revealed Himself to him, but linked Himself with him, in a bond which no power of earth or hell can ever dissolve.

And what of Jacob? Why, he dedicated himself to God and vowed that the spot where he had enjoyed such a revelation and hearkened to such exceeding great and precious promises, should be God's house. All this was deliberately uttered before the Lord and solemnly recorded by Him; and then Jacob went on his journey. Years passed—twenty long and eventful years—years of trial and exercise, during which Jacob experienced many ups and downs, changes and chances, but the God of Bethel watched over His poor servant and appeared unto him in the midst of his pressure, and said unto him, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." God had not forgotten the original terms; neither would He let His servant forget them. Is this legality? No; it is simply the exhibition of divine love and faithfulness. God loved Jacob, and He would not suffer him to stop short of the old standard. He jealously watched over the state of His servant's heart, and lest it should, by any means, remain below the Bethel mark, He gently reminds him by those touching and significant words, "I am the God Of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow." This was the sweet expression of God's unchanging love, and of the fact that He counted on Jacob's remembrance of Bethel scenes.

How amazing that the High and Mighty One, who inhabiteth eternity, should so value the love and remembrance of a poor worm of the earth! Yet so it is, and we ought to bear it more in mind. Alas! we forget it. We are ready enough to take mercies and blessings from the hand of God, and most surely, He is ready enough to bestow them. But then we ought to remember that He looks for the loving devotion of our hearts to Him; and if we, in the freshness and ardor of other days, set out to follow Christ, to live for Him, and give up all for Him, can we suppose for a moment that He could coldly and indifferently forego His claims upon our hearts' affections? Should we like Him to do so? Could we endure the thought of its being a matter of indifference to Him whether we loved Him or not? God forbid! Yea it should be the joy of our hearts to think that our blessed Lord really seeks the loving devotion of our souls to Him, and that He will not be satisfied without it—that when we wander hither and thither, He calls us back to Himself, in His own gentle, gracious, touching way.

"When weary of His rich repast,

I've sought alas! to rove,

He has recalled His faithless guest,

And showed His banner, love."

Yes; His banner ever floats, bearing its own inscription upon it to win back our vagrant hearts, and remind us of the original terms. He says to us in one way or another, as He said to Jacob, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar." Thus He deals with us, in the midst of all our wanderings, our haltings and our stumblings. He makes us to know that as we cannot do without His love, so neither can He do without ours. It is truly wonderful, yet so it is. He will keep the soul up to the old terms. Harken to those touching appeals of the Spirit of Christ to His saints in other days, "Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." Rev. 2:4, 5. "Call to remembrance the former days." Heb. 10:32. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" Gal. 4:15.

What is all this but calling His people back to the old point from which they had declined? It may be said, They ought not to have needed this. No doubt; yet they did need it, and because they needed it, Jesus did it. It may be said, further, that tried love is better than first love. Granted; but do we not find, as a matter of fact, in our spiritual history, that upon our first setting out to follow Jesus there is a simplicity, an earnestness, a freshness, fervor and depth of devotion which, from various reasons, we fail to keep up? We become cold and careless; the world gets in upon us and eats up our spirituality; nature gains the upper hand, in one way or another, and deadens our spiritual sensibility, damps our ardor and dims our vision. Is the reader conscious of anything like this? If so, would it not be a peculiar mercy if, at this very moment, he were called back to the old terms? Doubtless! Well, then, let him be assured that the heart of Jesus is waiting and ready. His love is unchanging; and not only so, but He would remind you that He cannot be satisfied without a true response from you. Wherefore, beloved friend, whatever has drawn you away from the measure of your earliest dedication to Him, let your heart now spring up, and get back at once to Him. Do not hesitate! Linger not! Cast yourself at the feet of your loving Lord, and let your heart be only for Him. This is the secret spring of all true service. If Christ has not the love of your heart, He does not want the labor of your hands. He does not say, "Son, give me thy money, thy time, thy talents, thine energies, thy pen, thy tongue, thy head"; all these are utterly unavailing, perfectly unsatisfying to Him. What He says to you is, "My son, give Me thine heart." Where the heart is given to Jesus, all will come right. Out of the heart come all the issues of life, and if only Christ have His right place in the heart, the work and the ways, the walk and the character will all be right.

But we must return to Jacob, and see further how our subject is illustrated in his fruitful history. At the close of Gen. 33 we find him settling down at Shechem, where he gets into all sorts of trouble and confusion. His house is dishonored, and his sons, in avenging the dishonor, endanger his life. All this Jacob feels keenly, and he says to his sons, Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me... among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." Gen. 34:30.

All this was most deplorable; but it does not appear to have once occurred to Jacob that he was in a wrong place. The defilement and confusion of Shechem failed to open his eyes to the fact that he was not up to the old terms. How often is this the case! We fall short of the divine standard in our practical ways; we fail in walking up to the height of the divine revelation; and although the varied fruits of our failure are produced on every side, yet our vision is so dimmed by the atmosphere around us, and our spiritual sensibilities so blunted by our associations, that we do not discern how low we are and how very far short of the proper mark.

However, in Jacob's case, we see the divine principle again and again illustrated. "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Gen. 35:1.

Reader, note this. We have here a most exquisite feature in the divine method of dealing with souls. There is not one word said about Shechem, its pollutions and its confusions. There is not a word of reproof for having settled down there. Such is not God's way. He employs a far more excellent mode. Had we been dealing with Jacob we should have come down upon him with a heavy hand, and read him a severe lecture about his folly in settling at Shechem and about his personal and domestic habits and condition. But oh! how well it is that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways like ours! Instead of saying to Jacob, "Why have you settled down in Shechem?" He simply says, "Arise, go up to Bethel"; and the very sound of the word sent a flood of light into Jacob's soul by which he was enabled to judge himself and his surroundings. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

This was, assuredly, getting back to the original terms. It was the restoring of a soul and a leading in the paths of righteousness. Jacob felt that he could not bring false gods and defiled garments to Bethel; such things might pass at Shechem, but they would never do for Bethel. "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem... So Jacob, came to Luz which is in the land of 'Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

"El beth el." Precious title which had God for its Alpha and its Omega! At Shechem, Jacob called his altar "El-Elohe-Israel," that is, "God the God of Israel"; but at Bethel, the true standpoint, he called his altar "El-beth-el," that is God-the house of God." This was true restoration. Jacob was brought back, after all his wanderings, to the very point from which he had started. Nothing less than this could ever satisfy God in reference to His servant. He could wait patiently on him-bear with him-minister to him-care for him - look after him; but He could. never rest satisfied with anything short of this: "Arise, go up to Bethel."

Christian reader, pause here. We want to ask you a question. Are you conscious of having wandered from Jesus? Has your heart declined and grown cold? Have you lost the freshness and ardor which once marked the tone of your soul? Have you allowed the world to get in upon you? Have you, in the moral condition of your soul, got down into Shechem? Has your heart gone after idols, and have your garments become defiled? If so, let us remind you of this, that the Lord wants you back to Himself Yes, beloved, that is what He wants, and He wants it now. He says to you, at this moment, "Arise, go up to Bethel." You will never be happy, you will never be right until you yield a full response to this blessed and soul-stirring call. O yield it now, we beseech you. Rise up, and fling aside every weight and every hindrance; put away the idols and change your garments and get back to the feet of your Lord, who loves you with a love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown; and who cannot be satisfied until He has you with Himself

according to the original terms. Say not this is legal; it is nothing of the sort. It is the love of Jesus-His deep, glowing, earnest love-love which is jealous of every rival affection - love which gives the whole heart, and must have a whole heart in return. May God the Holy Ghost bring back every wandering heart to the true standard! May He visit, with fresh power, every soul that has gone down to Shechem, and give no rest until a full response has been yielded to the call, "Arise, go up to Bethel, AND DWELL THERE."

C. H. M.

Your Treasure and Your Heart

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief, approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:32-34).

Act the part of kings, as persons called to and having a higher inheritance; and give alms. And there is a reason - it is a separating principle: let your treasure be there, your heart will be there also; you will be formed for God. It is not, observe, the value of the gifts meritoriously, but the effect internally. Such is the suitable position of believers in the kingdom: hereunto are they called.

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