

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 6

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 6, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

113 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 6

1 Corinthians 11

It would seem that the sisters at Corinth gave the assembly considerable trouble, and that they had forgotten entirely their due relative place. No doubt the men were at least as much to blame. It is hardly possible that women should ever put themselves forward in the Church unless Christian men have deserted their true, responsible position and public action. It is the man's place to guide; and although women may assuredly be far more useful in certain cases, still, unless the man guides, what an evident departure from the order God has assigned to them both! How complete a desertion of the relative position in which they were placed from the first! Thus it was at Corinth. Among the heathen, women played a most important part, and in no quarter of the world, perhaps, so prominent a one as there. Need it be said that this was to their deep shame? There was no city in which they were so degraded as that in which they attained such conspicuous and unnatural prominence. And how does the Apostle meet this new feature? He brings in Christ. This is what decides all. He affirms the everlasting principles of God, and he adds that which has so brightly been revealed in and by Christ. He points out that Christ is the image and glory of God, and that the man stands in an analogous place as connected with and distinguished from the woman. That is to say, the woman's place is one of unobtrusiveness, and in fact, she is most effective where she is least seen. The man, on the contrary, has a public part—a rougher and ruder task, no doubt—one that may not at all bring into play the finer affections, but which demands a calmer and more comprehensive judgment. The man has the duty of the outward rule and administration.

Accordingly the Apostle marks the first departure from what was right by the woman's losing the sign of her subjection. She was to have a covering on her head; she was to have that which indicated as a sign that she was subject to another. The man seemed to have failed just in the opposite

way; and although this may seem a very little thing, what a wonderful thing it is, and what power it shows, to be able to combine in the same epistle eternal things and the very smallest matter of personal decorum, the wearing of long hair or short, the use of a covering on the head or not! How truly it marks God and His Word! Men would scorn to combine them both in the same epistle; it seems so petty and so incongruous. But it is the littleness of man which calls for big matters to make him important; but the smallest things of God have significance when they bear on the glory of Christ, as they always do. In the first place, it was out of order that a woman should prophesy with her head uncovered; man's place was to do so. He was the image and the glory of God. The Apostle connects it all with first principles, going up to the creation of Adam and Eve in a very blessed manner, and above all bringing in the second Man, the last Adam. Did they think to improve on both?

The latter part of the chapter takes up not the relative place of the man and the woman, but the supper of the Lord, and so the saints gathered together. The first part of it, as is evident, has nothing to do with the assembly, and thus does not dispose of the question whether a woman should prophesy there. In fact, nothing is said or implied of the assembly in the early verses. The

point primarily mooted is of her prophesying after the manner of a man, and this is done with the greatest possible wisdom. Her prophesying is not absolutely shut out; if a woman has a gift for prophesy, which she certainly may have as well as a man, why is it given of the Lord but for exercise? Certainly such a one ought to prophesy. Who could say the gift of prophecy given to a woman is to be laid up in a napkin? Only she must take care how she does exercise it. First of all, he rebukes the unseemly way in which it was done-the woman forgetting that she was a woman, and the man that he is responsible not to act as a woman. They seem to have reasoned in a petty way at Corinth that because a woman has a gift no less than a man, she is free to use the gift just as a man might. This is in principle wrong; for after all, a woman is not a man, nor like one officially, say what you please. The Apostle sets aside the whole basis of the argument as false; and we must never hear reasoning which overthrows what God has ordained. Nature ought to have taught them better. But he does not dwell on this; it was a withering rebuke even to hint at their forgetfulness of natural propriety.

Then in the latter verses we have the supper of the Lord, and there we find the saints expressly said to be gathered together. This naturally leads the way to the spiritual gifts that are treated of in chapter 12. As to the supper of the Lord, happily I need not say many words to you. It is, by the great mercy of God, familiar to most of us; we live, I may say, in the enjoyment of it, and know it to be one of the sweetest privileges God vouchsafes us here below. Alas! this very feast had furnished occasion, in the fleshly state of the Corinthians, to a most humiliating abuse. What led to it was the Agape, as it was styled; for in those days there was a meal which the Christians used to take together. Indeed, the social character of Christianity never can be overlooked without loss, but in an evil state it is open to much abuse. Everything that is good may be perverted; and it never was intended to hinder abuse by extinguishing that which was only to be maintained aright in the power of the Spirit of God. No rules, no abstinence, no negative measures, can glorify God, or make His children spiritual; and it is only by the power of the Holy Ghost in producing a sense of responsibility to the Lord as well as of His grace that saints are duly kept. So it was then at Corinth that the meeting for the Lord's supper became mingled with an ordinary meal where the Christians ate and drank together. They were glad to meet - at any rate, originally it was so, when love was gratified with the company of each other. Being not merely young Christians, but unwatchful and then lax, this gave rise to sad abuse. Their old habits reasserted their influence. They were accustomed to the feasts of the heathen where people thought nothing whatever of getting drunk, if it was not rather meritorious. It was in some of their mysteries considered a wrong to the god for his votary not to get drunk, so debased beyond all conception were the heathen in their notions of religion.

Accordingly these Corinthian brethren had by little and little got on until some of them had fallen into intemperance on the occasion of the Eucharist; not, of course, simply by the wine drank at the table of the Lord, but through the feast that accompanied it. Thus the shame of their drunkenness fell upon that holy supper; and hence the Apostle regulated that from that time forward there should be no such feast coupled with the Lord's supper. If they wished to eat, let them eat at home; if they came together in worship, let them remember it was to eat of the Lord's body, and to drink of the Lord's blood. He puts it in the strongest terms. He does not feel it needful or suitable to speak of "the figure" of the Lord's body. The point was to make its grace and holy impressiveness duly felt. It was a figure, no doubt; but still, writing to men who were at least wise enough to judge

aright here, he gives all its weight, and the strongest expression of what was meant. So Jesus had said. Such it was in the sight of God. He that partook undiscerningly and without self-judgment was guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. It was a sin against Him. The intention of the Lord, the true principle and practice for a saint, is to come, examining his ways, trying his springs of action, putting himself to the proof; and so let him eat (not stay away because there is much discovered that is humbling). The guard and warning is that if there be not self-judgment, the Lord will judge.

Attacks on the Scriptures

People are energetic enough in these days, but their energy is against the gospel. It is not so with all, thank God! but the peculiar feature of the present age is that the active aggression is against Scripture, an organized rebellion proceeding from professors in the high seats of human learning. Not only daring individuals here and there attack Scripture, but the nominal teachers and heads of the clergy combine to do it with comparative impunity as if they were determined to concentrate the whole weight of their personal and official influence to that end. This has a voice for us; if we have understanding of the times, let us take care that we stand firmly, conscientiously, and uncompromisingly, though humbly, on the foundation of divine truth, caring for nothing else. We shall be counted harsh; this is always the portion of faithfulness. But the name of the Lord is our tower of strength for the last days, as from the beginning.

So Paul warns Timothy in his last epistle, as he looked at the perils of these days (which are still more emphatically true now than they were then); and what is the resource for them? Not tradition, but the written Word of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," etc. It is not teachers, nor godly men raised up, however precious both may be—nothing but Scripture can be a permanent standard of truth.

The Basket of First Fruits

"And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place His name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression: and the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which Thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God bath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." Deut. 26:1-11.

That this scripture applies to Israel's possession of the land at any time is plain. The last words of the first verse imply as much: "And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take," etc. Exod. 23:19; Lev. 23; and Numb. 18:13 fully confirm this. It was a standing ordinance in the land. The spirit of the offering is also clear—a full profession before God that they possessed the things which He had promised to their fathers. Their father had been a Syrian ready to perish, a slave in Egypt, and redemption had brought them out thence, and into the good land of which they were now in full enjoyment. Therefore were they come up to own the Giver in offering to Him the first fruits. They worshiped and rejoiced in every good thing Jehovah had given them, and this in grace, with the Levite and the stranger.

How all this bears on the way in which the believer now makes the offering, is evident. All his worship is but the answer, the reflex, and bringing back to God of the fruit—the first fruits, if true faith and godliness be there-of what God has revealed Himself to be to him, and of that heavenly joy into which He has introduced him. Such is properly what the Lord calls "that which is your own"; for on earth we are pilgrims, in the desert it is not "ours." The characteristic of piety will be found to be, in Scripture, and everywhere, and ever, that the first effect of blessing is turning back to God and owning it there, not the personal enjoyment of it which, without this, turns us from God. The love that gave it is more present than even the gift. See Eliezer at the well (Gen. 24), the cleansed Samaritan leper (Luke 17), and a multitude of other examples. He who gives is more and more

before us than the gift itself. This is the elevating character of divine enjoyment. Then surely we do enjoy it, freely and blessedly, and the stream of grace flows out to the Levite and the stranger-to those whose hearts are in need, and who have not an inheritance in the land we enjoy. It is then the return of the heart to God in the enjoyment of the heavenly blessings which are the fruit of redemption. The Christian too can enjoy or so worship when he has the consciousness that heavenly things are his. It is the profession, the open avowal, of this; if he has not this consciousness, neither can he bring his basket of first fruits.

"A Syrian ready to perish" was a thing past. The worship was grounded on possession of the blessing and on a known inheritance - type of sitting "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is not thankfulness for promises, however surely this has its place, but thankfulness that they are accomplished-in Christ, yea and amen. Redemption is owned as an accomplished thing that has put us in possession, though for the redemption of the body we have yet to wait.

Indeed, this is the general character of Deuteronomy. It is not drawing near to God in the sanctuary by means of sacrifice, but the people-not the priest merely for them-are themselves in possession, and hence the sentiments toward God Himself, and toward the desolate of men, in the enjoyment of the blessing; for free grace becomes him who has received all through grace. Compare Deuteronomy 16 where even the various degrees of this are traced in the three principle feasts of Jehovah. Hence also the responsibility of the people as to the continuance of the enjoyment of the blessing; for it is in the path of obedience that such enjoyment is known. Deuteronomy is a book of the deepest practical instruction in this respect.

Behold What Manner of Love

Beautiful indeed it is to hear these words from one who had known that love so long and so well!

The Apostle had just said, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." "Born of Him," "born of God"! What a thought! It is this that causes the Apostle to exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God." It gives us a character and relationship of which the world knows nothing. He who was the Son of God, the only begotten, and in whom, as Man, the character and relationship were displayed before the eyes of men, was not known. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:10, 11. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

We have Christ's relationship with the Father, and we have His place as unknown here on earth. We suffer with Him here; we shall be glorified with Him there. "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." Rom. 8:16, 17. While here it is suffering with Christ in a scene where sin has sway, and where everything has been alienated from God-man at enmity with God, and under the dominion of sin, while the creation groans, and waits for deliverance - but being children of God, we wait for the children's place, our predestinated place in glory, and then we shall have the children's portion when the inheritance is given to the First-born, and the creature, delivered from its groaning, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

As His co-heirs we shall then possess the inheritance with Him, and reign with Him, having also been glorified with Him. We can well afford then to be unknown here in a world that knew Him not. It will not always be so. But we need confidence in God, and patience to wait till the Lord comes. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. 10:35-37. Blessed it is to look forward to His coming, but we must with patience wait for it; and while we wait we must be content to be as unknown in the world.

Now while we wait for Him and to be in the condition in which He is in glory, we have a present and known relationship with the Father. "Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God." We do not wait for this. We are born of God now, and are children and heirs of God now. It is a present relationship which we know by the Word of God, and have the consciousness of by His Spirit in us. And what a relationship! How vastly more blessed than anything known to this poor world, with all its boasted wealth and intelligence! It is a great thing in this world to be the child of a king, and greater still to be heir apparent to the throne; but what is this compared to being children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, soon to reign as kings with the King of kings and Lord of lords? Yet this, dear reader, is the dignity and glory of the humblest and poorest believer in Christ. How

this ought to lift the heart above all the empty glory of this world where Christ was a weary, homeless stranger, not having where to lay His head!

Nor is this all. In the relationship we have with the Father through Christ, we are the objects of His love-love immeasurable, boundless, eternal. He spared not His Son, but gave Him up for us all. And who can measure what was involved in that giving? Let the cross answer. Let its horror of darkness and unfathomable sorrows of that hour when the Son of God was forsaken, utter their voice, and declare what it cost to redeem us and make us children of God. Oh, it was a wonderful price! But the price has been paid, and we are redeemed and now have the same place in the Father's love as Christ Himself. The day of glory will manifest this even to the world, according to John 17:22, 23: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." This is an ocean of love into which we are introduced-an eternal fullness into which we drink even now.

And what will it be when the fullness is known in glory? "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." What a prospect! Now children of God; then not only children, but fashioned into the likeness of the glorified Firstborn! This "we know," though it is not yet a matter of public manifestation. But we shall see Him as He is. It is a wonderful thought. It is not the glory in which He will be displayed as the coming Messiah. We shall see Him, and shall be with Him in His Messianic glory, as it is said, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. His glory as Messiah and as Son of man will be publicly displayed before the world, and all shall see it; but this is not what is meant when it is said, "We shall see Him as He is." We shall see Him as He is now in the glory of His Father's presence. This is the expressed desire of the blessed Lord Himself: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24. Here is One loved before the foundation of the world, Object of the Father's unchanging, ineffable delight, who moreover, having glorified God as Man here on earth, has been glorified of God as Man on high, with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He is now in the highest glory, supreme in the affections of the Father, the light and joy and glory of courts above; and this is the One we shall see as He is. Oh what a sight will that be! How it will thrill our souls! What rapturous praise our overflowing hearts will utter when we behold that once crucified, but now glorified, Savior.

But how could these mortal eyes behold Him as He is? It could not be. The glory is of too dazzling brightness. But we shall be like Him; we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump (1 Cor. 15), and mortality will be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5). Predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8), "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. 3:20, 21. This body, humbled by sin, will be changed into a body of glory, after the likeness of Christ's body of glory. "We shall be like Him," and this not merely in body, but in spirit as well, so that we shall in every way be united to the glorious and holy sphere where He dwells. Blessed, glorious prospect!

And now, reader, what is the present effect of this upon those who have this hope in Him? What is its effect upon you and me? "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Have you believed on Him unto life everlasting?

Have you, as a poor lost sinner, turned to Him in your helplessness, and found Him a Savior? And are you now waiting for His return from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10)? Do you expect to be like Him when you see Him as He is? And will this be worth while? Is it something worth looking for and waiting for? Do you now in faith look up and see that blessed One in all the brightness of the Father's glory? And do you say, I am going to be with Him, and like Him, in that glory, and then I shall be eternally satisfied in His presence? Well, if it will be worth while to be like Him when He comes and takes us to Himself, it is worth while to be like Him now- like Him in purity of heart, like Him in spirit and in ways, giving forth the sweet fragrance of His life all along the path here.

The Lord grant to the reader and to the writer to have Himself as an all-satisfying Object so that the heart may be formed according to what He is, and thus we shall continue to purify ourselves as He is pure-having this measure and character of purity before us-till He comes and completes it in glory.

"Lord, we shall see Thee as Thou art,

In yonder mansions fair;

We shall behold Thee face to face,

Thy glorious image bear.

"With what delight, what wondering love,

Each thrilling heart shall swell,

When we, as sharers of Thy joy,

Are called in heav'n to dwell!

"Oh hasten, hasten on that hour,

And call us to Thy seat; Lord,

Thou without us ne'er will count

Thy joy and work complete."

Benjamin's Blessing

"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." Deut. 33:12.

Deuteronomy 33 gives "the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." As the eye glances down the beautiful chapter, no brighter blessing appears than that which belongs to Benjamin. Let us dwell upon it briefly, and look upon it as indicating the blessedness which now belongs to him that believes on Jesus. Benjamin's blessing, as that of all Israel, was undoubtedly of an earthly and a temporal character, whereas ours is heavenly and spiritual; yet the one may be interpreted as giving a simple and beautiful indication of the other.

"THE BELOVED OF THE LORD." Benjamin was a son of sorrow, and so named "Benoni" by his mother (see Gen. 35:18). Yet here he is spoken of as the object of Jehovah's love. "Man is born to trouble." But how precious a thing it is to know that we are the "beloved of God" (Rom. 1:7). Every blessing we possess springs from this. Man, when awakened to a sense of his need, and desirous of possessing the blessing of God, looks to his own heart, hoping there to find love to God which may prove a basis for the blessing he desires. Alas! he is bitterly disappointed. In his misery he cries-

'Tis a point I long to know, Oft it causes anxious thought- Do I love the Lord or no? Am I His, or am I not?"

The Scripture replies, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." We rejoice as we learn this, and exultingly say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Then follows in its own due order, "We love Him, because He first loved us." (See 1 John 4:7-21.) Let us not then seek to build anything upon our love to Him, but delight in this -that we are the objects of His changeless, eternal love.

Peter boasted much of the love which he had for his Lord. Doubtless it was sincere; but what bitter experience he had to pass through that he might learn not to trust to the strength of his own affection! John delighted to speak of himself as the "disciple, whom Jesus loved." He who wrote of the full display of God's love in the only begotten Son of the Father's bosom did himself recline on the bosom of Jesus. In all our sorrows therefore, in the sense of our own weakness and when assailed with thoughts of our own utter unworthiness, let this be the comfort and joy of our souls-we are "beloved of God."

"SHALL DWELL IN SAFETY." The mention of safety brings to mind the thought of danger; and we ask, To what danger were we exposed? As sinners, we stood exposed to the judgment of God. Every sin merited eternal perdition; and to the lake of fire we must have gone, had not God's love provided a dwelling place of perfect safety. Such a shelter we were unable to provide for ourselves. All our works, all our endeavors, could not ward off the stroke of justice. What could? Let us go back in the history of Benjamin and Israel for a reply.

Exodus 12 is well known as the chapter which records God's last and sorest plague upon Egypt. It tells of that solemn night when throughout all the land there was not one house where death entered not. God dealt in judgment, maintaining His own character. In the houses of all the Egyptians, the first-born died. For the houses of Israel, the lamb was slain. Death fell upon the unblemished, sacrificial victim, instead of the first-born. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled at the door, and thus those who would otherwise have fallen beneath Jehovah's stroke had a dwelling place of safety even in the midst of His judgments. "When I see the blood," Jehovah said. He spoke not of their good works, or religion, or aught beside, but the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Surely none can fail to see in that blood a prefiguring of the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God." 1 Pet. 1:19-21. It is that blood which alone can screen from God's judgment. Happy is he who is sheltered by it!

Then are there not foes which trouble and menace? Yes; both evil spirits and wicked men. But God is for us. (Rom. 8:31-39.) The blood which screens us from judgment forms a righteous ground upon which God can manifest Himself as on our part. His love could not triumph at the expense of His righteousness. He could not pass by our sins; but He gave His own Son to bear the judgment due to them, and thus declared Himself against our sins, but for us. Who then can be against us? Benjamin, as the other tribes, was sheltered on the night of the Passover, following which God brought him forth from slavery, delivered him from all the harassing foes of the wilderness; and now, as he is about to enter the land, He speaks of a dwelling place of safety. Happy Benjamin! And happy, thrice happy, is he who, through the value of Jesus' blood, has God as his justifier and protector until all danger be past, and he is landed in that bright abode of peace!

"BY HIM." The last words were incomplete in beauty; here is their completeness. It is not only a dwelling place of safety which He provides, but it is by Him, at His side. Love must have all distance removed. See how the father ran to meet the wicked son, nor slackened his pace until the weary head of the wanderer was pillowed upon his bosom. Then would he assign to him some place in his house where he might be free from danger? No; if the father acts he must do so according to the dictates of his own love. What place must the prodigal have? A place near his father. "Let us eat, and be merry." Oh, blessed picture! What says the sinner? "Oh, if I could but creep in behind heaven's door!" There is no such place. Either, as sinners, we are assigned to the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, or, as redeemed by the blood of Jesus, we are brought perfectly nigh to God. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures: "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. There is the contrast-"far off," "nigh." How near? Just as near as the one blessed word "nigh" can express. It is unqualified nearness.

"AND THE LORD SHALL COVER HIM." In the land of promise Benjamin occupied a small tract of country close beside Jerusalem, and thus they might be covered, as it were, by the shadow of Jehovah's earthly dwelling place. The Lord Himself gave a beautiful figure of the truth which the words express when, bemoaning Jerusalem, He described the blessing they refused. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings!" They desired not His presence or blessing, and He solemnly declared that the house, under the shadow of which Benjamin had dwelt, should be desolate. But how beautiful the figure, and how

precious its application to those who submit to be gathered by Him! Enemies may surround, but none can touch the brood without first attacking the parent bird. Oh, believer, why do you tremble when assailed by foes and temptations? He who lives for you must first be assailed and overcome before you can be overthrown. Nor is protection the only idea in the figure. If we are beneath the shadow of His wing, we are where we are kept conscious of the warmth of His heart. Oh, it is a blessed thing that our Lord so knows how to turn everything to account that He makes the very dark times of tribulation and persecution the occasion for more fully manifesting His love! Surely in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

"ALL THE DAY LONG." Yes, throughout the weary day of our sorrow here upon earth. The day has many moments, and each moment may bring its changes and fresh sorrows, but throughout its length He covers us. A young Christian woman who had been lying in bed for many years was cheered through months of weariness by the literal rendering of Matt. 28:20, which was given to her by a visitor: "Behold, I am with you all the days." (J.N.D. Trans.) Whether the bright sunlight gleams upon all things, and makes them seem lovely, or whether the sky be overcast, and storms rage, He is with us all the days.

"AND HE SHALL DWELL BETWEEN HIS SHOULDERS." According to God's ordinance, the high priest, robed in his garments of glory and beauty, bore upon his breast and upon his shoulders the names of the tribes of Israel. There Benjamin shone, as the rest, a precious stone in the light of the sanctuary, held in pure gold. The priesthood failed in man's hand, but it is all fulfilled in Him who is the great Priest over God's house. He bears His people upon His breast and upon His shoulders. That is to say, all His love is engaged for us, and all His divine power is administered in our behalf to bring us through this weary world. Some may say, "It is indeed precious to think of being sheltered in perfect safety, and kept in the assurance of His love; but oh, we are so feeble!" But it does not require much strength to be carried. We asked an aged woman of over eighty years, "How far did the shepherd carry the sheep when he had found it?" She thought for a moment, and then a smile kindled in her face as she joyously answered in that sweet monosyllable - "HOME!" It is His divine power which sustains us in each step we take, and what we need is unfeigned dependence upon Him, and unwavering reliance upon His strength. In His bosom, and on His shoulders, are the two places where He speaks of carrying His own; the one expressive of His realized love, the other of His unailing strength. (Isa. 40:11; Luke 15:5.)

"The Shepherd's bosom bears each lamb

O'er rock, and waste, and wild;

The object of that love I am,

And carried like a child."

The Blind Beggar

"A blind beggar!" What an expression of helplessness and need! What a picture of the real condition of the Jewish nation, and of every unregenerate soul! Let us turn aside for a few moments and gaze upon this singularly striking picture, or to speak more correctly, this most interesting piece of living history, this scene from real life.

The study of the 9th chapter of John suggests two very important questions; namely, first, What has Jesus done for me? Second, What is Jesus to me? These questions are very distinct and yet closely connected. We shall find them both forcibly illustrated in the glowing narrative of "The Blind Beggar."

At the close of the 8th chapter, we find the Lord Jesus making His escape from the rude violence of the Jews whose wrath was raised to the highest pitch by His pointed and powerful testimony. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." Such was the return which the blessed Savior met for all His grace and truth. But no amount of rudeness and violence could interrupt Him in His unwearied course of service. The stream of goodness flowed on unhindered by all man's wickedness. If it could not find a channel in one place, it found it in another. If it failed of an issue here, it sought it there. The precious grace in the heart of Jesus must find an object somewhere. Eternal blessings on His name!

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples Asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Thus it was with this blessed Workman He pursued His path of service unhindered by all the enmity and opposition of the human heart. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Yes, and that light should shine despite all man's efforts to put it out. The stones of the Jews could not hinder the divine Workman from working the works of God, and these works were to be made manifest in the case of any poor blind beggar who crossed His path in this dark and sinful world. How blessed to know that the most glorious, the most characteristic work of God is displayed in the salvation of lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinners!

"When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

Reader, note this carefully. There is more involved in this mysterious act of Christ than we might, at first sight, imagine. The most likely way in the world to blind one who has his eyesight would be to put clay upon his eyes; but here the Lord Jesus opens the blind eyes of the beggar by that very means. What do we see in this? Just the deep and precious mystery of the Person and work of

Christ Himself, as He says at the end of this profound chapter: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." v. 39.

This is deeply solemn! "For judgment I am come into this world." How is this? Did He not come to seek and to save that which is lost? So He Himself tells us again and again. Why then speak of "judgment"? The meaning is simply this: the object of His mission was salvation; the moral effect of His life was judgment. He judged no one, and yet He judged everyone. The life of Christ down here was the most powerful test that ever was applied to man. Hence He could say, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin... If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." John 15:22-24.

It is well to see this effect of the character and life of Christ down here. He was the light of the world, and this light acted in a double way. It convicted and converted, it judged and it saved. Furthermore, it dazzled by its heavenly brightness all those who thought they saw, while at the same time it lightened all those who really felt their moral and spiritual blindness. He came not to judge, but to save; and yet when come, He judged every man, and put every man to the test. He was different from all around Him, as light in the midst of darkness; and yet He saved all who accepted the judgment and took their true place.

The same thing is observable when we contemplate the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. 1:18, 23, 24. Looked at from a human point of view, the cross presented a spectacle of weakness and foolishness. B u t looked at from a divine point of view, it was the exhibition of power and wisdom. The "Jew," looking at the cross through the hazy medium of traditionary religion, stumbled over it; the "Greek," looking at it from the fancied heights of philosophy, despised it as a contemptible thing. But the faith of a poor sinner, looking at the cross from the depths of conscious guilt and ruin, found in it a divine answer to every question, a divine supply for every need. The death of Christ, like His life, judged every man, and yet it saves all those who accept the judgment, and take their true place.

Now it is not a little interesting to find the germ of all this in our Lord's dealings with the blind beggar. He put clay on his eyes, and sent him to the pool of Siloam. This was "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It was the application of the doctrine of Christ, by the Spirit, through the Word. Thus it must ever be. If a man who thinks he can see, looks at that doctrine, it will blind him. If a man who is blind has that doctrine applied to his heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the Word, it will open his eyes and fill him with divine light.

But let us trace the history of this blind beggar. No sooner were his eyes opened than he becomes an object of interest to all around. "The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he." The change was manifest to all. He might have lived and died in beggary and blindness, unheeded, unnoticed; but he had been brought into personal contact with the Son of God, and that contact had produced a mighty change which could not fail to attract the attention of all around. Thus it must ever be. It is impossible for anyone to have to do with Christ

and not experience a something which cannot be hidden from those who are looking on. Personal contact with Christ is a divine reality. There is life and power in the very touch of Jesus. One believing look at the Savior of sinners-the Quickener of the dead-produces the most astonishing results.

We are more and more impressed, each day and each year of our existence, that the great object of preaching and writing-of oral or written ministry-is to bring the soul and Christ together. Till this is done, there is positively nothing done. Sermons may be preached and volumes may be written, but unless the soul of the sinner or the soul of the saint is brought into actual, living, and life-giving contact with the Son of God, there is no real, tangible, permanent result reached. The blind man in our chapter might have gone on all his days in his helpless and needy condition, even though surrounded by all the appliances of the Jewish system. Nothing was of any value to him save the name of Jesus. "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

But then I must be brought into vital connection with that divine and all-powerful name in order to partake of the good. I may go on forever saying, "None but Jesus" and be nothing better. The devils know that none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good, but it avails them nothing; and men may know, or profess to know, the same thing, and they may mistake the profession for the reality, and so deceive themselves and perish eternally. There must be a living link connecting the soul with Christ in order to lift the soul out of its condition of spiritual blindness and poverty; and not only so, but the power of this living union must be maintained and habitually realized in order to keep up in the soul the freshness and fruitfulness of the divine life. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. 2:6, 7.

Here we have the two grand and essential points; namely, first receiving Christ, and second, walking in Him. The first meets all the need of the sinner; the second perfectly answers all the demands of the saint. Many there are who seem to receive Christ, and yet do not walk in Him. This is the secret of most of the meagerness and poverty which one meets among professing Christians. There is not the habitual walking in Christ. Other things intervene. We get occupied with the mere machinery of religiousness, with meetings, with ministry, with men and things. It may even happen that we allow our work, our very service, to come in between our souls and Christ. All these things, which surely are right enough in their right place, may through Satan's craft and our lack of vigilance, actually displace Christ in our souls, and superinduce barrenness and lifeless formality.

O beloved Christian reader, let us seek to walk in abiding communion with Jesus! May we keep Him ever before our souls in all His fullness and preciousness. Then shall our testimony be clear, decided, and unmistakable. Our path shall be as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May it be thus with all the people of God in this day of shallow profession!

The Blind Beggar

In pondering the record of this blind beggar, we notice a very striking development of character in the different classes of persons that are brought forward. In, the poor man himself, we see an earnestness, a simplicity, and a reality which we greatly covet. He illustrates very forcibly the value and importance of honestly following the light as it shines upon our path. "Unto every one that hath

shall be given," is a motto plainly visible on the face of our narrative; and a precious motto is - a valuable incitement to a zealous and devoted career. It would manifestly have served the poor man's worldly interest, to cushion the truth as to what had been done for him. He might have enjoyed the benefit of the work of Christ, and yet avoided the rough path of testimony for His name in the face of the world's hostility. He might have enjoyed his eyesight and, at the same time, retained his place within the pale of respectable religious profession. He might have reaped the fruit of Christ's work and yet escaped the reproach of confessing His name.

How often is this the case! Alas, how often! Thousands are very well pleased to hear of what Jesus has done, but they do not want to be identified with His outcast and rejected name. In other words, to use a modern and very popular phrase, They want to make the best of both worlds - a sentiment from which every truehearted lover of Christ must shrink with abhorrence-an idea of which genuine faith is wholly ignorant. It is obvious that the subject of our narrative knew nothing of any such maxim. He had had his eyes opened, and he could not but speak of it and tell who did it and how it was done. He was an honest man. He had no mixed motive, no sinister object, no undercurrent. Happy for him! It is a terrible thing to have an undercurrent in the soul, a mixed motive in the heart, a personal interest, before the mind, a secondary object before the eye. Such things give the deathblow to all genuine, practical Christianity and true discipleship. If we want to follow a rejected Christ, the heart must be thoroughly free. The true disciple must have his heart freed from all the objects of personal interest, as well as of expediency. These things are sure to prove extinguishers in Satan's hand for quenching the light of truth in the souls of men. A man may be ignorant of many things, but if he only honestly follows the light which God has graciously poured upon his pathway, he will assuredly get more. On the other hand, if for any object whatever, if to gain the most plausible and attractive end, light be extinguished, truth cushioned, testimony quashed, there is an end to all true devotedness.

Reader, do give this point your most serious attention. See that you are acting up to your light. It is a great thing when each fresh ray of light communicated produces a step in the right direction. This will always be so when the conscience is in a right condition. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4:18. Again, "If... thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Matt 6: 22, 23. Solemn thought! "Give glory to the LORD your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains." Jer. 13:16. We know of nothing more awfully dangerous than familiarity with truth, without an exercised conscience. It throws one directly into the hands of Satan; whereas an exercised conscience-an upright mind-a single eye-keep us steadily going on in the holy, peaceful, lightsome ways of God. Hence, in our Lord's words in Luke 11 there is marked and beautiful progress. "If," He adds, "thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." In other words, the man who has a single eye will not only have light for himself, but he will be a light bearer for others; but a man whose eye is not single, who has a mixed motive, an undercurrent, a secondary object, a personal end, is not only involved in moral darkness himself, but he is a dishonor to the name of Christ, an instrument in the hand of Satan, and a stumbling block in the way of his fellow men.

This is a truth of the deepest solemnity in this day of easy profession and worldly religiousness. There is a wide diffusion of evangelical doctrine; and while we have to be truly thankful for the

doctrine and its wide diffusion, we have to watch against the use which the devil is making of it. We are deeply impressed with the conviction that the self-indulgent, superficial profession of the present hour is paving the way for the dark and appalling infidelity of the future. We feel the urgent need of something far more profound, earnest, and wholehearted. We need more exercise of conscience. We are not sufficiently penetrated with the genuine spirit of the gospel. The enemy has not been able to shut out the pure light of the gospel. The dark cloud of ignorance and superstition which for many a long and dreary century had settled down upon Christendom, has been rolled away, and the bright beams of revelation's heavenly lamp have poured themselves upon the human mind and dissipated the gloom. We bless God for this. But we are not insensible to the craft and subtlety of the enemy, nor can we shut our eyes to the startling fact that evangelical profession without an exercised conscience, is one of the devil's most potent agencies at the present moment. The doctrines of grace are widely promulgated and professed, but instead of being used for the subjugation of nature they are made to furnish a plea for self-indulgence. The evangelical religion of the day in which our lot is cast is of a very light and fragile texture, ill adapted for rough weather. We are inclined to think that were the Church to be again visited by the stormy blast of persecution, it would thin her ranks amazingly, but it would, doubtless, be the means of developing a veteran band of witnesses; for amid much that is painfully superficial, there is, we are persuaded, much that is real, solid, and true.

In one word then we urge upon the Christian reader the importance of honestly following the light communicated, and we use the case of the blind beggar to this end. Nothing could daunt him. Nothing could shut his mouth. His light could not be extinguished. When "the neighbors" inquired, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" his ready answer was, "I am he." When they inquired further, "How were thine eyes opened?" he unhesitatingly replied, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight." When they proceeded further to ask, "Where is He?" he as frankly replied, "I know not." He neither lagged behind nor rushed beyond, but honestly acted up to his light. This is precisely what is needed. He had been brought into personal contact with Christ, and that personal contact formed the broad and solid basis of his testimony. This, we repeat, is what is needed. We should not go one hair's breadth beyond the measure of real personal knowledge of Christ; but then we should act faithfully up to that measure. It is our happy privilege to have to do with Christ, each one for himself, and our profession should be the result of that personal dealing. We are in danger of being merely propped up by the influences around, instead of being sustained by the vital principle within. In the case of the blind beggar, the external influences were all hostile, but he boldly confessed the truth, and that, moreover, just in proportion to his own personal experience, and no further. He acted up to his light and we shall see, in the sequel, he got more.

Look at him in the presence of the Pharisees. These men, governed by blind prejudice, had deliberately closed their eyes against the light of the truth. Instead of calmly sitting down to investigate the pure and heavenly doctrines of that blessed One whose voice had sounded in their midst, they "had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." It was, therefore, obviously impossible that they could arrive at the truth while their eyes were covered with the bandage of prejudice. They professed to see; therefore their sin remained. Solemn thought! "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." The permanency of sin is judicially

connected with the empty profession of sight. A man who knows he is blind can have his eyes opened; but what can be done for the man who thinks he can see while, at the same time, his eyes are, covered with the bandage of blind prejudice? Alas! nothing. The light which is in him is darkness, and how great is that darkness! The s e Pharisees could talk of keeping the Sabbath, and of giving God the glory, and yet say of Christ, "We know that this man is a sinner." So much for religiousness! A Sabbath without Christ is a vanity. To talk of giving God the praise otherwise than through Christ is a deadly delusion. And yet it was thus with those poor Pharisees. They were disturbed by the testimony of the poor man. They would fain have quashed it. Most gladly would they have put the extinguisher of their official authority upon that dazzling, disturbing, detested light. But they could not. They tried to enlist in their service a cold-hearted expediency as personified in the parents, but in vain. The parents feared the Jews. They did not want to lose caste. They knew nothing of Christ, of His work, or of His Person, and they were not going to encounter obloquy or reproach for Him. They knew nothing about the marvelous cure that had been effected. "He is of age," said they, "ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews."

What a terrible snare is religious position! It is sure to act as a hindrance in the path of bold decision for Christ. If I have to pause in order to consider how such and such a step will affect my religious position, my influence, or my reputation, my eye is not single, my body is full of darkness; the very light which I profess to have is darkness, and I shall be an instrument in the hand of Satan, and a stumbling block in the way of men.

How refreshing to turn from the dark background of prejudice and heartlessness, and contemplate the fearless honesty of the blind beggar. We must confess we greatly admire it, and long to imitate it. He did not know much, but what he did know, he turned to good account. He boldly declared what Jesus had done for him. "One thing I know," said this noble witness, "that, whereas I was blind, now I see." There was no gainsaying this. All the arguments of the Pharisees could not shake his confidence in the fact that his eyes had been opened. It was this that constituted the power of his testimony. It was based upon a plain, palpable fact. The man that sat and begged was now sitting with his eyes open, and it was "a man called Jesus" that did it. Terrible fact! And yet the man was ignorant, but he was honest. He told the plain truth, and proved it in his person. He did not know much about Jesus. He neither knew who He was nor where He was; but he knew and said quite enough to disturb the Pharisees amazingly. Higher and higher he rose in his testimony. The gross irrationalism of his enemies actually forced him into clearer and yet clearer light until at length he breaks forth in these memorable and irresistible accents, "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing."

It is positively quite a feast to read this record. To see an honest man boldly grappling with religious prejudice and intolerance, is something to do the heart good. Would to God there were many nowadays formed on the model of this blind beggar! We know of no more powerful breakwater wherewith to stem the rising tide of infidelity than the bold and vigorous testimony of those who have experienced aught at the hand of Christ. If such would only declare plainly what the Lord has done for them, and base their testimony upon what is plain and palpable-so plain and palpable as to be unanswerable-what power there would be! What point! What pungency! In the case before us we see that one poor ignorant man who had sat as a blind beggar was more than a match for the Pharisees and all their reasonings. He proved a most burdensome stone to them-so

burdensome that they could not endure him. "Thou wast altogether born in sins," said they, "and dost thou teach us? And they excommunicated him" (Margin).

Happy man! He had followed the light in simplicity and sincerity. He had borne an honest testimony to the truth. His eyes had been opened to see, and his lips to testify. It was no "matter of wrong or wicked lewdness," but simple truth, and for that they cast him out. He had never troubled them in the days of his blindness and beggary. Perhaps some of them may have proudly and ostentatiously tossed him a trifling alms as they walked past, thus getting a name among their fellows for benevolence; but now this blind beggar had become a powerful witness. Words of truth now flowed from his lips - truth far too powerful and piercing for them to stand - and they thrust him out.

Happy, thrice-happy man! again we say. This 'was the brightest moment in his career. These men, though they knew it not, had done him a real service. They had thrust him into the most honored position that any mortal can occupy; namely, a position of identification with Christ. And only see how the tender heart of the good Shepherd was moved by the bleatings of this outcast sheep! "Jesus heard that they, had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This is deeply touching. No sooner had the poor sheep been rudely thrust out from the fold than the true Shepherd flew to his side in order to lead him up higher and higher still along that path which he had hitherto trodden with such a bold and decided step. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him."

This is enough. This faithful witness here reaps a rich reward. He had followed on with plain decision along the path of simple, earnest testimony for Christ according to his light and, as a consequence, he was cast out by the religion of this world'. He was forced outside the camp; but there Jesus found him and revealed Himself to his soul, and the curtain drops on this highly favored man as a worshiper at the feet of Incarnate Deity. What a place! What a contrast to the place in which we found him at the opening of his history! What a career! - first a blind beggar - then an earnest witness - and finally an enlightened worshiper prostrate at the feet of the Son of God. Happy, highly honored man! May the Lord raise up many such in these days of cold indifference and superficial profession! O for an earnest heart, true to Christ- a heart that never calculates results, but presses on after Jesus regardless of consequences!

Cause of Strife

Every age of the Church's history illustrates and proves the truth of the statement that self and its odious workings are the producing cause of strife, contention, and division, always. Turn where you will, from the days of the apostles down to the days in which our lot is cast, and you will find unmortified self to be the fruitful source of strife and schism. And, on the other hand, you will find that to sink self and its interests is the true secret of peace, harmony, and brotherly love.

Choosing the Chief Rooms

It is just the place that nature likes. The world which has no relations with God delights in exalting self and shutting Him out. Self gets for self what it likes, and forgets God. Man is always setting up self, pushing for self against God. He does not think so, for he says he is only using his faculties. But so Adam did to hide himself from God. Do not we use our faculties to please ourselves, rather than for God? While the master is away the servants go on in their own way, and do their own will. A man is naturally hurt when he is put down in a corner and despised. Flesh does not relish being thrust aside; but this seeking for a place is to seek for it where Christ had none. Therefore He says, "When thou art bidden... to a wedding,... sit down in the lowest room."

The point of this parable is seen in verses 8-11. It refers the heart to the master, to him "that bade thee." If I am conscious of being a sinner, and therefore deserving no place, God bestows one on me. I shall take none, but wait till I shall have honor indeed when God gives me a place. The point is, What does He bestow upon me? Having the eye upon God, and referring to Him, seek for the lowest place, as Christ did. It will not do to say, "I will not have a place in the world." The great thing is, the heart resting on God's place in the world. When the eye is thus upon God, self is forgotten; if not, I am thinking of the slights I receive, and neither faith nor grace are in exercise. If I could think nothing of myself, I should be perfect. The man who bade the guests has the right estimate of each, and the honor due to them. The evangelist's place, the pastor's, the apostle's, etc., will be appointed by God. When God gives me a place, it is one of power and nearness to Himself; but when a man takes a place for himself, it is one of weakness and alienation from God because self is the object.

Then again we must guard against the mere refusing to take a place in the world because we know it is wrong, as followers of Him who has been rejected. A mere legal estimate of what is right can never last. A thing may be very right, but there is no stability in pursuing it because there is no power to subdue the flesh in merely doing what one knows to be right. There was the sense of obligation with the law, but the law did not set an object before me to attract my heart; it did not bring God to me nor me to God. That lasts which feels we are nothing and that God is everything. Many have begun very energetically and taken a certain place, right in itself, but if legality be the source of it, there will be no power of perseverance; for that which is taken up under law will be sure to be lost in the flesh. When God is the object, the low place here is sufficient. He Himself carries me on; and whatever it be, if the mind and affections are upon Him, what was hard at first is no effort as I proceed. His love, which attracted and gave me power at first to take such a position, becomes brighter and brighter when better and longer known; and what was done at first tremblingly, is easy with increasing courage. The only thing which can enable me thus to go on is to have CHRIST the object before me; and just in proportion as it is so, I can be happy.

There may be a thousand and one things to vex me if self is of importance; they will not vex me at all if self is not there to be vexed. The passions of the flesh will not harass us if we are walking with God. What rubs we get when not walking with God, and thinking only of self! There is no such

deliverance as that of having no importance in one's own eyes. Then one may be happy indeed before God.

If we look at Christ, we learn two principles; first, that He humbled Himself because of the sin of the world all around Him; second, the world did all it could to humble Him; for the more He went down, so much the more it sought to pull Him down.

No one cares for another, so that if a man does not care for himself, he will be sure to be pushed down low enough. Then again, so deceitful are our hearts, that it is possible we should be willing to humble ourselves if we could get anything by it, even the approbation of men. On the other hand, if we, in the usual sense of men, merely seek to imitate Christ in this, it will be but legal effort. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself. First, He "made Himself of no reputation"; that is, He emptied Himself of His glory to become a man. In doing this, He left the Father's glory to become a man. This was a great descent (though we think a great deal of ourselves). But was that all? No; He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. It is the same principle which is put before us in this chapter in Luke. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Real lowliness is being ready to serve any and everybody; and though it may look low to the eye of man, it is in reality very high, being the fruit of divine love working in our hearts. God, operating in our hearts, makes us unselfish. The only thing worth doing in the world is this service, except it be enjoying God. We should be ready to serve our enemies. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is not only being humbled, but humbling oneself, and not doing it before those who would honor us all the more for being humble. Paul could say of himself and others, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." He felt they had a title to serve in grace; and in proportion as he took the humble place, he will be exalted in the day that is coming.

Christ for Our Circumstances

In the epistle to the Philippians, the practical condition of the soul is developed more fully than anywhere else; and this is not so much in doctrine as in action and experience. The Apostle lays bare his own motives as well as walk, and even Christ's also. Hence it is peculiarly in this epistle that we find displayed the exercise of individual Christian life. Here we have the power of the Spirit of God acting in the soul of the believer, enabling him to realize Christ in the heart and path here below. But what gave rise to this character of instruction? What circumstances brought it out? The absence of the Apostle from the Philippians, and from his ordinary ministry while he was imprisoned at Rome. It was not, as at Corinth, that his absence brought out their ostentatious vanity, and party spirit, and worldly laxity, and quarrellings. It led the Philippians to feel the necessity of living increasingly with, and for, and to Christ. There was nothing for it but each one looking, and helping his brother to look, to the Lord Himself. This being the effect produced, the Apostle was full of joy in thinking of them. He had been away several years, and externally in the most dismal circumstances himself; but his joy was not dimmed one whit. On the contrary, there is not another epistle so full of actually tasted happiness; and yet there never was an epistle written when all on earth seemed more clouded and filled with sorrow. So thoroughly is Christ the one circumstance that rules all others to the believer. When moving about and seeing both the devotedness of the saints, and sinners everywhere brought to God, one can understand the Apostle's continual joy and praise. But think of him in prison for years, chained between two soldiers, debarred from the work that he loved, and others taking advantage of his absence to grieve him, preaching the very gospel out of contention and strife; and yet his heart was so running over with joy that he was filling others with it!

If there be a witness of the power of the Spirit of God working through human affections, through the heart of a saint on earth, in the midst of all weakness and trial, it is found here. It is not the picture of a man down under trying circumstances, for under them he never is, but of one consciously more than conqueror. Not that he never knew what it was to be cast down. He who wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians fully experienced all that which God in His grace made to be a kind of moral preparation for bringing out the comfort that was needed by the saints then and at all times.

The Christian and Politics: the Editor's Column

The inauguration this month of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as President of the United States reminds us of God's gracious provision for us in setting up rulers-"There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (What a terrible scene this world would be if there were no governments!) Although the Christian should be separate from politics, he can thank God for those whom He ordains-ministers of God to us for good (Rom. 13:4).

We would also add a word of caution for Christians in respect to a habit prevalent in the world of speaking evil of rulers. This ill-becomes us; on the contrary we are to render "honor to whom honor" is due. While we have nothing to do with setting up rulers, we should be the most respectful of all people to them.

Another privilege we have, is to pray for them; in fact, we are exhorted to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks... for all that are in authority." 1 Tim. 2:1, 2. Who can measure the effect on any nation's tranquility if separated, devoted saints of God make such intercessions! It is not by helping to select rulers, nor by mingling in politics, that this weight is effected. Consider Lot in Sodom, for instance; he was right in the midst of their politics, and was of no help at all, while his godly uncle Abraham, who was separated from it, could make intercession on behalf of that wicked city. God heard Abraham's intercession, but the wickedness of the place had gone too far then for judgment to be withheld. Lot neither perceived the imminence of judgment, nor was he fitted to make intercession for the city. His political associations blinded his eyes; his moral contacts blighted his soul and ruined his family

The world's history bears record to the fact that when Christians have lost sight of their heavenly calling, and have sought to help forward certain political aims, or have curried the favor and sought the support of "the powers that be," they have done so to their hurt. It is not good to lean on "an arm of flesh"; rather, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes." Psalm 118:9.

As terrible as godless, atheistic communism is, it is to be feared that in many places where communists have gained control, Christians have suffered unduly by having taken sides against them, and having sought by political means to prevent the communists from coming into power. In this way Christians, who should have maintained their separation, became identified with political forces. Then when the new authority was set up they were treated as political enemies. The inflammatory remarks against communism by some Christian leaders in this country have perhaps added to the severity of persecution against Christians in such places as North Korea.

Satan has been very successful in seducing Christians to forget their earthly strangership and heavenly citizenship, and in having them seek to adapt Christianity to the ways and aims of the world. There is little or no reproach for that compromising type of Christianity in the world. The god of this world easily makes use of it for his own ends. It has become integrated with world politics, reforms, and advancements of all kinds.

In some ways we should be more like the Jewish captives in Babylon. They were taken from their own land and were strangers (not pilgrims journeying home, as we are, however) in a foreign land, but they were told by God through Jeremiah to "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Jer. 29:7. They were not to be engaged in setting things right in the land of their captivity, but they could and should resort to prayer on behalf of that place, not in the spirit of seeking its greatness, but that they might enjoy peace. In the same spirit, we are to pray for those in authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2:2. It is not by voting for the "right men" that this peace can be preserved to us, but by thankfulness to God for the men whom He has chosen to rule over us, and by earnest prayers, supplications, and intercessions for them.

With our limited knowledge, how could we know who the best men are? or that it was God's will to place them in power? To vote against God's man would be a serious thing. Gamaliel gave some sober advice to the men of his day when he said: "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts 5:39.

May we not forget that we are "strangers and pilgrims" in this world. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20); our calling is to heaven (Heb. 3:1); our hope is in heaven (Col. 1:5). Yet for all that, the Christians who act accordingly, and make intercession for those in authority are the greatest power for good in any land.

We do not know just how the new President of the United States may fit into God's plans for developing the time of the end. It does seem, however, that the new administration will continue a strong international outlook and involvement which will tend to further the uniting of Western Europe. It will one day culminate in the formation of the revived Roman Empire. Many preliminary steps have already been taken for this development, and God is still moving behind the scenes preparing this world for that eventful moment when His beloved Son shall come to make His enemies His footstool.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18.

Christ's Patience

The present constant expectation of Christ stamps its own character on the Christian- "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."

It is by this that the Christian, in his mind and thoughts, becomes associated with Christ Himself. You find this especially in the letter to the church at Philadelphia, for there, besides keeping His word and not denying His name, you read, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience." Whose patience? Christ's. Christ is waiting, and He is waiting a great deal more truly and earnestly than we are. We are waiting for Him and He is waiting for us with all the love that the Bridegroom bears to the bride.

True, He is waiting until His enemies be made His footstool; but, for His friends, He has perfected His work; and

He sits expecting as to His enemies, and then He will rise up to judgment. He does not know the time in that sense (of course, as God, He does) for it is not a revealed thing yet.

He is waiting, and we wait for Him, and so complete is the association, now in spirit and then in glory, that save His personal glory, He cannot take any glory until He has us with Him, for we are joint heirs with Him.

In the address to the church at Philadelphia, we get, "I know thy works," but there is not a word said about them; the saints must be content to wait till the Lord comes.

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience"; that was Christ's own path down here, and we are to walk in it now-now that we are at the end of a dispensation which, as an outward system, has wholly departed from God.

The City of Jerusalem: the Editor's Column

Jerusalem, comparatively speaking, is a very small city. Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the days of the apostles, gives dimensions which indicate that it had an area of little more than one square mile within the walls. In its palmier days some adjoining areas were a part of the city, as they are today, but even then it was small.

Most cities no larger than Jerusalem would attract little attention, and their names would scarcely be known outside of their own country, but the eyes of the world have focused on it intermittently for 3000 years. It has been honored and defamed; it has been besieged, captured, pillaged, and destroyed again and again. But for all that, it is there today as a prize sought after by Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, and its troubles are not over.

Jerusalem has been connected with events that have changed the course of the world, and have affected the lives, manners, and even destinies of people everywhere. It has a bright and glorious future as the city of the Great King, and the metropolis of the whole earth; but today it serves to honor the inspired Word of God, for our Lord said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled " Luke 21:24. As it now stands, most of the old part of the city, including the famous temple site, is in the hands of the Mohammedans - descendants of the children of Ammon and perhaps of Moab and others - while the Jews hold the newer section of the city.

This partition of the city is not satisfactory to either party concerned. The Jews want the whole of it, and the Arabs stubbornly cling to that historic old section with all its memories. The Jews have recently announced that they are allocating \$5,000,000 of a recent bond issue for economic development of the newer part of the city. They have also transferred government offices there in an attempt to make it, rather than the modern city of Tel Aviv on the coast, their capital. Then the Jordan government announced its decision to open offices of all its ministries in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Jordan premier declared: "We are determined to defend the city at all costs and we are going to strengthen it economically. Jerusalem is dear to us and to all the world." Thus the two contenders vie with each other in attempting to establish their hold on the city.

Israel's latest step was to move its foreign offices there so that the nations of the world would have to have their representatives go to Jerusalem to do business with its government. Great Britain and the United States protested the removal, and the United States representatives have carefully avoided doing business there; they thus refuse to acknowledge Israel's right to Jerusalem, even the newer part, as their capital.

There is another strange involvement in the struggle for the city of Jerusalem. In December of 1949 the United Nations meeting in New York voted that a permanent international regime should be established to administer the city. How this could be done without an army, great cost, and considerable bloodshed is difficult to see, but the strange part of it is that this resolution was passed by the United Nations under pressure from the Catholic Church. According to reports, they

put pressure on all predominantly Catholic countries to vote for the internationalization, and in doing so they joined forces with the Arab nations and India-Mohammedans-and with atheistic Russia.

The latest in this move is a letter to the present United Nations Secretary General from the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, of which Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York is head, protesting Israel's transfer of its foreign ministry from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and charging the Jewish State of violating the UN resolutions on the internationalization of Jerusalem.

All of this shows the increasing importance and power of the Roman Church in international affairs, and how that which claims to be the Church does not hesitate to promote her affairs with the nations of the world.

But the great question is this: What special interest does Rome have in Jerusalem? What is the purpose of these unholy alliances respecting the "holy city"? Is it not that Rome wants control of the so-called holy places in Jerusalem? Some of us have very little idea of the traffic in what tradition has set up as holy places and shrines in that city which will be spiritually "called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8).

Strange as it may seem, the Jews, Mohammedans, Roman Church, Greek Church, Armenians, and even Protestants cling to that which antiquity has built up into tradition and legend respecting Jerusalem and its environs. Thousands upon thousands of pilgrims flock to these so-called sacred places with their countless relics, which for the most part are fraudulent inventions to beguile unwary, superstitious people. When we remember what ravages time works, and that Jerusalem was sacked and pillaged several times in this era, how could these things have been kept intact? Think of finding the stone on which the angel sat, the sepulcher room, the rock on which the body of the Lord was laid, three holes where the three crosses were placed, the altar on which Isaac was placed, etc., etc., etc.!

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is supposed to house the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea where our Lord was laid with loving hands, but its location is altogether unsatisfactory; it is also said to cover the spot where He was crucified, and yet it is within the city, whereas He "suffered without the gate," and the sepulcher was near by-"it was nigh at hand." One who visited the famous church there wrote: "Within this vast enclosure there seems to be no end to aisles, windows, stairways, vaults, tombs, dark recesses, chapels, oratories, altars, concealed relics, and other holy 'inventions.' Verily, nothing is too hard for stout-hearted Credulity. She has not only removed mountains, but wrought impossibilities of transposition and aggregation. At her bidding, rocks and caves, and distant localities gathered from all quarters into this temple, as the wild beasts came to the ark."*

The same visitor wrote regarding asserted locations where each event took place: "Now I am devoutly thankful that no amount of learning or research can establish the remotest connection between any act of our Savior and any of these so-called holy places. And I seem to find, in this uncertainty which hangs over every sacred locality, the indications of a watchful Providence in beautiful accordance with many similar interpositions to save God's people from idolatry. The grave... of Moses,... of David,... of John the Baptist,... and Mary-the tombs of these have been irrecoverably concealed: and the same watchful care has hid forever the instruments of the

Savior's passion; the exact spot where He was crucified, buried, and whence He rose to life again; and also the place from which He ascended to heaven. I would have it thus. And since God has concealed the realities, we have no need of these fictitious sites to confirm our faith."*

Again this writer says: "If sure, to the fraction of a foot, in regard to the sepulcher, I could no more worship it than I could worship the boat in which He sailed over Gennesaret, or the ass upon which He rode into Jerusalem, and hence I have no need of these 'inventions'; and since they are perverted to an idolatry worse than burning incense to the brazen serpent [2 Kings 18:4], I would have them all removed out of sight."*

Human ingenuity must have worked hard and long to prepare all these things for "pilgrims" to see, and Protestants are not free from these superstitions and inventions. One of them recently told us that the real tomb of Lazarus was still there as it was. Who could prove that it is? And if it were duly ascertained, what would it add to our faith? Our faith rests on the Word of God, and not on finding a tomb or any other object. The same writer previously quoted says of the reputed sepulcher of Lazarus to which he descended "twenty-five slippery steps": "It is a wretched cavern, every way unsatisfactory, and almost disgusting."*

The words of our Lord, when He viewed the rebuilt tombs of the prophets of Israel, come to mind: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisee; hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets Matt. 23:29-31.

And so the struggle for the control of that little piece of the earth called Jerusalem goes on and on, and will go on through much turmoil and trouble, and will at least see one more desolation before the rightful Heir will come and possess it.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Psalm 24:3-5.

Thus we see that the passing events are constantly calling our attention to the close proximity of the consummation of the ages. As things continue to focus attention on Jerusalem, we see the ground being laid for the coming time of Jacob's trouble, and for apostate Christendom's Satanic delusion from the man of sin, whom "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thess. 2:8. But first He must come and take His redeemed ones to Himself.

If the events that will occur after we are with Christ in glory are already casting deep shadows across the world's landscape, surely His coming for us is even at the door. Any moment we may hear that blessed shout, and be caught up to meet Him in the air. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

The Comforter

Every one who believes in Christ and rests on His work, shares the blessings of the Comforter now given and abiding. A person is not a Christian unless he is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is not known as an object (though He distributes to every one severally as He will), but He is in us - living spiritual power in us. Christ does not dwell so in us. Christ was with the disciples three years, and then went away from them; but the Holy Ghost never goes away, and is promised to be in them "a well of water," etc. The effect of the Holy Ghost's power is to bring Christ back to us-not in person, as an object, but Christ becoming, by the power of the Holy Ghost, life in me. "To me to live is Christ," etc. Christ Himself is He whom the Holy Ghost shows unto me. There is a blessed living object in Christ which I do not find in the Holy Ghost. They could not say of Him, "We have handled Him," as of Christ.

Creation and Salvation

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Heb. 11:3.

God could call worlds into existence by the word of His mouth, but when sinners had to be cleansed, something more was needed. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." When worlds were to be framed, God had but to speak; when sinners had to be saved, He had to give His Son.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:9, 10.

The Cross and the Crown

The covering of the brazen altar was a purple cloth, the royal color. If we suffer, we shall reign. There is a connection between the cross and the crown, upon the earth and in heaven. Thus it was with Christ, the King of the Jews, according to the superscription written on the cross; and the very throne of God was the answer to His sufferings, inasmuch as He was the burnt offering, offered according to the power of the eternal Spirit acting in man according to the exigency of the divine Majesty. The comparison of Psalm 19; 20; 21, and 22 is, under this point of view, most interesting. Psalm 19 contains testimonies of the creation and the law. Psalm 20 presents Messiah suffering, but externally, so that man can take an interest in Him. Psalm 21, Messiah exalted and, as a consequence, vengeance striking at His enemies who had rejected Him. Psalm 22, His sufferings, as forsaken by God Himself. This is the expression of Christ alone, while in Psalms 20 and 21 the Jewish remnant were speaking of His outward sufferings. There is no vengeance in connection with those sufferings (Psalm 22) consequent on His being forsaken of God, for it was expiation. There is nothing but blessing which the mouth of the Savior announces, and to which He Himself responded by praising in the midst of His saints. This blessing will extend to the ends of the earth during the Millennium.

Danger of Forsaking Public Testimony

"Consider one another to provoke unto love"; that is, having got to God in grace, we must be diligent in acting toward others in grace. Paul introduces "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" to meet the tendency there was to avoid public testimony, and to think that private faith would do in times of persecution such as these were. This was their natural tendency; and, whether it be persecution or reproach, it is the same thing. The latter is perhaps our snare. "And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"; for judgment is surely coming. If the power of evil increases, there is the more need to cling closely to Christ. And we must not suppose that the world is improving because the Spirit is working; on the contrary, this is just the proof that judgment is nearing. The more rapidly souls are gathered in, the more reason we have for believing the coming of the Lord to be at hand. 'While the long-suffering of God is salvation, the hope should ever be a present one to the Church. It was the wicked servant who said, "My lord delayeth his coming"; yet He did delay it.

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward"; and let us remember that we shall "have need of patience"; but "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

The Danger of Prosperity: the Life of Hezekiah

It may be; no, it is very often so, that God's prosperings are attended with greater danger to our souls than are the devil's harassings.

We have an illustration of this in Isaiah 36-39. In chapters 36 and 37, the uncircumcised Assyrians thunder at the gates of Jerusalem, but Hezekiah is not dismayed; he sanctifies the Lord God of Israel in his heart, and instead of crying for being overcome is compassed about with songs of deliverance. With crippled Jacob, "By his strength he had power with God." The letter of the invader, with all its boastings, all its threats, all its scoffs, all its revilings, is laid down quietly before the Lord; it has reached the right address, for the Lord declares concerning its writer, "/ know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me. Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult, is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

As David, a "dead dog" in his own eyes; as Paul, in that time of trouble which came upon him in Asia, having the sentence of death in himself, in company with all those obtainers of a divine good report, of whom the world was not worthy, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. 11:33, 34); this Israelite, indeed, takes hold of the strength of the mighty God of Jacob, believes that He is (Heb. 11:6), and so believing is upheld by the right hand of His righteousness.

Bright, and only bright, would have been the portrait of this saint, had the record closed here. Bright indeed it is; "He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel: so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city." 2 Kings 18:3-8. But then the Spirit of God is a faithful biographer, and the memoir He has furnished has its double instruction. Hezekiah had been proving the Lord in His power and faithfulness. We have now to look at him in other circumstances proving what he himself is.

It is the hour of prosperity. The Lord by His favor has made his mountain to stand strong; the good hand of his God has wrought deliverance; riches flow in from every side; and the renown of his name is spread abroad. "And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth." 2 Chron. 32:23. Popularity, a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth, is

the result of the faith that, in the sense of his own nothingness, had to do with God. Hezekiah's history is in this respect no uncommon history. How many a saint has been lifted into a place of prominence before the eyes of his fellow saints, and before the world, through a course of unaffected simplicity of dependence, and of purpose of heart for God. Hezekiah "was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth"; yes, but alas! he was magnified also in his own sight. In all times of our prosperity let us say, O Lord, "hold Thou me up."

"In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.... Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." Psalm 30:6, 7.

There is one who understands our case, and in the lights and shades of the life of faith the Physician is at work. What emptyings from vessel to vessel go on there to prevent a settling on our lees. We are "exceeding glad of the gourd" (Jonah 4:6). But such gladness the haulm shrivels, for the Lord God who had prepared the gourd has prepared a worm at the root of the gourd. Our gourd is withered.

Is there nothing answering to this in the history before us? "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die and not live." Yes, the worm is there.

How does Hezekiah receive the message? What is its effect on this saint of God? "Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD." v. 2. Could he have done better? The man who in the strait of the siege betook himself to the temple, in this time of his sickness, now that his feet can no longer tread the courts of the house of his God, bethinks himself, and turns, and makes supplication from his bed thitherward. "I have set the Lord always before me," is the language of faith. So far all is right. But we need look a little closer, and consider not simply the fact of his praying, but the character of his prayer. If the Lord is set before Hezekiah, Hezekiah is set before the Lord.

What is his cry? "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore." v. 3. He is calling on God to witness to his faithfulness, to the perfection of his heart, to the goodness of his ways, to his jealousy against idolatry, to his diligence in restoring the feasts, and worship, and order of Israel. In the temple he had spread the letter with its blasphemies; now he spreads his graces before the Lord, and appeals to Him on the credit of them.

Will the Lord admit the plea? He is not unrighteous to forget; He does not deny the truth of what Hezekiah says. He takes it at its worth, and tells him He will yet add fifteen years to his life. "Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." vv. 4, 5.

To a casual observer there might be nothing wonderful in this recovery of one who had been sick unto death. Such things are of daily occurrence. The proverb has it, "While there is life there is hope," and our infidel hearts deify means. But the sentence of death has gone forth from the mouth of the Lord, and it has taken hold; the faith of a Hezekiah can be only and nakedly in God. To Him to whom belongeth the issues of death, who turneth man to destruction, and saith, Return ye children of men, he looks in the hour of his sore sickness. The Lord that has recovered him and

made him to live, he celebrates in the writing which he wrote when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness. The lump of figs laid as a plaster on the boil is but a lump of figs. If healing and health have flowed into his veins immediately through them, the breaker of the brazen serpent acknowledges that it is the God of the brazen serpent that has been at work. A wonder has been wrought in the land.

There is an accompanying wonder, the tidings thereof reach even to Babylon: "So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down." v. 8. The princes of Babylon may send to inquire about this wonder, and congratulate the king on whose behalf it has been wrought; but He whose hand is in both, who suspends not nor reverses the action of the laws of nature, save in the accomplishment of His own counsels, has another field of inquiry for His saints. On the sickbed of Hezekiah, no less than on the dial of Ahaz, God has put forth His power. "I will bring again the shadow of the degrees' " "I will add unto thy days fifteen years." Faith owns this; but the secret of His ways has to be arrived at by the man of faith, not through inquiries in the world without, but through the discovery to himself of the world within

"The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:... What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth. The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD." vv. 9, 15-20.

The Lord has undertaken for him. He killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. Such is the acknowledgment of Hezekiah. "Salvation is of the LORD." Jonah 2:9.

And mark, with the sense of this deliverance fresh upon his soul, the purpose of Hezekiah's heart is not merely that of paying that which he has vowed in the presence of the Lord's people, of sacrificing unto Him with the voice of thanksgiving; his thought is that he shall bear along with him the remembrance of these days through all after life, that what man is and what death is, as he saw and felt about them then, will never be forgotten. But it is one thing to recognize the truth of these things with the face to the wall, one thing to have the strength and goodness of nature withered there and thus; and it is altogether another and a different thing so to live in the continual sense of God's presence as to disallow every pretension of the flesh.

What resolutions, not insincere but formed in ignorance of self, are recorded in this memorandum of a convalescent Hezekiah. He who had thought to behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world is about to enter afresh for a definite added term upon the scenes and activities of life. How will he carry himself in them? Bearing about with him in all its wholesome bitterness the lesson of death, a living one, he will be on the principle of a continuous gratitude, the worshiper and extoller of the

Lord. Such is his settled purpose. Alas! it is built upon the "I shall" and "we will" of a sincere but self-ignorant heart. Ere the cock crow, this Old Testament Peter must be made to prove that his own "I will," like the "will not I" of the son of Jonas, are but big words. There is no "hold Thou me up" about it, and hence there is no stability.

The very next chapter brings before us a state of things entirely dissimilar from that of these good resolutions. It is again a time of prosperity; the sackcloth is put off, and the wearer of it is girded with gladness. Is the house in order? has God His own right place? The ambassadors of the king of Babylon have come, and Hezekiah's heart is "lifted up"; the man who was to go softly is a self-exalter. "Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." 2 Chron. 32:31.

He has put God in remembrance of the perfection of his heart, and God leaves him that he may know what that heart is. The ambassadors come; an opportunity is presented for magnifying the Lord, for making known the truth. What does he do? Then "Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor, and all that was found, in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." He was glad of them; this explains it all. He calls them to examine his treasures; but God is calling him to the examination of his own heart. "I am king in Jerusalem," says that heart in its pride; just as another, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" There is nothing of the dead man in all this, nothing of a going softly.

It needs but that we be left a little moment so that we should be tried in order to our knowing all that is in our hearts; and that which is in the heart comes out to our self-loathing. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." That man may carry himself well and go through with the deception until he makes his bow at the end, who is the mere actor of a part, walking before his fellow men instead of before God. It may be a fair show that is made, though a fair show in the flesh. But the true-hearted saint who' knows what it is to wrestle through the onslaught of indwelling corruption, to detect the breaking out afresh of some old sore, the stealthy reviving of the viper long thought dead, finds his safety in a holding fast grace, and keeping himself in the love of God.

To return to Hezekiah. We read in Chronicles that he "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. N o t withstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah." He humbles himself under the hand and word of the Lord. The look that, while it brings sin to mind, assures us that He is unchanged in His love against whom that sin is, and that He has provided for it all, works brokenness of spirit. "Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and

that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." vv. 3-7.

"Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days." v. 8. What a justifying of God in His ways have we here! However humbling the needed process through which His saints are put, the grace is pure that does it. Our profit is attained when, exercised through the discipline, we turn from self and from eyeing our graces to find in God our help.

Daniel's Deliverance: Individual Faithfulness and Its Results

Never were two more sweeping measures passed by any government than those enforced by Darius the Mede in the days when he had for prime minister Daniel the Jewish captive. The first prohibited, for the space of thirty days, all practice of religion whatsoever. The second not only annulled this, but proclaimed the worship of the true God throughout all the one hundred and twenty provinces of this monarch's mighty dominion. Both were published within the course of a week or so.

But as to these measures, What caused their enactment? What led Darius to preclude every petition saving those addressed directly to himself for that period? Again, Why did he so quickly strike his pen through his newly-framed bill? The cause in each case was Daniel.

Now this man had, like Joseph before him, been raised to great eminence in a land wherein he was a stranger. God raised both for the accomplishment of His purposes and the help of His people.

Daniel was chief president, and placed in authority over all the councilors of Darius. But this fact made him the victim of jealousy. A Jewish premier was, of course, intolerable to the pride of the Medo-Persian nobles. The result was that they plotted his downfall. But where could they find a fault? His administration was blameless, his life irreproachable. They could only find it in the fact that he did not acknowledge their gods. His religion and theirs differed. Theirs was one of form, and allowed infinite latitude; his was one of conscience, and bound his very being to a principle, the maintenance of which was dearer to him than life. Theirs might be held in abeyance or temporary neglect; his was a matter of as much importance as daily food. Theirs connected them with idols; his sustained him in communion with the living God. Of all this his artful enemies were fully aware, and hence their clever device.

They succeeded in obtaining from the unsuspecting king a decree which forbade the presentation of any petition to God or man, except the king, for thirty days. To this decree Darius appended his sign manual. This was his first famous measure. Daniel was hopelessly entangled. Escape, even if desired, was impossible apart from the betrayal of conscience and of God.

He saw the dilemma. He must either deny God, and thus escape the lions' den, or else continue true to God, and lose his life. The happy result -one which brought such a revenue of glory to God, and such honor to Daniel-was that in faith he chose the latter. "Them that honor Me I will honor" was fully proved by this dear faithful man.

Meanwhile he was to make no petition to God for thirty days. Such was the clear command of Darius. Obedience was impossible. He must obey God rather. And so at all risk, without reserve, and most boldly, he prayed "as aforetime." With his window open, and with his face toward Jerusalem - that earthly center of divine interest, though at that time in ruins-he cried to God. Jerusalem was more to him than

Babylon, and God more than Darius. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," and a praying Daniel was a victor.

Yet to his foes such conduct must have appeared folly. Think of petitioning an unseen God; think of turning toward Jerusalem while so doing -a ruin which bore witness to the wrath of that God on His people-and think of disobeying the king's decree. However, folly or wisdom, they had gained their end, and had entrapped Daniel. They could now prove a charge of disobedience, and claim for him the punishment of the law.

Accordingly we find them at once preferring their charge, and telling the king of that Daniel, a Jewish captive, who did not regard the king or his decree, but who made thrice daily his petition. How skillfully had they framed their indictment! Here was a man who neither regarded the king nor his decree. Was this a fair presentment of the facts? Further, thrice daily he made his petition. True; but to whom? They did not say. How could they utter the name of the unseen God, in whose awful presence Daniel found his strength and comfort? Yet the indictment was complete, and Daniel's ways had a semblance of disregard for the king. A way of escape was impossible.

And now Darius discovered, when too late, the faultiness of his measure; and in order to deliver his favorite minister, he labored till sundown, but in vain. His was the labor of mercy against the iron claims of justice, of love against law. Evidently both could not stand. If he delivered Daniel, he broke the law, and dissolved the bonds of his empire; if, on the other hand, he fulfilled the law, he must shock all his feelings of mercy and compassion. There was no alternative. Hence his long and futile labor. Justice barred benevolence, and demanded satisfaction. She refused the smallest violation, and urged by the law of the Medes and Persians, by the very pillars that support the universe, the priority of her cause. And she prevailed. She must prevail.

Oh, that problem to the brain of man so insoluble! How can mercy find scope for acting without infringing the rules of justice? 'What infidel can answer such a question? or what system of philosophy explain its riddle? But God has explained the whole in one single sentence - "That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. And the cross of Christ stands before the world as the divine answer; for there justice, finding perfect satisfaction in the death of the Son of God, permits mercy to extend all the riches of her bosom toward the guilty; and thus the two, working hand in hand, carry the blessing in love, and secure it in righteousness, on behalf of all who believe in Jesus.

Oh, grand solution of our problem, to be admired through the eternal day as the triumph, not only of God's grace, but of His wisdom too!

Well, the law of the Mede must have its way, and Daniel suffers its full penalty. He is cast into the den of lions. The law demands no more. The curtain drops, and night falls over the scene. But the king cannot sleep, nor do the sweet strains of music charm him. His soul is troubled on Daniel's account. And so, early morning finds him at the mouth of the den crying lamentably to Daniel, whom he calls the servant of the living God, in order to learn whether God were able to deliver him from the lions.

"O king, live forever," sounded loyally and joyfully from the lips of the man of God. "My God," said he, using the possessive pronoun by a renewed right and title, "sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." Yes, God was able to deliver, and had done so.

"Then was the king exceeding glad for him.... So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." Happy testimony! Daniel honored God, and God honored Daniel. No hurt befell his three friends in the burning fiery furnace. They had refused to worship the image. No hurt befell Daniel. He had refused to cease worshiping God. Their conduct was negative; his was positive. They said, "No"; he said, "Yes." Both responded by grace. And faith, like a golden coin, has two sides, the negative that refuses evil, and the positive that chooses good. Thus Moses refused Egypt, and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. It is the nature of faith to cease doing evil and to learn to do well.

"Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast forever." This was his second measure. It wiped the first out of existence. It established, so far as a human decree could do it, a religion that acknowledged the living God, before whom men were to tremble and fear, and it was published in every realm of his wide domain.

Just think, dear reader, that this was the effect of the faith and devotedness of one man. Think of the glory that redounded to God through him. Daniel loved God, loved His interests, loved His people, loved His poor desolate city; and therefore, at all risk, and at all cost, he clung to Him. The ordeal was terrible, but the grace-given victory was glorious! Happy Daniel! Oh for grace to cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord, and to continue in prayer to God as our hearts turn in true sympathy to the moral wastes of Zion, and await the coming of the great Deliverer-the Son of the living God.

Deep Plowing: Lacking in Present Day Evangelism

There was nothing superficial in the gospel of Paul. His preaching was always searching. It did not skim the surface nor heal the hurt slightly by saying, "Peace, peace," when there was none. It did not call for a mere profession of faith nor a dead intellectual assent; no, it laid the conscience bare, and put its finger on sin. It dealt not only with overt acts of evil, but with the corrupt nature from which they sprang. It left no stone unturned. It was influential and resulted either in its deliberate rejection as a thing intolerable, or in its reception as a thing precious beyond comparison. It was either a warrant of death or "the power of God unto salvation." This is true of the gospel as such always; but in Paul we find the fullest and most abundant testimony to Christianity, and therefore it is well to refer to him as our model.

Thus in Acts 26:20 we have a summary of his method and mode of work. He "showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." This is doubtless a fair sample of his style.

Three weighty truth burdened his soul, and lay at the bottom of his preaching-

Repentance

Turning to God.

3. Works meet for repentance.

And these three truths, observe, were urged by him everywhere and on all classes. Unto them of Damascus first, where he first saw the light, and where in the Jewish synagogue he preached that "Jesus is the Son of God"; then at Jerusalem, not yet fully judged, but having at least a semblance of God's favor and privilege; then in Judea; and last, to the Gentiles, ignorant of God and given over to sin. Everywhere and always the same appeal comes from his lips for the simple reason that one response is incumbent on all.

Repentance lies at the bottom of all true religion. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3), said the Lord when on earth. You may as well expect to see a house without a foundation as a saved soul without repentance. Such a thing does not exist. Granted that "all have sinned," then all must repent. Granted that "there is none righteous," then all must repent.

It is an absolute necessity. It is a thing that cannot be avoided, nor can a substitute for it be found. Each one must for himself own his personal guilt, and judge his evil condition, although repentance, however deep, is not our Savior, but Christ Jesus our Lord.

Repentance implies self-judgment in the presence of God. It is a change of mind in reference to myself, to others, and to God-such a change of mind that humbles me in the dust, putting me in my true and proper place before Him. I say then, like the prodigal, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Oh the unbounded value of this full admission of total de merit! If absolutely necessary, it is also profoundly blessed; if deeply humbling, it is also divinely elevating. It puts the soul right with God; it anticipates and averts His judgment of it, and acknowledges His holiness by a true confession of its own guilt.

But is there merit in repentance? None. It is one of the activities of faith-the initial, dawning activity of the Spirit of God as He operates on the conscience. It is the repudiation of all merit. Else why called repentance? An eternal difference exists between repentance and "doing penance" -the one is self-condemnatory, but the other is self-exalting. The one is seen in the offering of Abel, the other in that of Cain.

Turning to God is an act of the soul that, though subsequent to repentance, is yet prior to the production of works meet for it. It is the outward and upward glance of faith that lets in the sunshine. It is the completion of repentance-the obverse of the coin, while the works are the music of its ring and the witness of its genuineness. "Turning to God" is confronting a living Person.

Philosophy turns you to a thing, perhaps a good thing. It may make a drunkard turn to temperance, an impure man to chastity; but Christianity turns you, whatever you are, to God. Yes, to God, and

to nothing short of God. If thus brought to God, works meet for repentance are natural.

Works meet for repentance. In these works we find the fruit growing on the tree. Anyone can tell that the tree lives and is healthy because of the crop it is bearing. Its life is developed in fruit. If there were no fruit, the fruit tree had better be cut down as a cumberer of the ground. But there is fruit. It is the necessary evidence of the life. The fruit does not produce the life, but the life the fruit. You might decorate the tree with fruit, but that would not give it life.

Further, if the tree be corrupt, the fruit is corrupt too; but the good fruit declares the nature of the tree to be good also.

Legality was once quite widespread, but levity is fast gaining ground as legality disappears' and preaching that pleases the ear is preferred to that which deals with sin. It is well, therefore, to listen to the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles, and to be reminded of that repentance, that turning to God, and those works meet for repentance, that threefold testimony which he preached so faithfully in his day.

Devotedness

Devotedness is a much deeper and, at the same time, a much simpler thing than many suppose. Most think that if they are earnestly engaged in the Lord's work, and looking to Him for guidance and blessing, this is being devoted; but it is much more. It is having Christ Himself as the delight and resource of my heart, and the bent of my mind toward Him. The highest service we can render to the Lord is to serve His heart, and that is a service to which few devote themselves. Occupation with Christ, with a view to becoming more intimately acquainted with His character; studying Him that we may learn what pleases Him, is very rare indeed. Many can be found who are occupied for Christ, like

Martha - few who are occupied with Him, like Mary. When we have reached this, we have reached the foundation stone of true devotedness. This is the Gilgal where the serving one returns to encamp, and whence he issues like the sun to run his course, and like a giant refreshed with new wine. It is because the saints know so little of this Gilgal in the Lord's presence that there is so much unsanctified activity and really profitless work. If there is zeal and ability, without a knowledge of God's mind and when to use it, how can there but be a turning to take counsel from nature; and how can we expect that the results flowing from such a source will be otherwise than profitless?

Dividing Asunder

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

God has created natural affections, but how much self and idolatry come in! Self-will, too, and self-gratification -how awfully it comes in! That is soul, and not spirit. The Word of God comes in and knows how to divide between soul and spirit, what looks like the same thing, the very same affections, as far as man sees. What a mass of corruption! Can we have communion with God when self comes in? How powerless Christians are now-you, and I, and everyone. "I here is grace, blessed be God, but in a certain sense, how low we are! "We will give ourselves... to prayer," said some. All blessing comes from the immediateness of a man's life with God. There are rivers of living water. How are you to get them? "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," and "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." A man must drink for himself first before there can be rivers, etc. In the time of the prophets they had a message, "Thus saith the Lord," and then they had to inquire the meaning of the prophecy; but with us, we ourselves drink first. We are so connected with Christ that we have it ourselves from Him before communicating it to others.

Doctrine and Practice: Admonition Based on Ephesians

Does the reader happen to be familiar with Paul's epistle to the Ephesians? If so, he will know what great and grand truths are unfolded there. Some of our fellow believers who are wont to dwell largely on what they term the heavenly side of Christianity speak much of the Ephesian epistle. They could not do better, for a richer field it would be hard to find in the whole realm of Revelation.

It is well, however, to remember that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. There is danger in confining our thoughts to one particular portion of the sacred Word. Sheep must have change of pasture if they are to thrive. But in Ephesians the saints are seen in the highest circles of blessing. Their blessing too is presented not so much in connection with the meeting of their need as with the opening out of God's gracious purposes formed in the council chamber of eternity ere time began. This is plainly shown in its earliest verses. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, before the universe was framed by the fiat of the Almighty, before the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, the saints were chosen in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4).

I emphasize those words "in Christ." They show us that the first man, Adam, set up in Eden, was not the center of God's counsels. He was not the pivot on which the whole revolved. "The second Man" was that. In Him we were chosen; in Him we are blessed with every spiritual blessing. Moreover, a son's place before the Father is what divine love designed for us. The saints are nearer than the angels. They stand in a relationship unknown to those unselfish, sinless beings, who in these gracious ways of God behold His manifold wisdom, and rejoice. Accepted in the Beloved. Heirs too are they with Him who is the Heir, destined to share His glory in the day of glory that is coming; and meanwhile the

Holy Spirit is given as the earnest of what they shall inherit when Christ takes possession of that which is His. Ah, how easy it is to speak of these things! But how feeble is our grasp of them, and how little do we apprehend that eternal weight of glory which they reveal!

As far as the first chapter of the epistle is concerned, there is nothing to show the condition of those on whom such immeasurable blessing is conferred. The seventh verse does indeed speak of redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; but apart from that there is not a word to indicate whether the beings thus blessed are fallen or unfallen. In the second chapter the truth is disclosed. They were dead in trespasses and sins - children of wrath. In those deep dark depths God has sought and found the objects of His mercy. These He quickens together with Christ, raises up, and makes to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Thus does He make known the exceeding riches of His grace now, even as this grace shall be still more gloriously displayed in ages to come, when the saints appear in the same glory with Christ.

Who could work in this dark sphere, where death held sway, save God alone? Therefore it is said, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." v. 10. And if the believer has been taken out of such an awful abyss, it is all of pure, free grace; for how can we speak of

meritorious works, or any goodness whatsoever, in connection with men dead in sins?

But it was not to dwell on this side of Ephesian truth that we took up our pen to write. Other and abler hands have dealt with these exalted themes, and what they have written is within the reach of all. A word of caution, however, we would utter against the tendency to overlook those parts of this epistle in which the Spirit of God warns against positive sins. How rarely are these warnings the subject of discourse. One might almost ask whether "the flesh" no longer exists in the Christian, and whether sin, the world, and the devil have changed their character so that the plain words of the Apostle are no longer needed.

There is a disposition to suppose that the ministration of heavenly truth is all that is required to preserve the saints from evil. Were this so, the epistle might have ended in the middle of chapter 4. But it did not end there. That such a ministry is to be cherished, we own with all our heart. Possibly no servant of Christ exercised it more than the Apostle Paul. Yet in this epistle where heavenly things have so large a place, he speaks of sins with a bluntness that might offend fastidious ears. A plain speaking man was Paul. When he had anything to say he said it, and did not hide his meaning in a multitude of words. He loved the saints, the honor of Christ was dear to him, and he was not ignorant of Satan's devices. He saw the possibility of being occupied with deep things in a mere mental way, to the neglect even of common morality - heavenly truth on the lips, and the feet in mire and dirt. Therefore he exhorts them not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby they were sealed unto the day of redemption, and he affectionately entreats them to be imitators of God as dear children, and to walk in love. Moreover, he bids them give no place to the devil, and to shun everything of the nature of a lie, both in word and in way.

Nor does he withhold the most solemn warnings against the committal of sins, the mention of which among the saints would be to their deep disgrace.

We want a little more of this practical Christianity nowadays-a working into the warp and woof of everyday life the holy precepts which in the Ephesian epistle follow hard on the heels of heavenly doctrine. The devil will divorce them if he can in the thoughts and lives of the saints. "High talk and low walk" is likely, alas! to pass into a proverb. It is the outcome of intellectualism in the things of God. If truth is to profit, it must reach us through the avenue of the conscience, as we have often been told; and when it does, the whole man is laid under the power of it. Nothing is easier than to gain an intellectual acquaintance with the profoundest doctrines of Scripture, and to acquire the habit of talking about them with the greatest fluency; but from beginning to end it shall be a mere mental exercise, and nothing more. The individual most proficient in this fatal art is not necessarily a hypocrite; but what he has learned has either not been learned with God, or it is not held in faith.

Something more than intelligence is needed, dear Christian reader. We need piety, the unworldly walk, the fear of God, the abhorrence of evil, the scorning to do a mean act, the tender and uncondemning conscience, the guarded lip that will refuse to utter what is false. What is this but the precious fruit of the Spirit and of that divine charity, without which we are nothing, though we understand all mysteries? Let this be lacking, and though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, we are but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

By all means study the deep things of God; but beware of intellectualism, and keep your imagination well in check.

Think soberly. Search into the things which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," and which are now revealed unto us in the holy Scriptures. Untold blessing may flow into your soul in the doing of it. Only see that your Christianity consists not in high-flown theories. Let it be practical. Read Eph. 1; 2, and 3 as often as you like; but also read chapters 4, 5, and 6. And remember that Paul, who certainly was no theorist, and who lived in the power of what he taught, exercised himself "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16. May we be followers of him even as he was of Christ.

A Duty or a Crime

Humility is proved by obedience, and obedience depends on subjection to the Word of God. The same act in different circumstances is a duty or a crime; the only unerring test for the believer is God's Word. It was a sin in the Jews not to destroy all the Canaanites; God commanded them to do so -the only One competent to judge, and entitled to command of His sovereign will. For a Christian now to do the same thing would be to mistake His mind. The world is bound to deal with murderers as stringently now as ever; God has not revoked in any wise the word He uttered as to the sanctity of human life. That is what God had set up long before the law of Moses, or any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. It is annulled neither by the law given to Israel nor by the gospel that now flows out in grace to the world. Government among men stands upon its own foundation and was involved in the commission given to Noah; but the Christian is outside and above it all. He is called unto a new calling and this we have here: "Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13. Our task is not the preservation of the world's order or the punishment of its disorder, but a new building grows up on the blessed, holy, divine ground of the blood of Christ by which we are brought nigh to God. Nor is it only what we shall be by-and-by, but what we are now. We "are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Effective Proof

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Psa. 119:130.

One day a skeptic asked a highly educated and cultured Christian woman how she could prove that the Bible was the Word of God, and she said to him,

"How can you prove there is a sun in the sky?"

"Why," he replied, "because it warms me and I can see its light."

"And so it is with me," she said, "the proof of this Bible being the Word of God, is that it warms my soul and gives it light."

Egypt: the Editor's Column

Egypt has been prominently in the international news the last few years, and the present impasse between Great Britain and the Egyptian dictatorship headed by General Mohammed Naguib threatens the peace of the whole Near East, and perhaps of the world. For the first time in many centuries the down-trodden, poverty-stricken common people of Egypt have been awakened, and now desire to throw off every trace of foreign occupation. They are demanding that the British withdraw their forces from the Suez Canal and abandon the \$1,500,000,000 military installation on which the Western Powers have counted to forestall Russian expansion into the Near East. This great base with its airfields has been a constant threat to would-be aggressors in that area, and has been a stabilizing factor in one of the most troubled spots of the world. To give it up might encourage another Arab-Israeli war, or a communist overthrow of the many unstable governments of the Mohammedan world.

To the Christian who is conversant with his Bible, Egypt is a familiar name. It takes a place in Holy Writ as second in importance only to the land of Canaan - Palestine. References to Egypt are to be found in 27 books of the Old Testament, and in many places in the New Testament. The history of God's earthly people is considerably interwoven with that of Egypt.

Long before the Israelites crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua and invaded Palestine, Egypt was a strong and very prosperous country. It was peopled by descendants of Cush and Mizraim, sons of Ham. In the fields of science and arts, manufacture, land development, wealth, and luxury, it was unrivaled in its day; and even today the greatness and grandeur of the old Egypt is somewhat of a marvel.

We are apt to look upon Western civilization as the only one that has made real progress, but almost 4000 years ago the Egyptians excelled moderns in some things. Developments that were supposed to have been made in medieval times (or later), were known to the Egyptians. They possessed considerable knowledge of chemistry and metallurgy, and even of the medical sciences. Mummies have been found with teeth containing gold fillings. Not only did they make glass and porcelain, but colored them. They were able to counterfeit the brilliant hues of precious stones, and even made imitation pearls. Glass cutting, engraving, and grinding were practiced by these early people. They made very beautiful linen and were able to dye their cloth in many colors. Papyrus (from which our word "paper" comes) was cultivated and processed into paper. Their knowledge of embalming is still unrivaled; they could preserve a human body with its features and facial expressions for thousands of years. They were acquainted with astronomy; and their engineering feats were tremendous, as is evidenced by the remains that have defied the ravages of time.

Ancient Egyptian attainments certainly go far to disprove the theory that man has been slowly working his way up from the brute beast. Egypt's greatest and best works were among her first; then deterioration set in, and for the last thousand years or more Egypt has been impoverished and degraded. It sank lower and lower until the masses of the common people have lived in some

of the worst poverty and under the worst forms of oppression that have been known among mankind. Shall we ask, Why? Is it not the sad fruit of turning away from God?

In tracing the place Egypt has had in the Scriptures, it is important to notice that Abraham went into Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan (Gen. 12). God had called him from a family of idolaters in Mesopotamia to dwell in the land of promise, but when adversity reached him there by means of the famine, he resorted to the well organized and prosperous land of Egypt. This was turning to the world for help, and Egypt is used in the Scriptures as emblematic of the world in its power and independence of God. During Abraham's defection in the path of faith, he was rebuked by Pharaoh.

Next we read that Joseph was sold as a slave to the Egyptians (Gen. 37), but God was with him and, in the wisdom and providence of God, Joseph eventually became the second ruler in the land. Egypt was probably at the zenith of her glory about that time. It is generally thought that Joseph was exalted in Egypt during the Hyksos (or "Shepherd-kings") dynasty. This may account for the kindly reception given to Jacob and all of Joseph's house when they came to live in Egypt at Joseph's request, for they too were shepherds, and were given the best of the land, the land of Goshen.

Shortly thereafter, these Shepherd-kings were overthrown, and the new dynasty which came into power did not know Joseph, nor the work which he had done-"Another king arose, which knew not Joseph." The new dynasty was not favorable to the posterity of Jacob, and began to persecute them. When an edict was issued condemning all the baby boys to death in the river, God intervened in a providential way and Moses was delivered from death and raised up to be the deliverer of Israel. Moses, brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" - an advantage that would be the envy of many today. By faith he forsook Egypt and cast in his lot with a company of slaves.

On the ancient tablets is found the record of the death of a son of the ruling Pharaoh at about the time of Moses. In all probability this was the death of the first-born of Pharaoh on that fateful night (Exod. 12:29).

From the time of the exodus the children of Israel were ever prone to desire Egypt and to turn to it for help. They had not gone far into the wilderness before they forgot the cruel lash of the taskmaster, and all the evil which befell them in Egypt, and in their hearts turned back again (Acts 7:39). At a later date God spoke to them through Isaiah, and said, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many;... but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel.... Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." Isa. 31:1-3. In like manner, we who have been delivered from this present evil world are often inclined to turn again to it for help, and that to our shame.

The idolatry of Egypt also had its influence on the Israelites. When they made a golden calf in the wilderness, they were imitating the Egyptians who worshiped the sacred bull. The same evil broke out again in the days of Jeroboam, when it was doubled - he made two golden calves.

Solomon in his day "made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt" (1 Kings 3:1) and took Pharaoh's daughter as one of his many wives from the heathen nations about him. This was in direct disobedience to the commandment of the Lord, and in his later years these wives turned his heart

to the gods of the heathen. This was a most solemn breakdown, but it shows that our only safety is walking in obedience to the Word of God. Solomon also disobeyed God in multiplying horses to himself (Deut. 17:16, 17), and many of these were imported from Egypt (1 Kings 10:28).

In the days of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt invaded Jerusalem and took all the treasures of the temple and of the king's house into Egypt (1 Kings 14:25, 26).

We cannot mention all the times that Egypt entered into the lives of the Israelites, but in the days of Jeremiah another defection occurred, and a company that had been left in the land by Nebuchadnezzar when he took most of the Jews to Babylon, disobeyed the word of the Lord, and sought refuge in Egypt (they took Jeremiah with them), only to reap the sad fruit of their ways. They had escaped Babylonian captivity, but then chose Egypt. The two principles set forth by Babylon and Egypt still harass the saints of God. The former represents the world in its corrupt religious aspect, and the latter, the world in its boasted wealth and independence of God—the world as we generally speak. May we be kept from both evils.

One claim to distinction for Egypt is that our Lord was there for a time. When Herod sought the young child Jesus to destroy Him, Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and the Child into Egypt, which he promptly did. Thus as Israel was called out of Egypt, so was the Lord Himself; Hos. 11:1 is applied to Him in Matt. 2

In all history no nation ever remained in a place of international prominence and importance for so long a time.

Other great kingdoms arose and vanished while Egypt retained her place for century upon century. We might well ask, Does Scripture have anything to say regarding the terrible fall of this once-mistress of the nations? Yes, God spoke through the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel of the destruction of its cities, its industries, its gods, and of its abject degradation.

One of the earliest of the great cities of Egypt was Memphis; it is called Noph in Scripture, and its fall is foretold in Eze. 30:13, 16 and Isa. 19:13. It was so completely destroyed that for a long time the place where it stood was unknown.

Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt, lies in ruins according to the word of the Lord. It is referred to as No in Ezekiel 30, where it was prophesied that "I will... execute judgments in No... And I will cut off the multitude of No.... And No shall be rent asunder." Today only the ruins are left of that great city with its massive temples, its obelisks, sphinxes, and many other works of art and engineering feats.

Zoan was the capital about the time of the Hyksos dynasty, and it was there that Moses and Aaron performed all their miracles before Pharaoh. "Marvelous things did He... in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.... He... wrought His signs... in the field of Zoan." Psalm 78:12, 43. Zoan was noted for its wise men, but God said, "Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counselors of Pharaoh is become brutish.... The princes of Zoan are become fools." Isa. 19:11, 13. Today there is another city, Tanis, built over the ruins of the proud city of Zoan. Surely God's counsel shall stand, and all the words of men shall be brought low.

The industry of Egypt was to be wasted, for the Lord said, "Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail [leaders or lead], branch or rush [high or low of the people], may do."

Isa. 19:15. The fishermen were to mourn, and those that worked in the flax were to be confounded (vv. 8, 9). Thus the land of enormous wealth and great industry withered and dried.

The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans each in turn ruled over Egypt; through all those changes of masters her glory faded, although she retained some of her native force and wealth. But with the onslaught of the Arab hordes, flushed with victory and with fanatical zeal of Mohammedanism in 638 A.D., the decline of Egypt was accelerated. There has been a fulfillment of the prophecy, "I will... sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it." Eze. 30:12. That once arrogant nation whose ruler said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?" was brought low, and the land of those that ill-treated strangers was laid waste by strangers.

But with all its degradation, Egypt still remains, and in a fashion described by God before it came to pass: "They shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations! for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel." Eze. 29:14-16. History and the writings of those who visited Egypt bear solemn testimony to the fulfillment of the prophetic scriptures concerning that nation, cities, land, and people.

For more than 2000 years they did not have a native prince ruling the land (Eze. 30:13), and such governments as they had were often corrupt beyond description. They have fared better under British control than they had at almost any time in the Christian era, but even those from among themselves set to rule have been utterly corrupt. Only now that it is ruled by a military junta has there been an attempt to give the downtrodden people an honest government. There is also a revival of a national spirit (for centuries it was extinct) which is now seeking to get rid of British troops and influence, and to assume once more the handling of their own affairs and destiny. This likewise is an indication of prophetic fulfillment, for it is said in Luke 21:29, 30 that when the fig tree (Israel) and all the trees (the Gentile nations) send forth shoots, then summer is nigh.

Israel, the fig tree, has again become a nation, and has shown the buddings of spring. It is there in Palestine in readiness for the antichrist and the last great day of man's wickedness. Egypt, another tree in the forest of nations, is showing the flow of sap, and is being readied for the strike against the Jews in Palestine under the antichrist (Dan. 11:40). The Moslem nations north and east of Palestine are in a state of agitation as though being prepared for some great happening, while Russia and the nations of the West continue to move closer and closer toward the consummation of evil, and the coming of the Son of man to execute righteous judgment.

But then after the great and terrible day of the Lord, Egypt is to be blessed during the Millennium, as we read in Isa. 19:21-25: "And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and He shall be entreated of them and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."

Faith and Its Object: Lines Written to an Anxious Soul

What determines faith to be true or false is not anything in the faith itself. If your faith rests on a true object, it is true faith; if it rests on a delusive object, it is delusive faith; but in either case the faith is the same—the difference lies in its object. One man believes in the stability of a certain bank, and invests his money there; the bank fails, and his money is lost. Another with equal certainty places his elsewhere, and receives it again with interest. The confidence in both instances was identical; but how vastly different the result!

The individual who believes the gospel believes God; for the gospel is "the gospel of God,... concerning His Son Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:1-3). Now "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Num. 23:19. And again, "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. 6:17, 18. The man therefore who believes God may justly have the firmest assurance, seeing that with Him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning

But it is evident that before a soul can believe the gospel he must know what that gospel is, for "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. 10:14. Many think they know it, but a few moments' conversation with them reveals the appalling fact that they are entirely in the dark as to the gospel of God. In the sacred Scriptures this gospel is set forth in words which the Holy Ghost has chosen, and by the mouth of His messengers, be it from the pulpit, the public platform, or the printed page, God proclaims His good news to all. What is it? Listen! "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9. Pause, dear friend, and go over that verse again; read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. What news it contains! What a joyous proclamation! What a blessed report! How suited to your actual need! And this report reaches you sealed with the seal of the true and living God, whose Word shall abide though heaven and earth shall pass away.

But what is to be believed? This: that God has raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead. Mark, that GOD has done it. Not simply that Christ is risen, but that GOD has raised Him from the dead. What a testimony on God's part to the perfection and all-sufficiency of the work of atonement wrought out in suffering and death upon the cross! For it was there that Jesus was forsaken of God, there God hid His face from Him, and there He was left alone to bear the full weight of divine and holy wrath against sin. And now that solemn work is ended, and in raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead God bears witness that what divine Justice required, Justice has received. But what has become of the sins the Savior bore? They are gone even as a debt is gone when full payment has been made. To believe this, to believe it with the heart, is to be saved.

Faith is the eye of the soul; without it the precious things of God's Word cannot be seen in their truth and beauty. But who thinks of his eyes? You may not have thought of yours since you began

to read this paper, yet without them all would be dark. Do not then be occupied with your faith, and puzzling your poor, weary brain as to whether you believe aright. After all is said that can be said about it, faith is not your savior, though no one is saved apart from faith. Christ is your Savior.

To be always peering into one's own heart to ascertain whether ours is true believing, is like a person constantly examining his eyes before a mirror to find out whether his sight is good. Had you the most convincing proof of the soundness of your faith, and rejoiced on that account, your joy would proceed from what you found your faith to be, and not from what Christ is.

Thus self, and not Christ, would be the spring of it.

Fix your thoughts on an object outside yourself, and forget your faith in thinking of that which the soul should believingly receive and rest upon, even the sure Word of the Lord. Think of Him whose love has been shown in the gift of His only begotten Son (John 3:16), and who commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Think of Him who came into the world to save sinners, even to save the chief of them (1 Tim. 1:15), and who once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18). Think of Him who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Behold Him now in heaven without our sins. See in the very fact of His being there the great proof which God sets before our eyes that our sins have been put away according to the requirements of the eternal throne. Search into these things, and blessing after blessing shall flow into your soul. Self will be displaced by Christ, and your faith will be forgotten in the joy and peace which you will have in being engaged with the true Object of faith, even God, and the precious revelations of His Word concerning Christ and His work.

Finally, dear friend, if you believe Jesus to be the Son of God, and put your whole trust in Him, and in His precious blood, **YOU ARE SAVED**. The knowledge of a present salvation is a different thing from a hope of being saved one day, however sure that hope may be. That blessed knowledge His blessed Word imparts. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." John 6:47. Receive this short and simple verse as spoken for you by the Lord Himself. Believe it because He says it. He that believeth on Me hath, **HATH, HATH** everlasting life.

False Prayer and Self-Will

How often do people go to God about something, and pray for guidance and direction, when all the time their own mind is made up about what they intend to do. In some cases, looking to God for direction means asking God to bless our own plans, trying to get Him to sanction our way.

There is a striking example of this in Jeremiah 42. We find there a great company of people of all ages met together for apparently a very good object, and that is to present a supplication to Jehovah, to ask Him to show them the way wherein they may walk, and the thing that they may do (v. 3). What could be better or more becoming-looking to God for their whole future course? Nor do they stop here; they even go further and promise that when the mind of the Lord is revealed to them, they will do it. They say, "Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God." v. 6.

After ten days the answer came, a plain straightforward answer, telling them what to do, and promising them life and happiness in the doing of it. Now they know the Lord's mind unmistakably, and after their promises you would expect them to hear and obey; but do they? No, for in the next chapter we find it twice recorded, they "obeyed not the voice of the LORD." What became of all their former boasted obedience only ten days previous? When reminded of it by the prophet, God's messenger, they profess to doubt the answer they have received, because it does not fall in with their views and arrangements, and they say to him, "Thou speakest falsely," and they try to find a reason for not carrying out the Lord's will. Bent on their own way, and utterly disregarding the answer to their prayer, they begin at once to carry out their preconceived plans which end in judgment and death.

Is there no lesson for Christians here? Do we not sometimes speak of having the Lord's mind when to others it appears quite the contrary? Do we not too often go to God full of our own thoughts and ways instead of seeking to get His mind by dependence on Him?

If we trace the progress of these same people after they had carried out their own purposes and gone into Egypt, we find their further departure from God. Now they boldly say to the prophet, "We will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth." Later on, judgment overtakes them as it assuredly must, for self-will brings its own punishment.

May we learn from their sad example not to give up dependence on God for self-will, for 1 Cor. 10:11 teaches us that "these things happened unto them for ensamples," and that they "are written for our admonition." If anyone should ask, What is false prayer? I think Scripture defines it in this same chapter referred to, Jer. 42:20. "For ye dissembled in your hearts," or, as another version has it, "For you, you are deceived in your souls."

The First Lord's Day

It is worthy of notice that neither the end of John 19, nor the beginning of chapter 20, makes any mention of the day intervening between the crucifixion and the resurrection of our blessed Savior. It was, however, the Sabbath day, so important both to the Jews and to the disciples. It was doubly solemn too on this occasion, for it was coincident with the feast of the Passover, and it is said, "that sabbath day was a high day" (19:31).

The Jews, scrupulous observers of forms, even in putting the Son of God to death, had not been willing to enter the judgment hall the night before the Passover for fear of defiling themselves and thus being unable to eat the Passover (18:28). Then, in the evening, after having gotten rid of the One who was the light of the world, and whom they had crucified in company with two criminals, they requested Pilate that the bodies might not remain on the cross during the Sabbath, which began at six o'clock in the evening. The chief priests and the Pharisees had not so many scruples about that day when they came together to Pilate to ask him to make the sepulcher sure, and when they themselves went to seal the stone and to set a watch (Matt. 27:62-66). They would have liked to avoid putting the Lord to death during the feast, not because of their own consciences, but so that there would be no tumult among the people (see Matt. 26:3-5); for doubtless there was a vast assemblage from different places to celebrate the Passover. But the rulers were unable to carry out their designs because, unknown to themselves, they were accomplishing the purposes of God. And, alas! no one among the people raised a voice for Christ. On the contrary, the multitude, led on by their chiefs, chose that He should be crucified, and Barabbas released (Mark 15:11-14).

The Savior then passed into the grave and was there on this high day of a Sabbath, without the Word making mention of this day in relation to Him. 'What a seal upon the reprobation of the Jews for whom the Sabbath was the sign of their alliance with God! The death of Jesus was the end of all that which had gone before, as His resurrection was the beginning of a new order of things.

But the Scriptures also speak to us of the burial of the Lord Jesus. Paul mentions it in Corinthians 15:3, 4, and the Gospels give details on this point which are in accordance with prophecy. The earth would receive the body of God's Son, but His sepulcher should be with the rich. "Men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death." Isa. 53:9; J.N.D. Trans. He would doubtless have been interred in the public burying place, destined, according to Jewish custom, to criminals, and it is probably there that the bodies of the two thieves were thrown. But now that man had fully gratified his hatred, God took care of the One who had glorified Him even unto death. At this solemn moment came Joseph of Arimathea, a counselor, and a good man and just, who obtained permission from Pilate to take the body. Nicodemus came also; and these two men of high rank among their nation, but who had hitherto been timid disciples, gave to the Lord an honorable resting place. At all events, we may observe, that the Sabbath being at hand, the burial was of necessity only provisional, and was to be accomplished after the Sabbath. This we learn from John 19:42: "There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation

day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand." The women who loved the Lord also prepared to embalm Him at a future moment. Mark tells us (16:1), "And when the sabbath was past" (after six o'clock in the evening), "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him." The same thing is recorded in Luke 23:55, 56.

The disciples, really attached to the Person of the Lord Jesus, at the same time, as faithful Jews, clave in heart and conscience to ordinances. This hindered them from completing the burial of their loved Master, which their affection for Him would have desired.

When the disciples had fulfilled the commandment in observing the Sabbath, they hastened, at least the women devoted to the Lord, to come at dawn of the first day of the week to do honor to the body of their loved Master by finally embalming it. But they arrived too late; the power, righteousness, glory, and love, of the Father had anticipated them in raising Christ from among the dead. What a glorious beginning of an eternal era for the redeemed!

The body of our Savior then remained in the grave during the solemn day of the Sabbath, and He rose again "the first day of the week." The Jews, against their intentions, had been led into putting to death the Lord on the day of the feast of the Passover, which this year fell on the day before the Sabbath, in order that, in view of consequences precious to us, He should rise the first day of the week. This fact has consecrated this day as "the Lord's day," the day of the resurrection, the commencement of an eternal era for us believers. It is thus that it has become the solemn day of Christianity, not as an imposed ordinance, but as a day of privilege which the conscience of a spiritual Christian recognizes. Christians delight to observe this day, not, I repeat, as an ordinance, but as being the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10). The spiritual Christian understands that he cannot dispose of this day according to his inclinations, for his own affairs, for journeys of pleasure or other amusements, because it is the Lord's day. The day when the Lord came out of the grave was not only the first day of the week, in contrast with that which preceded it, but the fact of the resurrection set apart this day as the Lord's day. Up to this moment, the Lord's day had not existed.

What a glorious day was that of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus! It is for us the end of death, and the introduction to life eternal. For the Christian, eternal life has its starting point in the Savior's resurrection. His death is the end of our life in Adam; His resurrection is the end of death. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," not "the life and the resurrection." He must deliver us from our first life, as well as from the death which characterized that life, and was its judicial end, in order, by His resurrection, to begin our new life in union with Him. The resurrection of

Christ has then left behind it, for us, our Adam-life and death; and this new life which succeeds death is necessarily eternal life, but eternal life in resurrection, life "abundantly" (John 10:10). We possess eternal life in present enjoyment, and soon on high it will be life in glory. We have for "the end everlasting life."

It is easy to understand why, from the time of Paul, Christians chose the first day of the week, the day of the Lord's resurrection, to come together for the express purpose of the breaking of bread (Acts 20:7). No one besides had meetings on that day. The Gentiles knew nothing of it; the Jews, scattered everywhere, had their synagogues wherein to assemble on the Sabbath day, the last, not the first, day of the week. Paul took advantage of the Sabbath day to preach Christ in the

synagogues; but on the morrow, the day that only Christians knew and celebrated as that of the resurrection, he was found with them at the breaking of bread.

By comparing John 20 with the accounts given in the other Gospels, we see that after the early morning of that remarkable day the risen Savior had appeared to one and another of His own. In John we find recounted His interview with Mary Magdalene, so full of interest, whether on account of the touching way in which the Lord dissipates Mary's anxiety, or because of the message with which He charges her for His own, announcing that they were now in the same position as He is before God, and in the same relationship as He to His Father.

But on the evening of the same day we have something quite special. The occasions when the Lord had showed Himself during that day had had a character more or less individual; but in the evening we see the disciples gathered together. Whatever may have been the motive or character of their meeting - though doubtless they were occupied with what they had seen and heard-the fact remains that they were gathered together. How many things had occurred during the day! What words they had to recount to one another! John tells us (v. 19), "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week." Yes, the first Lord's day. They had shut the doors for fear of the Jews.

When thus assembled "came Jesus"-in spite of the closed doors - "and stood in the midst." No longer now a manifestation to Mary, to Simon, to two disciples; it is His presence in the midst. It was the risen Savior, ready to ascend to glory-the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, but into which He was now going to enter as Man. He was in a body of resurrection, which was superior to matter, so that whether eating fish and honey, or entering through closed doors, all alike were acts of power. He was no more a Man of sorrows; He was no longer "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). "The days of His flesh" were over (Heb. 5:7). And He expresses this change when He says to His disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you." Luke 24:44. It is this risen Savior that the world neither can nor will see till He comes in glory, who is found in the midst of His gathered ones, sanctioning thus by His presence the first assembly of His own after His resurrection on that day-the first Lord's day.

It was in their midst that He said, "Peace be unto you." What words to proceed from the mouth of the One who came from the cross, where He had made peace!-who came in all the power of resurrection, a proof of the full acceptance of His sacrifice by God. Then the Lord showed them in His resurrection body the marks of the death to which, in grace for them, He had subjected Himself.

Following this-let us notice an important statement- "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." The sight of the risen Lord in their midst is the subject of their joy. Thomas was not with them; and when the other disciples saw him, they gave him, in five words, a summary of that remarkable scene - "We have seen the Lord." The following Lord's day-the second Lord's day- the Lord is again in their midst.

How many principles are to be found in these verses! (John 20:19, 20). What a beautiful type of our present gathering in the name of and around the Person of the Lord! Let us remark four things which are unfolded successively here. First, the presence of the risen Lord in the midst of His own when assembled; second, the peace which He announces to them on His road from the cross by

way of the resurrection; third, the marks which He shows them in His resurrection body, and which witness to the fact that He has been down into death for them, but with that death now behind Him (see Rev. 1:17, 18); fourth, the result produced in the heart of His disciples after the unfolding of all these marvelous things, when they suddenly find themselves assembled around Him. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

In our day, in spite of the evil which has come in, in spite of the ruin of the testimony of the Church on earth, in spite of the great weakness of those who by grace are gathered to His name, we can, on this same footing, experience these four things which we have just considered.

What grace to us! When on the Lord's day we are gathered for the breaking of bread at the Lord's table, spread-need it be said?-on the ground of the one body, we have (may we realize it more!) all that the disciples had when gathered that first Lord's day. Yes, Jesus risen is personally present in our midst, although in a spiritual way (Matt. 18:20).

We enjoy the peace He brings and has made. (Compare Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:17.) We have before us the touching tokens which remind us of His death for us; that is, the Lord's supper, which corresponds so well with the third thing which we have considered-Jesus showing His disciples His pierced hands and side. And if we know and appreciate all this blessing, the result will be deep joy. We can rejoice in having the Lord in our midst. How desirable it would be to realize this presence, so that we might be able to say to any absentees, "We have seen the Lord"; and not, Such and such a brother spoke so well-useful and precious as such ministry may be when given of the Lord. The absent ones, on the other hand, would ask, Did you enjoy the Lord's presence? not, What brother spoke?

May the Lord Jesus so attach our hearts to Himself that our gathering together, having Himself for motive or object, may become increasingly what it really is, the most precious thing in the world for us collectively. May we know how to appreciate the mercy which in a time of ruin gives us the possibility of having a special meeting, as in Acts 20:7, to remember our precious Savior together, and to enjoy His presence in the midst. How sweet to the heart of the Christian who comprehends the thoughts of God on this subject! We go there as being invited by the Lord, to remember Him while waiting for Him. Therefore the intelligent Christian will not readily miss such a meeting, except for reasons which hold good before the Lord.

Yes, the Lord Jesus Himself is the motive and the end of our gathering together on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection. The great thing is to be occupied with Him and not with ourselves; but if then our thoughts do turn to ourselves, they should include all the members of the body of Christ on the earth, a body whose oneness is expressed at the Lord's table: "One bread,... one body" (1 Cor. 10:17).

Forgiven and Forgotten

It is a common saying among men, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget." The tide of human affection may rise at times to such a height as to cover the tablet on which memory has engraved the record of my misdeeds; but when the tide retires, the record is there. Not so the love of God. That mighty flood tide not only covers the tablet, but obliterates the inscription forever, so that no trace of it remains - "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 8:12. Precious words! God can not only forgive but forget.

God's eye of infinite holiness cannot discern a single stain of guilt upon the conscience that has been once purged by the precious blood of Christ. All the sins and iniquities of the believer are plunged in the waters of eternal oblivion. God has pledged Himself never to remember them. He can say, I have "not beheld iniquity in Jacob." Man cannot undertake to forget. He cannot prevent memory from throwing up at times, upon its surface, the record of the past; but God can. The atoning work of the Savior has forever canceled the believer's guilt so that it can never again rise against him.

The believer's peace is founded on the blood of Christ and the imperishable Word of God.

Gehazi at Court

"And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done." 2 Kings 8:4.

To have been connected with a testimony, while now we only relate its marvels at court, is a sad position. To rise in the world, and entertain the world with the mighty works of God, is to fall very deeply.

The Gentile

There is something much to be observed in the opening of the book of Daniel.

It was the moment when the Gentile was receiving the sword of government from the hand of the Lord; and this scripture lets us know with what mind the Gentile did receive it; and we see that it was a very bad mind indeed.

The Gentile would never have had the sword in this way if Israel had been true to Jehovah, and if the house of David had continued in its integrity. But at this moment, when the Chaldean is thus endowed, Jerusalem is a wilderness, and the glory is departed from the earth.

The Gentile, therefore, in taking the sword, should have taken it with a burdened heart. He should, in spirit, have sorrowfully tracked the way by which power had now come into his hand, and have accepted it as with grief and trembling. This would have been the right mind in the Gentile when accepting power from God on the fall of Jerusalem and the departure of the glory.

In such a spirit David accepted power. It was Saul's apostasy that opened the passage to the throne for David. But Saul was God's anointed; and the fall of the anointed of the Lord was before David at that moment, rather than his own exultation. He lamented with a sore lamentation over the mountains of Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan had been slain (2 Sam. 1).

This was beautiful, and the very opposite or contradiction of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 1. Instead of mourning, the king of Babylon triumphed, and the very first thing he did was to adorn his palace, the seat and witness of his power, with the best-favored children he could get from among the captives of Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar should not have looked on Jerusalem in the day of her calamity. He may have been the rod of the Lord's indignation against her, but he should have used his commission with a grieved heart. The glory itself, though it had to leave Zion (Eze. 8-11), left it reluctantly and with reserve and, as I may say, sorrowfully.

And this Gentile should have known also the holiness of Judah, and how near the Lord had been to Israel. If he never thought of this, it was because of the hardness of his heart; and he is answerable for such hardness that blinded him, as the world is answerable for not knowing Him who made it, when He was in it. The Gentile should have known that God's house was at Jerusalem - a house too made to be a house of prayer for all nations. All this was the witness of God's presence in that city; and the Gentile's exultation in the day of her calamity is the Gentile's wickedness.

All this condemns the Gentile from the very beginning. And when we look around and abroad, we see him in the same spirit to this day. No, the Gentile has this further sin attaching to him. He is now in Christendom, exalting himself, advancing, enriching, and adorning himself in the world, though Christ the King of glory, like the glory of old in Jerusalem, has been grieved and sent away. The present Gentile is careless about the sorrows and the blood of Jesus, just as Nebuchadnezzar

in his day was careless and thoughtless about the fall and the griefs of Jerusalem. The Gentile is the Gentile still; and God's indignation against Jerusalem shall end in his destruction.

God and the Conscience Satisfied

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psalm 32:1.

I much question if the bare idea of forgiveness of transgression, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests, namely, the infinite atonement of Christ-"forgiveness in His name"-would ever satisfy the conscience. The groveling thought of escape is, indeed, the careless thought of the unbelieving mass, without one just thought, either of the character of God, or of the evil of sin. But if such a manner of forgiveness were possible, it would leave the recipient of it in that state of uneasiness which a man feels who finds himself in the presence of one whom he has injured, yet who has forgiven him. He would be under the conscious sense of degradation. Such a condition would be the very opposite of being "blessed." It is the mode of forgiveness, bringing the person forgiven to stand at ease in the presence of God, declared to be just, while He is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, which constitutes the blessedness. The atonement of Christ is indeed the remedy, the only remedy, the divine remedy for the forgiveness of transgression; but it is more, it is the great medium of the display of the moral glory of God. Angels look into these things and learn the glory of their God by means of His dealing with sinners. And it is a wondrous thought that man's necessity as a sinner, and the manifestation of the divine glory, find their one and only meeting point in the cross of Christ. Yes, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and so forgiven that God is glorified. Oh, what riddance of anxiety to the soul, when its salvation is thus taken from off its own responsibility, and it is no longer the question, Shall I be saved? but, Shall God be glorified? Blessed peace, indeed! surpassing all understanding, when God and the conscience are alike satisfied.

God's Care in Great and Little

Manna was a thing unknown to Israel when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing toward producing it—they were dependent. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performed another miracle, for a cloudy pillar was their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so of us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular, as well as a general providence (see Deut. 8:4). "Thy raiment waxed not old." It may be that, the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God's care for us pass unobserved by us!

Going on to Perfection: What Perfection Means and Not Means

It is clear that we are enjoined to "go on unto perfection," but it certainly is not to perfection in the flesh. This was the error of the Galatian believers, and brought upon them apostolic censure. They were remonstrated with by the Spirit of God as "foolish," "bewitched," and as those who did "not obey the truth," in that, having "begun in the Spirit," they afterward sought to be made perfect in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). They "did run well," but they seemed to have lost sight of what Christ crucified had done for them, and to have forgotten that they had two natures - that which is born "after the flesh," and that which is "born after the Spirit" - and let slip the blessed fact that they were now not in the flesh (though the flesh was in them), but in the Spirit, a new creation in Christ Jesus, which neither circumcision, law, nor any ordinances of any kind could bring about or alter. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15.

It is certain then that the going on to perfection, here set forth, in nowise favors the false notion, so subversive of Christianity and so severely censured in the Scriptures, of seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. As to moral principle, we should as God's children seek to imitate our Father; therefore our Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But this is a widely different thought from being made perfect in the flesh. The truth is that the believer will not lose this evil principle in him which is born after the flesh, in which dwells nothing good, until the Lord comes, or he falls asleep through Jesus, and is forever with the Lord.

In order to understand what is here meant by "let us go on unto perfection," we need to remember that the epistle is written to the Hebrews, and that the expression occurs nowhere else in Scripture. Those addressed had been born and educated in a religious order of things which, though it recognized man in the flesh, under law, and of the world, was divinely instituted before Christianity was brought in, though these Jewish things abounded with types and shadows of realities now made known. They had been accustomed to think of the rudimentary truths of "repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God"; they were familiar with divers washings or "baptisms," "laying on of hands" on the sacrifices, and believed in "resurrection of the dead" and "eternal judgment." But these things were the beginning of the doctrine of Christ, infantile truth, the "milk" of divine revelation compared with "strong meat" which God has given us since the accomplished work of His beloved Son, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Many of these Hebrews were still looking at Christianity as connected with a system on earth, and were taken up with the first buddings of divine revelation, with which Jews were familiar, instead of knowing God's Son now glorified as the central object of

God's present ways. The consequence was, there was no spiritual progress. Instead of being teachers, as they ought to have been, they needed to be taught again "the first principles of the oracles of God"; so there was no hope of their getting on a truly Christian footing and progressing in the truth until they received in faith the "strong meat" which communicated to souls the perfections of the Person, work, and offices of a Messiah not now on earth, though He will be, but glorified in heaven (chap. 5:11-14).

"Therefore," said the writer to these Hebrews (observe this word therefore as connecting it with what had gone before), "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," or the word of the beginning of Christ, or first principles, "let us go on unto perfection." What seems to have brought the writer to this point in the epistle was, he desired to say "many things" to them about the "high priest after the order of Melchisedec," the Son in heaven; but they were "dull of hearing"; they had not the sense of the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, but were so taken up with Jewish things which dimly pointed to Christ, instead of with Christ Himself where He is, that their state of soul was low indeed. The inspired writer knew they would not advance until they had to do with Messiah now in heaven as a totally distinct thing, and in contrast with the Jewish system which still surrounded them; for the temple was then standing, and shadowy things in measure still going on. For such there was no deliverance but being taken up with the personal glory of the Son, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, His all-prevailing and unchangeable priesthood, and His present intercession for us in the sanctuary above. Here we have perfection, a perfection which not only had its source in divinely "perfect love," but gives "perfect peace" to the believer, because he has a perfect conscience and a perfect way of approach to God.

It was then to Christ in heaven the writer of the epistle directed the hearts of these Hebrews; and, when we are under the Spirit's guidance, we pass through the various chapters with our feet consciously on earth, but our eyes every now and then specially directed to the glorified Son of man in the heavens. Let us observe some of the instances of this.

In chapter 1 we are invited to look at the Son, by whom the worlds were made, who after He had died for our sins, sat down on the throne of glory. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." v. 3.

In chapter 2 the proper attitude of a believer on earth is described as gazing on the Lord in glory. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." v. 9.

In chapter 3 we are enjoined to consider Him, not only as the One who came down from heaven, but who is also gone up there, and entered upon His priestly office for us. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." v. 1.

In chapter 4 we are bidden to behold Him as man passed through the heavens, yet Son of God, and there our sympathizing High Priest, so that we may hold fast our confession, and approach God's throne with boldness as a throne of grace to find grace for seasonable help. What unutterable blessedness we know in present intercourse with the Son of God where He is now! "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (confession). "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." vv. 14-16.

In chapter 5 we behold Him as the Man, yet God's Son, who was on earth offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of death, but now Priest by divine appointment after the order of Melchisedec. "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I

begotten Thee.... Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec." vv. 5-10.

In chapter 6 we see Him as the forerunner who is gone inside the veil for us who are still running the race here. Blessed object for the contemplation of our hearts! "Within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." vv. 19, 20.

In chapter 7 we are still gazing on the Son in heaven in His eternal and unchangeable character, as able to save us right on to the end, and ever living to make intercession for us (vv. 24-28).

In chapter 8 He is presented to us a sitting Priest, and active in the sanctuary in heaven. These were entirely new ideas to a Jew. Their priest, from Aaron downward, could never sit down, but was always standing because of having to offer many sacrifices which could never take away sins. But "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." vv. 1, 2.

In chapter 9 we learn that He went into heaven itself by His own blood, and now appears before the face of God for us, having obtained eternal redemption, and has made the power of it known to us by the eternal Spirit while going on to our eternal inheritance (v-v. 12-24).

In chapter 10 we are instructed that we have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus where He is, and are assured by the witness of the Holy Spirit that our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more, and that the coming of the Lord is nigh. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (vv. 14, 19, 37.)

In chapter 12 we are enjoined to look away from every other object to Him who ran the race of faith perfectly, who endured the cross and despised the shame, and is now as man, who resisted sin unto blood, sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. While running on to meet Him at His coming, we are sustained and cheered by thus being occupied with Him where He is. (vv. 1, 2.)

In chapter 13 we are supposed to be so occupied with Him, and all the goodness and mercy of God to us in and through Him, as to be offering "by Him" the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks "to His name," and like Him, not forgetting to minister to those around us.

Nothing more need be quoted to show how clearly it is the mind of God that we should now while on earth know the heaven opened over us to faith by the rent veil, and have personal occupation with our Lord Jesus Christ there as truth which delivers from a weak and infantile state of soul, and is not "milk," but "strong meat," because it ministers to us the perfections of Christ in heaven, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, and of His divinely appointed and unchangeable priesthood as sitting on the throne of God.

It is well to lay this to heart, and to often ask ourselves, Am I taken up with the Son of God in glory on account of what He is in Himself, what He is to God, and as the One in whom are all my resources, blessings, joy, strength, and inheritance? The more we ponder this epistle, the more we shall be convinced that our souls have not accepted the blessings which the accomplished work of the Son entitle us to enjoy, unless we are consciously inside the veil where He now is, and offering to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as purged worshipers.

Good Fruit and Bad Fruit: the Editor's Column

The editor was privileged recently to be conducted through some experimental plots belonging to the College of Agriculture of the University of California by a member of its faculty who is a devout Christian. (Contrary to a prevalent thought that all educators are infidels and votaries of the hypothesis of evolution which shuts God out of His own creation, here is one who definitely is not. There are others also here and there who can distinguish between true scientific knowledge and the false speculations of science which are produced by men whose wish is parent to the thought that God is not the creator, but that all things came into being through so-called natural processes. The basic aim of all those who in the enemy's service propound these theories is to prove that man is not God's creature, and consequently does not have to give account to Him who will judge according to every man's work.) The trip was very interesting and supplied examples of some well-known truths of Scripture which opened up material for thoughtful consideration.

One plot was a row of large, fully developed pear trees. They gave evidence of being well cared for and their foliage was a good green color. At one end of the row the trees were loaded with beautiful well-nigh perfect fruit. Such healthy pear trees would have been an asset in any man's pear orchard Their fruit was delectable. At the other end of the row the pear trees appeared to be healthy and vigorous, but here the Christian plant pathologist paused and plucked some fruit; it was worthless. The fruit was shriveled and knotty. It was astounding that trees so near to each other, and of the same outward appearance as to foliage and vigor should bear such vastly different fruit. What was the explanation? Could there be a simple answer for the seeming mystery?

The scientist explained the reason for the bad fruit. We will quote his words: "Those trees are bad, and there is nothing that can be done for them; they have a virus disease that pervades them from the roots to every extremity. They cannot produce good fruit." Together we then spoke of the Lord's words: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Matt. 7:18. A tree is judged according to the quality of its fruit; and so with men. John the Baptist searched the hearts of his would-be followers by saying, "The ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. 3:10. Mere religion or profession will not correct the root cause. Adam fell and pulled down his whole posterity; and every man from that day onward has been born with an evil nature which can only bring forth evil fruit. What man needs is a complete change, a new birth, a new life, so he can bring forth fruit for God. Otherwise he will be cut down and cast into the lake of fire.

Another comment by the scientist gave emphasis to a picture of man's hopeless condition apart from a complete rebirth. Referring to the bad trees he said, "No amount of pruning, watering, spraying, or fertilizing will improve those trees or their fruit. To give them special culture would only increase the bad fruit they would bear." Here was food for meditation: could not man be improved by education? by environment? or by any of the means so often tried? Alas, no. Man by nature is as hopelessly bad as those diseased trees. He may indeed present an outward appearance which

compares favorably with those who have a new life from God, and yet his heart be unchanged-it is enmity toward God. This led us to reflect on all that had been done to improve man, apart from God and new birth. Many and varied are the means that have been tried to give the world a moral uplift-to stop vice, crime, blasphemy, murder, war, etc., etc. Have they changed man? No. In fact it might be said that educated man has only become more prolific in the production of bad fruit. Wars, for instance, were bad enough before men became so civilized; now they are frightfully worse. Men used to kill one another by club or sword in hand-to-hand combat; now with a higher degree of civilization men have discovered how to wipe out the inhabitants of a whole city with one blast, or to destroy all the crops of another country with chemicals and so bring famine upon the populace, or to spread the worst plagues by bacteriological warfare and thus wipe out a people by disease. It is just as true of the highly civilized people of the mid-twentieth century as it was of the heathen world before Christ came-"The way of peace have they not known," and "destruction and misery are in their ways."

The disease pervading those bad pear trees is like sin, the root and nature in fallen mankind, which in activity produces wicked acts-sins. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Mark 7:21, 22. The epistle to the Romans carefully distinguishes between sins (the acts committed) and sin (the nature which bears bad fruit). Rom. 5:11 concludes that portion of the epistle dealing with the subject of sins, and the next verse begins the subject of sin. For sins God has forgiveness for all who believe in the Lord Jesus, and He has been proved righteous in forgiving their sins because of the work of Christ; for sin God has only condemnation - He "condemned sin in the flesh." He treats the old nature as beyond improvement, and passes sentence on it. The 7th chapter of the epistle shows the struggles of one trying to mend what is unmendable, and then the struggling one finds full deliverance in the last verse of that chapter and the first verse of the 8th: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." He is now in a new position entirely - "in Christ Jesus"-and has power to walk after the Spirit (v. 4).

There was another comment of interest on the bad pear trees, and that was that they could not produce progeny that would be any better. No young trees derived from those bad ones would be better than the parent stock. How true that is of the human pattern we have been considering! The offspring of fallen man is also fallen. The innocent babe has within it the bad stock that will in maturity bring forth the same evil fruit.

The plant pathologist's final comment on the pear trees pointed up another likeness to the human family. He said, "Even grafting in a branch from a good tree will not improve the condition of a bad tree." In like manner, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; it can never be anything else. And when a man repents and believes the gospel, and consequently receives a new life from God which can bring forth good fruit, that does not improve his old nature one particle. It is a lie of the devil to say either that the old nature can be improved, or that because one is saved the old nature can be burned out. We Christians have a wholly new life, but we also carry the flesh with us, and if it is not judged and kept in the place of death it will bear the ugly fruit of which it is only capable.

In another experimental station we saw good tomato plants which had been transplanted into soil that was bad, and oh, how sickly they looked. The plants had been good, but they were having

great difficulty growing in diseased, unhealthful soil. Here, we thought, was another lesson for us: we as Christians have a life that belongs to heaven, and there is nothing in this poor world that will nourish that life which is from above. Our lives as children of God must draw all their sustenance from another source or we shall be as sickly as those tomato plants. The very climate of earth tends to blight our spiritual lives. The new life of the Christian is not indigenous to this scene, and must grow here in an adverse climate against many ill winds; the secret of a healthy Christian with robust spiritual energy is to be drawing fresh resources from above, and feeding on Christ, the bread which came down from heaven.

Finally, the plant pathologist called attention to some plants that had been transplanted into sterilized soil. All the evil contamination had been killed or rendered ineffective by the process, 'but still the plants drooped, for there were not sufficient nutriments in that particular soil to sustain them in vigor. Thus the mere absence of evil is not enough to promote spiritual health; there must be the positive source of good. Nutrition must be furnished our souls, or we cannot grow. May we see to it that we get a sufficient quota of that which will feed us, and draw freely from those rich streams of the water of life for refreshment as we traverse a barren wilderness. Our blessed Lord and Shepherd is engaged in ministering sustenance to us.

The Gospel in the Psalms

The gospel is not the subject of the Psalms. Still, in the Psalms we do find what constitutes the gospel; that is, we find Christ-"The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11); and it is with the thought of presenting Christ that we desire to take up certain psalms in a gospel way.

Let us begin with Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man." How sweetly the first word falls on the ear-"Blessed"! It is what God pronounces him to be who answers to the description given in this psalm. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." What a beautiful life this is, both in its negative and its positive side! My reader, can you claim blessing from God on the ground of answering to the description here? Have you never walked "in the counsel of the ungodly"? Have you never stood "in the way of sinners"? Have you never sat "in the seat of the scornful"? Have you delighted in the law of the Lord, and in His law meditated day and night? Let such questions be answered by you in the presence of God. No, your life and mine have been far otherwise. One Man, and one alone, could claim blessing from God on the ground of what He was. It is Jesus who fully answers to the picture-that unique and perfect Man over whom God could open the heavens and say, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely He was that "tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." It is Jesus who was all that a man should be. His perfect life should convince us of sin.

We have all, like lost sheep, gone astray; He never did. And He could perfectly say, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." We have found pleasure in doing our own wills; He could say, I always do the things that please My Father (John 8:29).

But let us look now at Psalm 14:2: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." "What did He see? "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." How emphatic and sweeping is this verse- "all," "all together," "none." No exception among all the children of men. May any unsaved reader be led to bow his heart here and say, "O God, I own that Thou hast in this scripture given me my moral photograph." This is repentance. God would convince the sinner of sin in order that he may take the place of self-judgment, and we know that He will never condemn those who condemn themselves. Psalm 1, then, is Jesus, not I; Psalm 14 is I, not Jesus.

Now we come to Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Well do we know who it is that was thus abandoned of God. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"

that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:45, 46. The forsaken Man of Psalm 22 is Jesus the Son of God-the blessed, perfect Man of Psalm 1. Dear reader, ponder these words: "why," "Thou," "forsaken," "Me." And when no answer came, then from out of that awful solitude, and from that heart, came the answer which vindicated God in that forsaking: "But Thou art holy."

In 2 Cor. 5:21 we read: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us." "Made Him... sin" is the reason He was forsaken. A holy God forsook Him because He was made sin. But this same scripture testifies, He "knew no sin," for

He was the perfect Man of Psalm 1. But here in Psalm 22 He, blessed be His name, takes the place of the "filthy" men of Psalm 14. None may know what it cost Him, and none can fathom that ocean of sorrow. There are other sorrows in this wonderful psalm-sorrows resulting from man's hatred - for poor, wretched man is there. "For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." They can even gamble for His garments (v. 18). But the sorrows of verses 1 and 2 are atoning sorrows-it was what He endured at the hand of God as in Isa. 53:10. "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." Oh, wondrous love to give His Son! Oh, infinite holiness that put Him to grief when made sin! Can we wonder at the streams of blessing flowing out from verse 22 right on to millennial scenes to all who trust Him? The bitter night of weeping is over in verse 21, inasmuch as He was heard and taken from the lowest point of death- "the horns of the unicorns"- after having met all the righteous claims of God, and Satan's power (see Heb. 2:14, 15). All -all was met there; and now joy, eternal joy, comes in the morning. It is the resurrection morning All our blessings are secured in resurrection - "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17.

How beautifully the psalm ends. Mark the closing sentence, "He hath done this." Let your eye rest upon it- "He hath done this." Now add believingly two other words- "for me"; or write your name in full at the bottom of that psalm.

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,

And I have died in Thee;

Thou'rt risen! my bands are all untied,

And now Thou liv'st in me.

The Father's face of radiant grace

Shines now in light on me."

Yes, you say, "for me" - for the "me" of Psalm 14.

Now turn to Psalm 32. Again we are greeted by that precious word "Blessed." "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." Now this is true of you, dear reader, if you can write your name at the foot of Psalm 22. You are without doubt the blessed man of Psalm

32. God accounts you righteous - the God who "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:24, 25. It is not what we think, feel, or realize; but it is what God says in His Word. (Acts 13:38, 39; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.) So the sinless Man of Psalm 1 dies in Psalm 22 for the sinful men of Psalm 14, in order that the sinful men of Psalm 14 may be in the blessing of the man of Psalm 32.

It is interesting to note also that the 32nd Psalm is the first "Maschil" psalm (see heading of psalm). "Maschil" means "giving instruction." It is the first instruction God gives to men. May you, my reader, be thus instructed and blessed.

Another word. The man who is thus blessed and instructed can now go back to Psalm 1 and seek to walk in the same path as this blessed One. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). Who are the people of whom this is said? In chapter 1:9 we are told they had already received the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. And again in chapter 2:24: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." It is because they were forgiven, justified, saved, that thus they were exhorted. So in 1 John 2:6: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." But note a little lower down, in verse 12, he says: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." They were in the blessing of Psalm 32. We must know Him as Savior before we can have Him as an example. We must be blessed before we can be exhorted how to walk. May it be our joy and blessing thus to walk

"Till traveling days are done."

Hardening the Heart

There are scriptures which contemplate a succession of eras, or times, all along the course of the earth's history from the time of the flood, I may say, to the days of antichrist, when there has been, or is to be, a judicial visitation under the hand of God upon the hearts, understandings, and consciences of men.

I might present the following instances (there are other instances of this judicial hardening, but they are of a private and not of a dispensational nature, and therefore I do not put them among these cases):

The old Gentile world Rom. 1:28

Pharaoh or Egypt Exod. 9:12

The kings of Canaan Josh. 11:20

Israel Isaiah 6

Christendom 2 Thess. 2

These scriptures show us this judicial hardening of which I am speaking; and they further show us that the fruit, or character, of it may be very startling, such as we could not easily have believed or feared.

Under it, men of refinement and intelligence may adopt all kinds of religious vanity; rulers and statesmen may be blinded to the plainest maxims of government. Did not Pharaoh persist in a course which, in the mouth of witness after witness, was sure to be the ruin of his kingdom? Did not the nations of Canaan tremble at the report of the conquests of Israel, and of what God had done for Israel? And yet, in spite of all that, did they not madly resist Israel? (see Joshua). And will not whole communities of intelligent, refined, advanced people, by-and-by, bow to the claims of one who shows himself to be God, setting himself up above all that is worshiped?

This has been thus, and will be thus still, under this judicial hardening; worldly men violate the clearest and most sensible means of their own interests, and religious men depart from the simplest instructions of the truth. We are not to wonder at anything. The very idols which men have taken as spoils of war, they have afterward bowed down to as their gods (2 Chron. 25:14). For what folly, what incredible blindness of understanding, will not the infatuated heart of man betray. But this hardening is never sent forth to visit man until he has righteously exposed himself to judgment. All the cases show this. Pharaoh, for instance, had, in deepest ingratitude, forgotten Joseph. The Amorites of Canaan had filled up the measure of their sins. The old Gentiles had brought this reprobate mind on themselves (Rom. 1:28). Israel "had not," Jerusalem "would not." (See Matt. 13:12; 23:37.) And the strong delusion is to be sent, by-and-by, abroad upon Christendom, only because they "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This hardening precedes destruction, but it comes after man has ripened his iniquity. God endures with all long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, as He fashions by His Spirit His own elect vessels of mercy ere He glorifies them. "Whom He will He hardeneth," is surely true; but He wills to show His wrath in this way, of hardening, or of prejudicial dementation, only in the case of those whom He has in much long-suffering endured. (Rom. 9:11-22.)

Thus then we see there is such a process in the judgment of God as the hardening of the heart-that this is never executed till man has ripened himself in evil-and that the fruit of this may appear in such human folly and blindness as we should never have apprehended, or perhaps conceived.

Let this prepare us for things which not only may shortly come to pass, but which have already appeared. Men of learning and of taste, men of morals and religion, men of skill in the science of government, and whole nations famed for dignity and greatness, each in their generation may be turned to fables and to follies enough to shake the commonest understandings in ordinary times.

I do not say the "strong delusion" has gone forth; but there are symptoms and admonitions of its not being far off. What a voice this has for us, to keep near to the Lord in the assurance of His love, to love His truth, to walk immediately with Himself, and to promise ourselves that His tarrying is not long.

Hear ... of Excellent Things: the Voice of Wisdom

In Proverbs 8 we get a world-wide cry. Wisdom lifts up her voice-"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things" etc. (vv. 4-11).

We would present to our reader four excellent things which this voice proclaims. They are found in the pages of the New Testament, and we trust that each reader will have ears to hear, so that these sayings will sink down into his heart and become a source of lasting profit.

The first is found in Hebrews 1-the presentation of the Person of Christ. Verse 4 shows that He has obtained a more excellent name than angels. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" Heb. 1:1-5.

This wonderful epistle presents in the most blessed way the Person of God's Son as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession-Christ Jesus. First, we see Him as the Son incarnate, the Messiah, walking here upon the earth, in whom God, at the end of the days of law, spoke to His favored people, the Hebrews. He is the appointed heir of all things, and at the same time the One who called all into existence by His word. The brightness of the glory of God, and the exact expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, yet He stooped to the awful woe of Calvary's cross to make purification for the sins of His people. And having accomplished this mighty work for the glory of God, He sat down-the glorified, crowned, triumphant Man- at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, having obtained a more excellent name than they. It was all-important to establish the believing Jews in this blessed truth, they being accustomed to hold angels in reverence, knowing that the law was given by their disposition (Acts 7:53).

In the latter part of chapter 1, the Apostle cites many psalms which present the Person of Christ as the only begotten Son, the Son of the Father, the First-begotten who is the object of the worship of angels, God whose throne shall be established forever, the Lord of all, whose years shall not fail, when the creation of His hand, wrecked through sin, shall perish, and as the Man exalted above angels at the right hand of God.

What object for the occupation of our hearts is to be compared with the Person of the

Blessed One who has obtained a more excellent name than the angels! Wisdom's voice speaks to each heart.

The second excellent thing for our consideration is found in figure in Heb. 11:4: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." This verse presents to us in type the wondrous redemption work wrought by the One of whom we have been speaking, for the glory of God and the eternal blessing of every one that believes. If God has revealed that Abel's sacrifice is more excellent than Cain's, how much more can such words be used of the perfect sacrifice of One greater than Abel, even Jesus, the holy Lamb foreordained of God!

Cain approached God with the fruit of the ground, produced as the result of his own toil. Abel presented of the firstlings of the flock and the fat. In what consisted the difference? Why did God have respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's? The answer is simple; but alas, how few, comparatively, have learned its significance. Cain failed to recognize that his life was forfeited on account of his fallen condition as a sinner, and brought the fruit of his own work and toil to God; whereas Abel, by faith, recognized his true state before Him, and approached God upon the ground of a substitute, which was divinely approved-type of the death of the Lamb of God upon Calvary.

The principle is the same today. Tens of thousands approach God continually on the ground of their own works and religious doings-the way of Cain. A solemn woe is pronounced upon all such in the epistle of Jude, verse 11. Others learn that they are sinners, guilty and lost, and believing upon the precious name of Jesus approach God upon the ground of the spotless sacrifice and finished work of Christ. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh. Every one who trusts in the more excellent sacrifice of Christ, is accounted righteous by God also. He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Rom. 5:9. Are you trusting therein? Wisdom's voice appeals to you, saying, "O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools [or foolish], be ye of an understanding heart." Pro. 8:5.

The third excellent thing is presented to us in Heb. 8:6: "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry." He who has obtained a more excellent name than angels, and has offered the more excellent sacrifice upon the cross, lives forever in the glory of God. As the great High Priest of His people, He is seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. There He ever lives to make intercession for His loved ones during their desert journey to the land of promise, ever sympathizing with heart of perfect love, being touched with a feeling of their infirmities (Heb. 4:15). He Himself has known what it is to walk here below as the dependent Man, doing the will of God.

And not only so, but as Minister of the sanctuary (or holy places), and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, He bears, so to speak, the names of His redeemed upon His shoulders and upon His heart in the presence of the unveiled glory of God. And there too, the veil having been rent at His death, His brethren can follow Him in spirit. By faith, all who know for themselves the acceptance and fragrance of His Person before God, and the infinite value of His sacrifice upon the cross, can draw near to God according to His word as presented in Heb. 10:19-22, and pour out their soul in worship, adoration, and praise.

May each believer who reads these lines know what it is to enjoy the blessed privileges which result for him through Christ's ministry on high in the presence of God. It is the desire of His heart that we should both walk in the pathway that He Himself has trodden here below, sustained by

Him in the midst of our weakness, and also draw near with full assurance of faith, as true worshipers, with a true heart, in the true tabernacle on high.

Fourth, we have another more excellent thing presented to us in 1 Cor. 12:31: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." The detail of it is given in chapter 13. It is the way of charity, or love. Gifts are important in their place, and we are to covet the best earnestly, but the way of love is more excellent still. It is God's way. God is love. He would have His own essential nature exhibited in the practical ways of His people, in whose hearts He sheds His love by the Holy Ghost (Rom. 5:5).

There is much talk about this love; but alas! on all hands we find that a mere human love usurps its place. Many cry out for more love, and complain of the lack of it in others, while sadly failing to exhibit it themselves. There is plenty of so-called love, which really means to be "Hail fellow well met," with everybody, and everybody's will at work in insubjection to God. But this is not the love of God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. And again, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." 1 John 5:2. Moreover, we are not taught to go about the world looking for others to show love to us, but we are exhorted, "Beloved, let us love one another." 1 John 4:7. We are to show it. Walking with God (who is love), love will be active in us toward our brethren, and will find its response in all who are treading the same pathway.

Now in 1 Corinthians 13 we have a detailed exposition of the way of love. All would do well to ponder it prayerfully. Space will not permit us to go through it verse by verse, but we may learn from the first that though a man were the greatest of orators, if he is not characterized by love in his daily life, he is become as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Or, if he were the chief of theologians or professors, or the most renowned on the list of those who live, or work, or heal by faith, and love be lacking, he is nothing. Or even if he were a philanthropist of world-wide fame, or the most heroic of martyrs, and he have not love, it profits him nothing, absolutely nothing.

Love is of God, and love never faileth. This is the more excellent way. Many a man, we fear, whom his fellows have exalted on account of his powers of oratory or of mind, his professed work of faith, his self-denial or liberality, or self-sacrifice for his creed, when weighed in the balances of God's sanctuary according to 1. Corinthians 13, will be found wanting. May our hearts be led to weigh these things before Him now. He is the searcher of hearts, reading the secret counsels and intents of every soul. All things are open and naked, and manifest in the sight of Him with whom we have to do.

May each believing soul who reads these lines be found listening to the voice of wisdom, with the heart occupied with Him who has obtained the more excellent name, the conscience at peace through His more excellent sacrifice, the soul enjoying the fruits of His more excellent ministry, and his life the exemplification of the more excellent way, that God may be glorified in all.

Hebrews 9:27-28

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Death is like the policeman to bring us up to the judgment. Then (v. 28) we have the counterpart of this in grace. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him [all believers], shall He appear... without sin." What does that mean? As to His own Person, He was without sin the first time; but now the same One comes back-what for? To deal about the sins? No! That He has done the first time; and now, apart from that entirely, He comes to receive them to Himself. For those who trust in His first coming, and look for His second, there is nothing but blessing. There is a work done in us to make us sharers in that which has been done outside us; but this is the question of the work done for us, outside of ourselves altogether. 'What had I to do with the cross of Christ? The hatred that killed Him, and the sins that He bore, are all that sinners had to do with it. Therefore there can never come a shade upon the love of God in the cross of Christ. It is perfect.

Holy and Unholy

The Word of God is absolutely conclusive that for a Christian to marry an unbeliever is directly contrary to it.

We would not, however, dare to limit (as we have heard some do) 2 Cor. 6 to marriage. On the contrary, the passage strikes at every unequal yoke where Christian and unbeliever are joined together for any common cause.

There is no question as to the bitter persecution both from believers (alas) and unbelievers, a faithful adherence to such a course involves. Men will tolerate you as long as you treat all as equal, but to make distinctions between holy and unholy is offensive to them.

Holy Brethren

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Heb. 3:1.

This title of "holy brethren" is bestowed on all believers, and its force is seen by a reference to the 11th and 12th verses of the 2nd chapter, where it is said of Christ that "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, / will declare Thy name unto My brethren." This declaration of God's name by Christ to His brethren is presented in its wondrous bearing by the Lord when, after He was risen from the dead, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." This is the blessed title of the relationship which God bears toward every poor sinner saved through the grace of Christ. It is no place of assumption for believers, nor is it a title to which attainments may give a claim. It is the place and title which

Christ's grace establishes for those who know Him in the reality of His sufferings, His humiliation, and death.

The position of Him whose calling they obey gives its character to theirs, whether viewed in relation to their inheritance above, or to their sojourn here below. It is not an earthly, but a heavenly calling that believers are brought into by Christ. Called from earth to heaven, they are to know the place of Him who is the Captain of their salvation and the first-born among many brethren.

The exhortation is to consider Christ in the two offices which are here expressed, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, offices which are shadowed forth by the position toward Israel of Moses and Aaron. The profession of Christianity, in distinction from the law, is based upon the fact that God has spoken to us from heaven, through Christ, who is the Apostle of our profession, and that we have a High Priest in heaven who accomplished eternal redemption by His own blood-shedding while here on earth.

The point of the exhortation is to consider who it is that sustains these offices, and how competent He is to the discharge of all which they imply. He was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as Moses was faithful; but He was as much above Moses as the owner of the house is higher than he who is but a servant, though faithful, in the house. Christ was the builder of the house, and thus has more honor than the house. He was the builder of all things and "He that built all things is God." Thus, by the simplest human footsteps (if I may so speak) are we led forward to see this blessed lowly One who was not ashamed to call us brethren, sustaining the office of apostle, or communicator of God's mind, and the High Priest of our profession, as bringing us into God's presence by virtue of His accomplished sacrifice, not merely as "a son over His own house," the Head and Lord of that house, but as the sovereign Creator of all things, the eternal God!

These offices were familiar to the Hebrews; they had their typical presentation in Moses, the prophet of the Lord, and in Aaron who was the consecrated high priest; but they are now sustained

by Him who is at once in grace the first-born among many brethren, and in intrinsic glory the Son of God, and Creator and upholder of all things.

How God Judges Sins

God judges sins according to the responsibility of those who are judged. But in the sovereign work of grace God judges of sin in those who approach Him, not according to what becomes man, but what becomes Himself. He dwelt in the midst of Israel, and Israel must be judged according to what becomes God's presence; our privileges are the measure of our responsibility. Men admit to their society what becomes themselves, and do not admit the base and corrupt, allowing their evil, because it is suited to their estate so to act. And is God alone to profane His presence by acting otherwise? Is all the evil which man's corruption leads him into to find its sanction only in the presence of God? No; God must (in order to make us happy by His presence) judge evil, all evil, according to His presence, so as to exclude it from it. Has the moral stupidity, which is the effect of sin, made us ignorant of it in ourselves? Is God to become blind because sin has made us so-to dishonor Himself and make others miserable, and all holy joy impossible everywhere, even in His presence, to let pass the evil? Impossible. No; all is judged, and judged in the believer according to the place grace has brought him into.

God is ignorant of nothing, and evil, however hidden to us, is evil to Him. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He may have compassion, enlighten by His Spirit, provide a way of approach so that the greatest sinner may come, restore the soul that has wandered, take account of the degree of spiritual light, where light is honestly sought; but that does not

change His judgment of evil.

How to Please God

On the footing of responsibility, every creature has failed save One, who was the Creator, whatever might be His lowly condescension in appearing within the ranks of men. And what is the secret of victory for the believer now or of old? We must be above mere humanity in order to walk as saints; yea, in a sense, be above our duty in order rightly to accomplish it. As of old., those only walked blamelessly according to the law, who looked to the Messiah in living faith; so saints now can glorify God in a holy righteous walk, only as they are under grace, not law. The sense of deliverance and perfect favor in the sight of God frees and strengthens the soul where there is the new life; the written word illustrated in Christ is the Christian rule. Therein, not in the law, is the true transcript of God.

In a Great House

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

The difficulty which is often felt by many as to this scripture would be at once removed by giving attention to the exact language employed by the Apostle. He does not say, "In the house of God," but "In a great house there are not only vessels," etc. In fact, he uses an illustration to set forth what professing Christianity- the house of God, indeed, as built by man (1 Cor. 3)-has become; that is, it has become a mixed thing, like a great house with vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor in it. The question therefore whether the vessels are teachers or saints proceeds upon a misconception, inasmuch as they only illustrate the fact pointed out, that the professing church has become so mixed and corrupt that separation is now necessary within its own borders. Whether converted or unconverted is not the point, for all are on that ground as professors; and all, whether converted or otherwise, must be separated from it if, like the vessels to dishonor, they are polluted by unholy associations or employments.

If a man therefore purge himself from these-the vessels to dishonor-he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. The next verse (22) points out that there must also be moral separation, and fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Inside the Veil

If dwelling inside the veil, I say, Oh the immeasurableness of the love of God in what He has done! How can I repay Him? I am preserved from ten thousand things which would have affected me if not there. I am in another place; as one said, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." I am not trying to squeeze what I can out of this or that little circumstance for myself. I am saying, Why, God has given me everything He could give in giving me

His Son. What return can I make Him? Cannot I give up this or that little thing for Him who gave His Son for me? It makes it seem as nothing. It is because we are not dwelling there that some little thing seems very great to give up; or perhaps some little disappointment comes, then we shrink from the cross, and we are not ready to rise and go forth to meet it because not living in heaven, not occupied with all the vastness of the blessing that is ours.

Israel in the Wilderness

What mercy was shown to the Israelites in the wilderness! their garments not getting old-God even caring for the clothes on their backs! Think of the mercy that would not let their feet swell! Then when they wanted a way, Oh! says God, I will go before with the ark to find out a way. That was not the place for the ark at all. It was appointed to be in the midst of the camp, but God would meet them in their need. They want spies to go and see the land for them; fools that we are to want to know what is before us. They had to encounter the Amorites, high walls, giants. A land that devours the inhabitant, is their account of it, even with the grapes on their shoulders. Just like us on the way to heaven. They cannot stand these difficulties. We are as grasshoppers, they say; but the real question is what God is.

As saints we are weaker than the world, and ought to be; but when waiting on God, what is that? When they have not confidence in God, they find fault with the land itself. What a wonderful God He is! He says, If you will not go into Canaan you must stay in the wilderness; and He turns them, and turns back with them.

Itching Ears: a Mark of Our Day

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

Here we find not closed ears but "itching ears," and those who "turn away their ears from the truth." The ears are not deaf, or stopped, or closed; they are keenly alive and open to hear. They itch in order to catch some sound, but not the truth. No, they turn away from the truth, as a sound known but unpleasant, familiar but distasteful, heard on all sides but discredited and avoided.

The itching ear that courts what is congenial to itself turns from the truth. It seeks the sensational, the sentimental, the unreal, the wisdom of this world, but it loathes the truth.

This is solemn and serious! And what is the result? Is it satisfied? Does its itching lead to peace or contentment, or to a solid basis of divine repose? No, but contrariwise; it is "turned unto fables." What a retribution! To turn from the truth is to be turned to fables. How descriptive of our day!

Hence we read: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers." That time has come. These are the men of this generation. Teachers are heaped up whose doctrine suits admirably the corrupted and vitiated tastes of the itching ears that listen. Sound doctrine such as atonement by blood, the eternity of punishment, and the deity of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be endured. God's great foundation facts of doctrine are scientifically discarded, and foolish fables and mental aberrations are greedily swallowed instead.

"What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD." And the religious ear of the day is feeding on fables. We rapidly approach the time when "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. It is, therefore, a serious thing to trifle with truth, or to think that God takes no cognizance of its treatment at our hands.

The men of this generation are fearfully responsible. They stand on slippery ground. A thousand sacred privileges, an open Bible, a clear and widespread gospel, the working of the Spirit on earth, the patient grace of God—all these make their responsibility enormous. Thank God, grace and mercy linger. The door is not yet shut. The sweet invitation still holds good. "COME" falls upon the open ear, full and rich as ever.

"Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for the light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." Jer. 13:15,

The King of the North: the Editor's Column

The recent peaceful gestures and conciliatory moves of Russia toward the West may have caused some people to assume that the voracious bear has suddenly been transformed into a gentle lamb. This, alas, is not true. Russia's aim is still the domination of the world by communism directed and controlled from Moscow, and her present attitude is but one phase of the drive to attain her goal. We are reminded of the words of Peter the Great of Russia: "Peace is made subservient to war, and war to peace, in the interest of the aggrandizement and increasing prosperity of Russia." If a peaceful appearance will gain more for her than a bellicose attitude, then it will be used, and vice versa.

Perhaps another statement of Peter the Great may throw some light on the present moves: "No opportunity must be lost of taking part in the affairs and disputes of Europe, especially in those of Germany, which from its vicinity is one of the most direct interest to us." The prospective rearmament of Western Germany, and integration into a Western alliance and Western army, might well cause war to be made subservient to peace so that Russia might have a voice in determining the final outcome of that strategically important country.

We make these observations so that our readers may not get their hopes on "peace on earth" at this time. That pronouncement was made when the Lord Jesus came into this world (Luke 2:14), but when He was rejected and about to be cast out of it, the disciples said, "peace in heaven" (Luke 19:38). This difference is not without significance. The "Prince of Peace" has been crucified, and when He returns it will be to first cleanse the world by sore judgments.

World statesmen would do well to remember Isa. 33:1: "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!" There is very good reason, from the context of the portion, to believe that Russia is being described in those words: spoilest and dealest treacherously. Here is a summary of the connecting portions:

Isaiah 31 gives the destruction of "the Assyrian" (vv. 8, 9), also called "the king of the north." He will be the implacable foe of the Jews; his territory will lie immediately to the north and east of Palestine. He will come against the Jews and their false king in Jerusalem just before the Lord comes out of heaven, and he will fall before Him.

Isaiah 32 then declares, "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." This follows the overthrow of the Assyrian-Messiah sets up His kingdom and calls the dispersed of Israel back to their land.

Then Isaiah 33 tells of another foe who has made a practice of spoiling and dealing treacherously. We know from Ezekiel 38 and 39 that this last foe of Israel is none other than Russia, who with her satellites will come down against the Jews in their own land when they are dwelling safely after having been "gathered out of many nations." One of our readers wrote to us regarding our recent review of the new Revised Standard Version, saying that he did not feel we had attacked it strongly enough. Perhaps there may be others who feel the same way; hence, a few words of

explanation. We hope that we have not encouraged anyone to procure a copy of this work in which there is evidently an insidious attack against the Person of our Lord and Savior. On the other hand, we felt that what was needed was a careful analysis and fair appraisal of this R.S.V., and not merely some name-calling. To hurl epithets at the revisers or make acrimonious charges against either them or their work would not enlighten anyone.

We have seen some writings against the R.S.V. that are regrettable, for in them charges were made that were unfair, and some were untrue. Such attacks only serve the enemy, and tend to bring any criticism of the revision into disrepute. These pitfalls, we sedulously sought to avoid.

Another question has also been raised concerning whether one should or should not make a study of Greek and Hebrew in order to understand what is intended in the original writings of Scripture. We readily admit that it is the privilege of anyone who feels clear before the Lord to do so, to study German, French, Spanish, Hebrew, Greek, or any other language, ancient or modern. This is not the point at issue in the question raised. The proposition posed is: Does a casual knowledge of the original Hebrew or Greek put one in a position to take the place of a textual critic, either as to the correct text, or the meaning of the same? Now we know and acknowledge that only by men of understanding of these ancient languages could we have a translation of the Bible into our own language, but the little Greek or Hebrew that most of us would have time to acquire would be of limited value. We know what a tedious and endless task it is to acquire a fair working knowledge of English, and that is nothing to be compared with the attempt to make a thorough study of Greek or Hebrew. Anything less than a mature understanding of either of these languages might be injurious, for with only a superficial knowledge of a language one could easily make very serious mistakes. There is always lurking in the superficial knowledge of anything the danger that one may think he has mastered the subject, whereas a more complete understanding would make him know how little he really knew.

Then there is another point to be considered: if one acquired a very complete knowledge of either Greek or Hebrew, would he have access to the multitude of manuscripts and renderings that exist? or would he have to accept one text which may in itself be in error? And if one had access to all manuscripts, would he have the mature judgment to be able to weigh the evidences for and against certain renderings?

God has raised up men who had both the educational and spiritual qualifications to undertake this work, and they had access to the necessary manuscripts. In our judgment it is far wiser to read the regular King James Version, and compare it with such translations as J. N. Darby's and W. Kelly's for any variations. In that way we shall come to a more accurate understanding of the text as given by God than were we to attempt our own examination of the originals. We shall also save much time that would be spent on the study of these languages, and which may more profitably be used in reading the Word of God in our mother tongue. O that we all would read and meditate more upon the Word of God, and in more simplicity! This is a crying need of the day.

In closing we shall quote a few words from the pen of W. Kelly which may be appropriate here. He was a master in Greek and could speak from experience and observation:

"My experience, beloved friends - and I know a little about what these men [scholars] have said and written - is this, that there are no men less to be trusted than mere scholars, because, being

scholars, they are naturally apt to be proud of their scholarship; and whatever we are proud of is always the very thing in which God will humble us. There is a mistake that Christian people often make. They very often overvalue the knowledge of a little Greek or less Hebrew. Depend upon it, that to know the English Bible well is far better than to know somewhat of Greek or Hebrew; and I have rarely found that knowing a little of these languages has any other effect ordinarily than to give a good deal of conceit. It enables persons, of course, to talk about knotty points, especially to those that do not understand them; but I do not think that really profitable for either party.

"However, I will not expatiate upon this, although no doubt it has its practical lesson because, among active minded Christians, such as those who are present, there is very often a strong desire to know accurately the things that God wrote. Now, if He gives means and opportunity, I would not say a word to discourage; but I do advise you, before you begin, not to expect too much from it. Whatever may be the opportunities that you can look to for learning, you are never likely to be great scholars. You may learn a little; but you must remember that as those of old who translated the Bible were men of real learning, so you are never likely, in this respect, to compare with them; nor can you hope to get by such study beyond what you have already got in the English Bible.

"Is there no means then of getting further light? Certainly, and here we have a little help in the margin; for God takes care, in His grace, to raise up persons who, perhaps, spend a great deal of a long, laborious, and uninterrupted life in many of these pursuits; but even this would enable them, you may depend upon it, only to speak with considerable moderation. I think you will find that persons who know most are apt to speak most moderately. They are diffident, after all, as to their own judgment; and although they would give it where it is called for, they would not pronounce so dogmatically as a learner.

Through such helps God corrects mistakes for His people."

From "Daniel's Seventy Weeks, A Lecture at Seymour Hall, London," 1876, pp. 13, 14.

The Knowledge of Christ

It is one thing for a perishing man to be saved by another, but it is something further for him to know the one who saved him; so also it is one thing for a perishing sinner to be saved by Christ, and another thing to go on to know Christ when saved.

This comes out in a very striking manner in Philippians 3. The writer is the Apostle Paul. As Saul of Tarsus, previous to his conversion, he had distinguished himself among his fellows by his persistent hatred of the name of Jesus, and determined persecution of those who followed Him. In Acts 26:9-11, when defending himself in the presence of Porcius Festus and King Agrippa, referring to his former manner of life, he says: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

Again, in Gal. 1:13, 14: "For ye have heard of my conversation" (manner of life) "in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

And again, in 1 Tim. 1:13: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

And one more example in Acts 22:19, 20, where he repeats what he had confessed to the Lord, saying: "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

Now this course that Saul pursued was not that of an ignorant and infidel sinner showing out the natural enmity of his heart against God and His people, but of a learned, religious man, zealous in doing God service, but whose heart was not one whit better (John 16:2). He was a man of good position, enjoying high privileges, and punctilious in his outward observance of the law of God; but instead of these things producing true subjection and love to God while leading in the profession of service to Him, he was using them to his own profit (Gal. 1:14), and had become Satan's stoutest champion in seeking to overthrow the truth.

But in course of time Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, is furnished with letters from the high priest, and starts for Damascus in order to bring them bound to Jerusalem; and as he journeyed, the Lord met him. (Acts 9:1-8; 26:12-18.) A light above the brightness of the sun shone suddenly round about him, and he falls to the earth. But richly as he deserved judgment, it was as his Savior and not his judge, that the Lord stopped him on his mad career, so that we find him saying in 1 Tim. 1:14-16: "And the grace of our Lord was

exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

From that time forth Saul of Tarsus (whose name is changed to Paul), forgiven and saved, and with the Son of God revealed in him (Gal. 1:16), leads in heralding the gospel of the grace of God. The devil's slave became the Lord's freedman and willing bondsman in the glad tidings.

And now in Phil. 3:4-7, we may learn from his own pen the wondrous effect produced upon his soul by this mighty change: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

How mighty indeed the power of divine grace! He could look round upon his kinsmen after the flesh and say, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." He had been circumcised the eighth day according to the original institution that God gave to Abraham; he was of the stock of Israel, the privileged earthly people that were not to be reckoned among the nations, and to whom pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. 9:4); of the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest and favored son; a Hebrew of the Hebrews, ranking among the highest of his kinsmen; as touching the law, a Pharisee, the strictest sect of the Jews' religion; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, the body and bride of Christ, the dearest object of His heart; and touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless; a man so strict in his observance of the law of God, that he walked without blame in the midst of his fellows. But then, having summed up all that he might trust in (and things too in which many around still trusted, though far beneath his standard), he gives us their true value in the presence of God (and it was there he had learned it), saying, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Note it well - "loss for Christ." Many slur it over as though it read "gave up for Christ." Such a thought apparently never entered his mind. Gave up! that was not how Paul reckoned. He counted himself a gainer, not a loser; he would have been a loser to go on with these things when he had Christ; he learned the end of the flesh, as well as the putting away of his sins, by the death of Christ. To hold to what was ended there was to be a loser both here and hereafter.

These things had been a gain to him as a man in the flesh. He had profited in the Jews' religion above many his equals in his own nation (Gal. 1:14); but now Christ was his Savior and his boast, and God's salvation his profit instead. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Beloved reader, how is it with you? Is Christ your Savior? If so, how are you looking upon the things that are a gain to you after the flesh? Are you clinging to them at the expense of what is due to Christ? Do you begrudge even giving them up, and retain them with a bad conscience? Is it a difficult task? If so, how far short of counting them loss! Surely if we know a Savior in glory, and rightly value Him, it ought not to be so. There was no effort on Paul's part. Everything beneath the sun had been eclipsed when the light above its brightness had shone round about him. Blinded at his conversion for three days, his eyes were again opened to be fixed upon a new object, a Savior

in glory who had saved him, and in whose company he was shortly destined to spend an eternity of bliss. O that we, like him, may be able to say in the sight of God, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

But there is something more. In the next verse we read: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

What we have hitherto been dwelling upon was the effect produced upon Paul at his conversion, but he is here writing to the saints at Philippi some 30 years or so afterward. In verse 7 he speaks of having counted loss for Christ, things which were a gain to him. This was when he first knew Christ as his Savior; but now he adds, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss." "Yea doubtless," surely; there was no question about it, no hesitation whatever. "I count." For some 30 years he had pursued his undeviating course toward the goal that he had before him. Was he weary and full of regret on account of his self-sacrifice? No; he was occupied with Christ, and superior then, as at starting, to circumstances which, if he had allowed room for the flesh, his heart naturally would have sought after and turned back to.

And not only so, but he counts all things, not merely things which were a gain to him, but all things loss. What for? For Christ as a Savior?

No, not even so merely, but more than that. Christ was his Savior still-perfectly true- and salvation in Him was doubtless his joy. But he is not satisfied with that, for he says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Long had he known Him as his Savior; but here his heart is ravished with the Person who had saved him. This is true devotedness. Men around him might boast of the knowledge of natural things. The arts and sciences, literature, astronomy, geology (things right enough in their place), might attract many; but Paul has an object before him infinitely superior to them all. What is to be compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, t h e fairer than the children of men? He knew who his Savior was; but here his whole soul's desire is for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He is enraptured with the Person of the Christ; he would learn Him, become more intimately acquainted with Him, know more of His excellent moral glories, enjoy still deeper and sweeter communion with Jesus, the Son of God's love; he would have Himself without a rival, alone enshrined in his soul. "Christ Jesus my Lord" - mine, as though He wholly belonged to him Whatever others might own (and he longed that all saints should own the same), for himself he says, "My Lord."

How many thousands know Christ as their Savior, but there stop, satisfied apparently with getting all they can through His finished work, rejoicing too, it may be, to speak about salvation to others, and yet have no relish in their souls to go on and progress in the knowledge of the One who saved them! Other objects engross their minds more or less to the exclusion of Christ. They are thankful to know Him as a Savior, but shrink from saying, "Christ Jesus my Lord." He is not their all. The will is more or less active, and the world, in certain aspects, and the things that are in it, more or less attractive; and to own the Lordship of Christ would mean a broken will, henceforth subject to Him, and the world as a worthless thing beneath their feet; but for this they are not prepared. But, beloved Christian reader, if through these lines your soul should be more occupied with Himself who died for you, they will not have been written in vain.

And note also now in closing what the Apostle adds: "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Christ was no mere doctrine to him, but a living Person in glory, that engrossed his soul and more than satisfied his heart. For the knowledge of Him he had suffered the loss of everything that the flesh values, and was enabled, after 30 years' experience in the path of faith without it, to count it as so much filth, that he might win Christ, or have Christ for his gain. In this he is an example to every believer in Jesus. May God in His rich grace enable many more to sing with the heart as well as with the lip-

"Oh, fix our earnest gaze

So wholly, Lord, on Thee,

'That, with Thy beauty occupied,

We elsewhere none may see."

Such knowledge of Christ, instead of leading to carelessness and license, becomes a true preservative against evil. And the more we know of Him, the more earnest will be the desire that our whole manner of life henceforth should be conformed in every detail to Him. And the more truly too we shall be enabled to say with the Apostle, "To me to live is Christ."

Korean War: the Editor's Column

While the world debates the wisdom of a Korean truce the Christian may quietly and confidently rest, knowing that the short and long-range outcomes are all in the hand of his Father. Many people seriously doubt that a cease-fire agreement reached with the communists of North Korea, China, and (not too indirectly with) Russia, can be trusted when these nations have shown such perfidy in their international agreements in the past. Others feel that a truce there may be but the prelude to a greater war, perhaps in some other quarter.

We know from the Word of God that war and not peace is in store for this poor world. God has a controversy with it, for it cast out His beloved Son. He may speak to it as He did to Cain when he murdered his righteous brother, "What hest thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Gen. 4:10.

The dreadful hour of trial is soon to come upon the whole habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth, but we have the assurance that we will be kept from the hour of it, not preserved through it (Rev. 3:10). Our blessed hope is the coming of the Lord. Soon, very soon, we shall hear His voice calling us to "Come up hither."

But while we are in our pilgrimage and made to feel in some measure the character of the world through which we pass, we can certainly thank God for any cessation of hostilities in Korea, or any other part of the world. It may be but a temporary lull before the full fury of the storm breaks, but surely we can be thankful for any respite. It means a little less sorrow for some dear Christians, and a little less suffering for humanity; in fact, for the animate creation also. It may prolong the opportunities of accepting the grace of God for some who might be cut off suddenly in war, but the sad part of it is that in general men use any period of peace to indulge their own desires, and forget God.

We are exhorted that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;.. that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2:1, 2. May we not neglect to use any period of peace for the pursuit of godliness, and not be like the unconverted who seem to forget God in proportion to the measure of their own earthly blessings.

However, let us not make any mistake in, supposing that man can bring settled peace to the earth. The time for "peace on earth" has not yet come, and will not come until He comes who alone has been designated God's King (Psalm 2). A time is coming when out of great agitation and confusion men will suppose that they have perfected a formula for peace, and then "they shall say, Peace and safety," supposing that they have reached their goal, only to find that sudden destruction shall come upon them, from which they shall not escape (1 Thess. 5:3).

But after those years of great tribulation, and the judgments at the hand of the Son of man when He comes to reign, peace shall be brought to fruition. It will then be true that "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." Psalm 46:9. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Job

34:29.

The great contrast between the strivings of the nations and His acts of power are clearly distinguished in another verse in Psalm 46: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted." v. 6. He will have but to utter His voice to accomplish His purposes. It reminds us of that memorable scene in the garden of Gethsemane when the armed mob came with all their weapons of violence to take the lowly Jesus; He had but to utter His voice and they were overcome.

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He.... As soon as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground." John 18:4-6.

The struggle for power goes on in high places of the Russian government. This was to be expected, for man away from God has a burning ambition for self-exaltation, and a ruthless disregard for others who may stand in his way. It is an old, old story which dates back almost to the beginning of history. Ever since man ruled over his fellow men a struggle for power has gone on. Plots, intrigues, murders, and assassinations have been used by those in power and by those who sought it. Many such cases are recorded on the pages of inspiration; the Old Testament tells a sad story of these things taking place in the kingdom of Israel, and in those kingdoms which occasionally had some contact with Israel.

The sudden arrest and purge of Lavrenti P. Beria from his place of power removed one of the three top contenders for the exalted position once held by Josef Stalin. Thus a man who had most cruelly executed and murdered many thousands finally faces the same fate. Even in this life a man's deeds often overtake him, but the solemn fact is that the One whom he has despised "is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

There is no telling what convulsions may yet take place within Russia, but nothing is apt to change her course. The lust for world domination is deeply rooted in all those who might be able to seize the power. The rest of the world may breathe a little easier while the struggle in Russia goes on, but we must not forget what God has told us of her dealing treacherously (Isa. 33). God is working out His purposes, and already Russia has pushed the Western Powers into close collaboration, and as she continues to exert her force, the coming federation of Western Europe as the revived Roman Empire, with the backing of the Americas, comes closer. These things do not take place over night and time is required to condition the thinking of the nations to accept a supernational organization to which the individual state must be secondary.

How different was the Lord Jesus as a man down here from the common story of man in his lust for power! Not only did He not seek a place of power or exaltation, but said when urged to act as a judge, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" When the devil offered Him the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, He promptly refused all. When the people who benefited by His feeding them with bread wanted to make Him a king, He retired. He refused all power and glory from men and from Satan, but one day (not far distant) He will receive supreme dominion from God's hand, even as it is said in the second psalm, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." God has

said unto Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies

Thy footstool." Psalm 110:1. He who humbled Himself has been given "a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9-11.

The Lame and the Feeble: Opportunities for Acting on Exhortations

"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." Heb. 12:12, 13.

What a grand opportunity is afforded today for the practical carrying out of this important little exhortation! On all sides may be seen hands hanging down, and knees feeble, and lame pilgrims dotting the road to heaven.

It is not as when in triumph Moses could review his six hundred thousand warriors, fresh over the sea, and discover that "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psalm 105:37), but the rather as when he beheld them, amid desert, the sad witnesses to their disobedience and unbelief, dejected and complaining as those who had "despised the pleasant land." Their feebleness, indeed, marked them, and lameness was seen on all hands. It must have been a sorry spectacle to their leader, though he bore with God-given patience their many rebellions!

So today! How different is the aspect of the Church from the fair picture she presented in the opening chapters of the Acts. Then all was fresh, and in the bloom and vigor of a living, acting, and God-honoring faith. The world was kept outside by the force of the inherent fire that burned within; and consequently they walked "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," and "were multiplied." There were giants in those days, giants in faith and devotedness and power, just because the heart was fresh and warm and true.

They could not boast of learning; no, their foremost teachers, Peter and John, were regarded by the chief priests as "unlearned and ignorant men"; and ignorant, no doubt, they were of the wisdom of this world and the learning of the college. But the lack was wonderfully counterbalanced by their knowledge of a few eternal facts, made theirs as eyewitnesses of the life and death, resurrection and ascension, of the Lord Jesus, held in living power in their souls by prayer and uncompromising faithfulness. Their little was rightly used, and yielded a splendid result.

Thank God for such grace- a Gideon's barley loaf, or a stripling's sling and stone, if only God be there, is all-sufficient. To the winds with Saul's armor and all that appertains thereto, when the Lord's battles must be fought. God wants no power or wisdom but His own; and wise are they who, even in this late day, believe and act thereon.

This is power, and He who was with His people of old, is with His people still. The bloom may be gone, but Christ abides. Circumstances may have changed, but the Word and Spirit remain. Now the call is that we should lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. God calls us to act in grace toward each other.

Look around at the "great multitude of impotent folk" who swell the ranks of the Church; look upon the battle field and see the vast number of wounded and maimed, and ask yourself if this is a day for smiting with the fist, or of hustling one another out of the way.

No, we are to watch so courageously that our evident joy and blessing may make the weak feel that it is their own assured portion also; and thus strength and healing will be administered to them instead of discouragement. But in order to do this, there must be personal dealing with God. Our own souls must be feeding on that which raises them above the perplexities of the day-feeding on the Word of God itself rather than on human thoughts of it. And thus, instead of leading souls away from their source of blessing, they will be established and comforted. It is charity that would lead us to the consideration of the weak and lame. Such abound on all sides, and that increasingly.

May our hearts be drawn more to the lame, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and be enabled to show that the Church is something else than a field of battle and controversy, something else than a school for the acquisition of doctrine; that she has the truth as a matter of enjoyment, and that there is such a thing as "fellowship... with the Father, and with His Son"-the richest and most precious privilege on earth-in itself always a distinct testimony of triumph over the enemy.

Law and Grace Exemplified: the Pot of Oil

A widow of one of God's faithful servants, reduced to the greatest straits through poverty, cried to the prophet Elisha. She discloses the exigency of her position. Her husband was dead, her creditor was pressing his claim, and her two sons in consequence were about to be sent into slavery. What should she do? Her husband's faithfulness when living she recalls to the man of God, but that will not appease the creditor nor mitigate the righteous demands of the law. The claim she admits, its validity was incontestable, the proceedings too of the creditor were unimpeachable. (Exod. 21:2; Lev. 25:39.) He might have been merciful - that rested with him - but none could challenge his right to exact what was his due, and the law which he put into action knew no pity. Her position was a sad one; she felt it; and turning to the prophet in her distress she confessed by her very action the hopelessness of her meeting the difficulty.

This is an apt illustration of the position in which the remnant of the Jews will find themselves in a future day, with the claims of the law pressing on them, the consciousness that the claims are just adding to their misery, without the power to discharge them and free themselves from the penalty they have incurred. This is a position they will be in, but one in which we have never been placed by God. See Gal. 3:13, 24, Eph. 2:15, and Col. 2:14, where the condition of the Jew as distinct from the Gentile is clearly marked. But though we have never been so placed by God, if we would value aright His grace, we must apprehend the helpless, wretched condition of what it must be to be under law. Hence, while the position of the widow does not correspond to the one we were in as children of Adam, we can get instruction from it as we see how grace worked on her behalf.

The prophet attends to her cry; but before he tells her what to do, he draws out from her the poverty of her condition. To his question as to what she has in the house, she mentions but one article, a pot of oil. Short was the catalog of her possessions-one pot of oil. Well might she cry for help, whose earthly goods could be so easily summed up. Had this pot of oil been of value, would she not have sold it? but it appears to have been an object worthless in the estimation of her creditor, and of no account in her own. He had not seized it; she had not disposed of it. The value both of them set on it is thus clearly manifested. She was to learn what others have learned since her day, that an object of little account in the eyes of the world is just that by which full deliverance may be effected. What use could this pot of oil be to her now? might have been her thought, as both Jews and Gentiles have underrated the value of the Lord's death on the cross. The Jews require a sign, the Greeks sought after wisdom, but the Apostle preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness, but to those saved, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ, God's power and God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1). The judgment of both her creditor and herself as to the value of the article having been elicited, the ground is cleared for God to work.

The prophet bids her to borrow abroad vessels of all her neighbors-empty vessels, and not a few - and then with closed doors on herself and her sons she was to pour out into all of them, and set aside that which was full. To these directions she faithfully adhered. Had she reasoned about them she would probably have not done what he bade her. Who ever heard of vessels filled without the

needful liquid to pour into them? But faith does not reason; it counts on God, and is obedient to His Word. With closed doors they went to work. God's dealings with souls are often in secret, for there must be personal and heart work-the effects appear openly afterward. With closed doors then they worked, and found that the word came true. All the vessels were filled with oil. Elisha had not told her how much would flow but she found, as souls do, that the reality surpassed the anticipation. That little pot, previously of small account in her eyes, supplied oil for all the vessels-none remained empty, nor even half filled. She poured into the vessels as her sons brought them to her; she stopped only when they were filled with oil. She could count how many vessels she had borrowed; she learned afterward the value of what she had got. But there was one thing she never knew, and that was how much oil could have flowed out of the pot. She never fathomed the depth of God's resources. She never drained the fountain of her blessings.

The vessels filled with oil- she acted aright and told the prophet to whom she had opened out her grief of the abundant supply she had obtained. Should not all recipients of grace acknowledge to Him, to whom they are indebted for it, what it is He has given them? Elisha, hearing of what she had received, told her what use she was to make of it. "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." The legal claim must be met. That Israel too will find in a future day. The widow could never have met it. She had felt all the pressure of it, and the anticipation of the consequence which must flow from it. She now was to have her deliverance from the burden, not by repudiating it, but by having the debt paid in full. "Pay thy debt," said Elisha. He acknowledged the legal claim. To have acted otherwise would have been to condemn God's Word which sanctioned the creditor's rights. God's Word was upheld, and the widow relieved. The claim was met, the creditor was satisfied, and the sons were free.

But was this all? It was all she had wanted, but would it have sufficed? We can answer, No, it would not. The claim simply met could not insure her against a similar trouble hereafter; nor could it have provided for her everyday wants. Her incapability to keep out of debt remained, as far as she was concerned, unaltered. She had not been able to keep out of trouble. She had no more power to preserve herself from it, if only the debt was discharged. How little souls understand so living a fact! But God knew what she wanted. He gauged the measure of her need; but He estimated too her incapability for the future, so the prophet tells her, "Live thou and thy children of the rest." That by which the debt had been canceled afforded future sustainment for her and her children as well. Here this history closes. It began with the widow in poverty; it ends with the widow in plenty. All was from God, for grace is from Him. She had learned what her condition was, and that she had nothing to give; she finds what it is to receive. The claim was met and she lived on the provision of God's grace. Surely the application is plain. He by whom the debt alone can be canceled, is the One on whom the soul should ever after feed.

The Life of Faith

In the life of faith we do not merely look for the principle of dependence on God, or of confidence in Him, though that may be the thought immediately suggested by such words. It signifies much more. It is a life of large and various energies, for according to God, or Scripture, faith is that principle in the soul which not only trusts Him and believes Him; it is also that which apprehends His way, acts in concert with His principles and purposes, receives His promises, enjoys His favor, does His bidding, looks for His kingdom, in His strength gains victories, and by His light walks in light; and thus it is ever, though variously, exhibiting a life according to Him, or formed by communion with Him.

All this is strongly marked for our observation.

Hebrews 11 shows us all this -the life of faith in its vast diversity of exercise and action. Accordingly, we shall find, in the life of Abraham, occasions where confidence in God was the virtue exercised; occasions too where strength was put forth, and conflict endured; and again, where surrender of rights and submission to wrongs were the virtues. And the life of faith is beautiful in its variety, for this variety is but the changeful glowing of the same mind, the mind of Christ, in the saint.

But again. We are not to understand that we get nothing else than this light and power of faith in the believer or saint. Perfection in this variety of the life of faith is not to be found save in Him who is set before us as "the author and finisher of faith," and whose way from beginning to end, and in every incident of it, was the great exemplar of this life in full unsullied brightness. Still, however, the life of Abraham, or of David, or of Joseph, or of Paul, is to be called the life of faith; for it was the life of those in whom that principle was, though betraying again and again, and that too in different ways, the pravity of nature, the workings of unbelief, and the counsels of a heart prone to converse with flesh and blood, and to take the way of a revolted world.

This life of faith our Abraham entered upon with beautiful simplicity and earnestness. He "went forth to go into the land of Canaan" and into the land of Canaan he came. He went out, not knowing whither he went. He took God for his security and his portion; and, as another has said, "It is in this that the Spirit of God rests, as characteristic of his approved faith; for, by separation from the world, on the ground of implicit confidence in God, he lost everything, and got nothing but the word of God."

We do not like such conditions. The heart resents them, but the renewed mind approves them, and justifies God in them. The sufferings of Christ are first, and then the glories (1 Pet. 1:11). Job was nearer his good thing in God when he lay in ashes amid the potsherds than when he was happy in his nest. Israel did not enter Canaan after a fruitful journey, through a land of cities and villages, and corn and wine, and rivers and vineyards; but they paced it slowly, through one desert after another. And so Abraham was called out from all to go he knew not whither; but this he knew, that it was God who had called him. And this was faith's beginning. He went forth to go into the

land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came.

Light and Darkness: the Editor's Column

During the past week two very different items of interest were brought to our attention. They were different in character and style, in the people concerned, and in the far reaching results that will extend into eternity.

One was the case of a young mother who had many troubles in her family, and at times became quite despondent. In her distress she often turned to a Christian woman who was her neighbor, and from her received words of comfort, and many exhibitions of practical Christianity.

The Christian neighbor welcomed the opportunity to lend a helping hand so that she might testify for the Lord Jesus in what He was to her, and be able to tell the needy one that she could have the same peace and joy through believing in Him. Time after time the gospel was presented to the one who had religion but not Christ and many prayers went up in her behalf.

After a time the Christian woman moved to another city, but before doing so she gave a Bible to her neighbor, and urged her to read it. Six long years went by before there was any evidence of bread being found after its having been cast upon the waters (Eccles. 11:1). Then a few weeks ago our Christian friend received a telephone call from the one whose salvation she longed after. She had come to the same city and soon called her friend and said:

"Oh, I found it; I've got it. The Lord Jesus died to put away my sins." This was a time of mutual rejoicing, and of praise to God who gave His only begotten Son that they might have eternal life through believing in Him and His finished work on the cross.

This little narrative should serve as an encouragement to us to witness for our Lord and Savior as we have opportunity. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Eccles. 11:6. Many have sowed the seed and never knew in this world that it had brought forth good fruit, but the day is coming when it will be declared. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." Isa. 32:20.

The other story is as sad as this one is happy, for it is the melancholy recital of the darkness of unbelief in a professed minister of the gospel.

A highly placed clergyman of the Church of England, William Ralph Inge, formerly Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, at the ripe age of 93, gave expression to the doubts and uncertainty of a man shrouded in the dismal hopelessness of those who reject the truth of God.

Think of a man who for many years took the place of being "a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness," saying at the end of life's journey: "I have tried to answer three problems which always seemed to me to be fundamental: the problem of eternity, the problem of human personality, and the problem of evil. I have failed. I have solved none of them, and I know no more now than when I started." What a confession! "I have failed"! Failed in what? first, in fathoming eternity. 'What did he expect? he a creature of time and, comparatively speaking, only an

infinitesimal speck in the vast universe of God. The human mind cannot comprehend that which has no beginning and no ending, but God in His Word takes us back into the past and lets us know of that Son who was in the bosom of the Father in that distant, unknowable past, and then brings us down to the creation, and tells us all that we need to know of how all came into being at His word. He also takes us forward into the eternity of the future, and shows us the blessed scene of bliss when God shall dwell with men (Rev. 21:3) in a state of permanent righteousness; and He faithfully tells us of the eternity of woe for those who reject the Christ of God. What room for any uncertainty here? None whatever, except for those who refuse the testimony of God.

It is difficult to see why "human personality" should have been such a lifelong unproductive study. Is it not the aggregate of an individual's mental, moral, physical, and emotional being which distinguishes him as an individual? These are generally inherited, but may be developed or altered by circumstances in life.

Certain it is that an unbeliever who finds Christ as his Savior and henceforth has a new life, with a pure object (Christ) before him, and a pure motive (to please Christ), will manifest some change in personality. The beloved, tender-hearted Apostle Paul certainly manifested a different personality from that displayed in the uncompromising foe of Christ, Saul of Tarsus.

The third thing that the great churchman failed to comprehend (sin) is fully stated in the Word of God- "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4; J. N. D. Trans; also 1885 Revised Version, and others). It is the creature's exercise of his own will independently of God. Our first parents sinned, in the Garden of Eden, and so have all their posterity from that day to this. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. God has left us in no doubt as to what sin is, its origin, its dreadful consequences in death and ruin here, His own way to cleanse the guilty sinner righteously, of life and eternal felicity for those who believe in His Son, and the blackness of darkness forever and ever for those who reject or neglect His great salvation.

But Dean Inge did not stop there. He went on to say to his interrogator, "I know as much about the after life as you - nothing. I don't even know t h e r e is one - in the sense the church teaches it." Why does he not know? God has spoken in unmistakable language. It is self-evident that he does not believe God and His Word. The Lord Jesus met a similar class of clerics when He was on earth, and of them said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. 11:25. The dear young woman we have previously mentioned knows much more than the man who claims the title of "Very Reverend."

"I know... nothing... I don't even know," is the language of unbelief, of the infidel. The language of faith is "I know," and "we know." Such is the portion of the simplest believer in the Lord Jesus. "We know that the Son of God is come." "We know that we are of God." "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (1 John 5:19, 20 Cor. 5:1.) The Apostle Paul was not uncertain of what lay ahead; he knew so well that he desired to depart and be with Christ, which he said was very much better. And when the end came he said, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12.

Perhaps the greatest clue to the Dean's morass of uncertainty is this statement: "I have no vision of 'heaven' or a 'welcoming God.' I do not know what I shall find and I must wait and see." How similar are the strains of this to the utterance of the wicked servant who said, "I knew thee that thou art a hard man." This parable describes one who never knew the grace of God; one who never "tasted that the Lord is gracious." No one could know the grace of God and say, "I have no vision of a 'welcoming God.'" Could he ever have read the 15th of Luke? Think of the welcome that the poor, wayward prodigal got! The father ran down the road to meet the one who had signally dishonored him. Oh! the manifold grace of God. Yet here is a blind leader of the blind who knows nothing of it. And he is only one of thousands upon thousands who preach to others and whose hearts are estranged from God.

An infidel said as he was about to pass from this world, "I am taking a leap in the dark," but here is a supposed minister of the gospel saying practically the same thing. Well did the Lord say: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matt. 6:22, 23. The eye is either single or evil. And if we do not have light from God, received through a single eye, then all we have is the light of nature, and in the fallen creature it is darkness. Man in his present state is away from God; he is darkness and is in darkness. No amount of culture, education, or even preparation for the ministry (as some call it), will change nature's darkness into light. It is only as we come by faith to God as sinners and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, that we can receive the true light.

In the first of these two cases we have mentioned there is the demonstration of the light of God coming into a soul that takes God at His word, making it unspeakably happy. In the second there is one who knows theology and the outward form of religion, but has nothing more than the mere light of a fallen nature, and so is about to leave the world, in darkness, not knowing where he is going. "How great is that darkness!"

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

In Rev. 5:5, the One who can step forward when all others have failed-not one in heaven, in earth, nor under the earth, being worthy to open the book and loose its seals-is the blessed One who comes, according to God's purpose, in the royal line of Judah, and who, because of this, is termed, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." He alone can take the book, open its seals, and unfold those things which are coming to pass upon the earth. He is the worthy and powerful One, but not manifested as such till all others have been proved unworthy to undertake such a work. How suitable and appropriate is the name, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." We know Judah was the tribe from which Christ, or Messiah, came, and the name "Lion" gives the thought of majesty and power, so Jacob compared Judah to a lion in Gen. 49:9: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"

The same symbol is used in connection with Israel, and awaits fulfillment in a future day: "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." Numb. 23:24.

The Lord, in His character as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is the One who will bring this about. At present He is still despised and rejected by man, but accepted of God, and seated at His right hand; He awaits the time when He will make His enemies His footstool, and all things shall be put in subjection under Him. Then His lion-like character of power and majesty will be manifested.

Another very important point which this portion brings before us, is that He does not take the place of opening the book because of His divine glory or because He is worthy, but because He "prevailed." His victory through His death is what is made prominent.

The Lord might at any time have taken that book and opened the seals, because of His personal worthiness, but had He done so on that ground, we could not have known the wonderful unfoldings (or the secrets) of the book. No, He would not thus open the seals, but by having become man, and still being a divine person, He had power to go down into death and to rise victoriously. He overcame, He conquered, or as the Scripture says, "He prevailed"; and on that ground He takes the book and opens the seals and can unfold to us, through John, what is to take place on this earth after He will have His Church with Himself in the glory.

"Lion of Judah's tribe,

Thy kingly power we own,

All blessing, might, ascribe To

Him upon the throne.

For Thou hast purchased by Thy blood,

And made us kings and priests to God."

Dear reader, do you rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ will yet have that place of honor and glory, or do you fear as you think of this? If you know Him in His lamb-like character; that is, as the One who has been a sacrifice for sin, and can say, "He died for me," you will rejoice that He will have His rightful place; but if you are not able to say so from the heart, you may well fear and tremble at the thought of His coming power and glory. Man must have Him as his Savior, or as his Judge. Which will it be with you?

Loose Him and Let Him Go: Life and Liberty

There are many divinely quickened souls who need to know the power of those commanding words, "Loose him, and let him go." John 11:44. They have been quickened out of a state of death by the life-giving voice of the Son of God, but they "come forth," "bound hand and foot with graveclothes," and their faces "bound about with a napkin." That is to say, they have not as yet been able to shake off the trammels of their former condition, or to go on their way in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. That they have received divine life, is manifest from the very struggles, fluctuations, and conflicts of which they complain.

Those who are "dead" know nothing of such things. As long as Lazarus lay in the silent tomb in the cold grasp of death, he never felt his graveclothes to be any hindrance to movement, or his napkin to be any hindrance to vision. All was dark, cold, and lifeless; and the graveclothes were the suited trappings of such a condition. A man whose hands and feet were fast bound in the fetters of death, could not possibly feel any inconvenience from graveclothes; and one whose eyes were fast sealed by the stern hand of death, could not feel any inconvenience from a napkin.

Thus it is with the unconverted, the unregenerate, the unawakened. They are "dead" -morally, spiritually "dead." Their feet are fast bound in the fetters of death, but they know it not. Their hands are confined by the handcuffs of death, but they feel it not. Their eyes are covered by the dark napkin of death, but they perceive it not. They are dead. The robes of death are around them; the graveclothes are upon them and suit their condition.

But then in some way or another, the persons for whom I write this paper have been acted upon by the mighty, quickening voice of the Son of God - "the resurrection, and the life." A verse of Scripture, a sermon, a lecture, a tract, a hymn, a prayer, some passing event, has proved to them a life-giving voice. It has sounded upon their ears, it has fallen upon their hearts, it has penetrated to the very depths of their being. They are aroused, they know not how. They wake up, they know not why. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. The life is there in all its reality. The new birth has taken place. The new nature has been communicated. Those who are standing by, who know what life is, see the movements, the struggles, the heavings and workings of life, but as yet the graveclothes and napkin are there. I believe there are many in this condition-many quickened-many born - who know not the privileges which attach to their birth, or the source and object of the life which has been communicated to them. In a word, they need that the voice which has already said, "Lazarus, come forth," should also say, "Loose him, and let him go." They have been quickened; they need to be emancipated.

Let us take an example or two from the Word of God. The prodigal was quickened before he was emancipated. "I will arise and go to my father," was the utterance of the new life-the aspiration of the new nature. When he spoke thus, he was full of doubt and uncertainty as to the mode in which the father would receive him. He was full of legality-full of the thought of servitude instead of the thought of sonship. The new life was there, but as yet it was connected with numerous doubts and

fears within, and the rags of his former condition were upon him. He had been acted upon by a life-giving voice, and he only needed to be emancipated. The new nature* having been imparted, moved toward the source from which it had sprung, but as yet its movement was cramped, as it were, by the graveclothes, and its vision impeded by the napkin.

Now who would think of maintaining the monstrous idea that the prodigal ought to have continued in his rags? to have persisted in his doubts, fears, and uncertainty? Who would assert that for the rest of his days Lazarus ought to have worn his graveclothes and napkin in order to prove that he was a living man? It will be said that the father's embrace dispelled the prodigal's fears, for how could he fear in the arms of paternal love? But was it not the father also who commanded the rags to be displaced by "the best robe"?

And then as to Lazarus, it may be urged that the voice that had quickened and raised him, commanded him to be loosed and let go. Exactly so; and is it not just the same in reference to any one who has obtained new life by believing in the name of the Son of God? Truly so. He should no longer wear the rags of the "far country," or the trappings of the grave. His hands and feet should be unbound so that he may serve the Lord Christ, and run in the way of His commandments. His face too should be uncovered- the napkin should be removed -so that he may gaze upon the One whose voice has quickened him.

But let us take another example. In the 7th chapter of Romans, we have a striking case of a quickened soul not yet emancipated. Here we see the earnest struggles of the new life-the fervent breathings of the new nature. Here we find one who can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and yet he has to say, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Now the believer is not "sold" but "bought"- "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ"- ransomed from the power of the grave - delivered "from going down to the pit." Again, we find this quickened soul confessing, "What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." This is a condition of perpetual defeat, whereas the believer can say, "We are more than conquerors," and, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." (See Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14.) Last, we hear this quickened soul exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the believer, instead of being a "wretched man," seeking for deliverance, is really a happy man, rejoicing in being fully and eternally delivered.

In short, the 7th chapter of Romans, which has been so sadly misunderstood, is a simple picture of a soul divinely quickened, but not yet divinely emancipated - a soul not yet able to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2. It is one who has been acted upon by the authoritative word, "Lazarus, come forth," but of whom it has yet to be said, "Loose him, and let him go." In other words, there is life but not liberty. There is sufficient light to see the wretched condition of "the old man," but not sufficient to see the position of the new-there is the just perception of the spirituality of the law, without the knowledge of deliverance from its condemning power. Should any rest satisfied with such a condition? Is this the believer's proper standing? Assuredly not. As well might we maintain that Lazarus ought to have been quite satisfied to go on all his days "bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face... bound about with a napkin." This would never do. The Lord does not do His work by halves, either as to soul or body. The life and the liberty are connected as coming from the same source. The life which the believer has is not old Adam-life improved, but new Adam-life imparted; and the liberty

in which the believer walks is not liberty for the old Adam to fulfill his horrible lusts, but liberty for the new man to walk with God.

Oh! how ardently I long that those precious souls for whom I write may fully enter into what I have written. I write for quickened souls who are not yet emancipated—who have life but not liberty—who have "come forth," but are not yet loosed and let go. There are many such. There are many in the condition of the prodigal when he arose from the far country, but had not yet reached the father's arms -many in the 7th of Romans. I earnestly long for their full emancipation. I would affectionately remind them that the whole work is done—the sacrifice completed—the ransom paid. They have not to read another syllable in order to get settled peace. Christ has made peace. God is well pleased. The Holy Ghost bears witness. The Word of God is plain. "Where then is there the foundation for a doubt? The reader may exclaim, "Alas! it is in myself." Yes; but my dear friend, you have nothing to do in a matter which has already been done for you.

The righteousness of God is "to him that worketh not." If you had aught to do in order to get righteousness, then Rom. 4:5 would not be true. Christ has done all for your present, personal, and perfect salvation. May many hear and understand those thrilling accents, "LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO."

The Lord's Coming: Laying Hold of the Truth

If you hear the truth of the Lord's second coming and see your portion as the bride of Christ, and you do not lay hold of it practically so as to possess it (have communion with God about it, which is possession), you will presently lose the expectation of His coming and forget your place of separation from the world, and the truth will gradually slip away because you are not holding it in your soul before God. Consequently your soul becomes dead and dull, and you lose the very truth you have received.

Thus, if one lives daily as waiting for the Lord from heaven, there will be no planning for the future, no laying up for the morrow; such a man will learn more and more, as other truths will open round this one grand central one, and he will be kept in the truth. If, on the other hand, he drops this center truth by saying, "He cannot come yet; so many things must happen first," then is the progress of such a one's communion with God hindered, for, as we have said, it is according to what a man has heard and holds with God that there can be any growth; for what is the use of teaching me that the Lord may come tomorrow, if I am going on living as though He were not coming for a hundred years? Or where is the comfort and blessedness of the truth to my soul if I am saying in my heart, "My lord delayeth his coming"? Though I cannot lose my eternal life, yet if I am losing the truth and light I have had, I shall be merely floating on in the current of life - half world and half Christ-and all the power of Christian life will be dimmed in my soul. If the truth is held in communion with God, it separates to Himself. Truth is to produce fruit, and you have no truth that does not bear fruit. Truth must build up the soul. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." Christ becomes precious in and by the truth that I learn; and if it has not that power, it all drops out, comes to nothing, and is taken away. If Christ is precious to me, I shall be waiting for Him with affection; and if it is not so, the bare truth will soon be given up.

Mark 11:22-26: From a Letter "Have Faith in God"

I have found Mark 11:22-26 of great benefit to myself and others.

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, -What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Here we have:

1. Faith - the "faith in God." That is, faith that takes its character and strength from God as its object-faith that brings God into the difficulty. There is a mountain to be removed. God only can lift a mountain up and throw it into the sea. But He is greater than the mountain, and if you can bring Him into the matter, the mountain must go.

Prayer is our proper attitude-what expresses our dependence on God - but the prayer of faith only is effectual.

There is a condition; that is, this prayer of faith is conditional on a certain state in us, and that is the spirit of forgiveness. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any." It is not here going to one who has wronged you and telling him you forgive him. In such a case the word is, "If he repent, forgive him." But here it is the state of our hearts toward our brethren when we are in the presence of God. Suppose I am praying to God, who has forgiven me ten thousand talents in absolute grace, and am holding something against one who may have wronged me, God will not hear me. I am not in communion, my state is wrong, I am not in the current of God's thoughts, and will not be able to exercise faith.

A person says, "I cannot feel right toward Mr. A"; that is, he has hard feelings toward Mr. A. But can I think of God in this way? Can I speak of Him as having "hard feelings" toward anyone? Never. When we were enemies, He gave His Son. Now my heart is to be formed by what flows down in communion through the Word from His heart into mine. And if this is my state when I pray, I will forgive if I have anything against anyone, and my heart will be free in God's presence; and, however my brother may have erred, I will be able to seek his blessing and restoration.

In case of personal difficulties among saints, if this state is reached in God's presence, it is wonderful how soon difficulties melt away because it is God Himself coming in to act in grace.

Gospel of Mark: How It Begins and How It Ends

How It Begins

Mark gives us the ministry of the Lord. His account is brief, and there are few events which are not recorded by Matthew and Luke. Nevertheless, what a gap there would be in our view of the Savior's life and work here below if we had not Mark! In none have we a more characteristic manner of presenting what is given us. In none have we such graphic, vivid life touches of our Master - not only what He said and did, but how He looked and felt. Besides, there is the evident design of drawing our attention to His gospel service; and all the incidents chosen, and the peculiar mode in which they are handled, will be found to bear upon this weighty and affecting theme: the Lord God as the servant in lowly, faithful ministration of the gospel here below.

How It Ends

"The Lord, therefore, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God" (W. Kelly Trans.). The work was done; He sat down. With His great earthly work over, He was the great Servant who could say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." So He sat down at the right hand of God, the place of power. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere." Is the Lord then inactive? No, "the Lord working with them." So true is it from the first verse of Mark to the last. Jesus is the One that does all things well, working for men in His life or, rather, working for sinners; suffering for sins in death; even now working with His servants when He is gone up to heaven. He is the Servant of God throughout our Gospel. Even seated at God's right hand, He is the Servant - "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

The Morning Star

May the Lord give us such an apprehension of redemption, and of our position in Him, as may so fix our hearts on Himself, that we may be daily walking down here like unto men that wait for their Lord, who has promised to come and take us to Himself, watching in the midst of a night of darkness, aware that it is night, although we are not of the night; but watching and waiting for the day, baying the Morning Star arisen in our hearts. May the Lord keep us from idols; and above all, from aught that savors of Jezebel, that we may be in dread for fear of grieving Him in any of those things which have come in to spoil and corrupt that which He once planted so beautiful, to be for the manifestation of His glory in this dark and evil world.

The Name of Jesus

Some time ago a company of men were waiting in a public hall, and to while away the time they began to sing popular songs. Among them was a Christian who would not join in the singing of his unsaved companions. Seeing this, one man leaned over and said, "Can't you sing?" "Oh yes," said our friend, "but only what my mother used to teach me." A shout of laughter went around the room, and he was asked, "What is that?" "Listen," he said, and then he sang to the tune of "St. Peter" the well known words-

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear."

A look of surprise was seen on the faces of the men, and some of them joined in the singing. The Christian, with a face full of joy, showed his delight in the theme - that peerless name - its sweetness was very real to him. He continued-

"It makes the wounded spirit whole,

It calms the troubled breast;

'Tis manna to the hungry soul,

And to the weary rest.

"Blest name! the rock on which we build,

Our shield and hiding place;

Our never-failing treasury filled

With boundless stores of grace.

"Jesus! our Savior, Shepherd, Friend,

Thou Prophet, Priest, and King;

Our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End,

Accept the praise we bring.

"Weak is the effort of our heart,

And cold our warmest thought;

But when we see Thee as Thou art,

We'll praise Thee as we ought.

"Till then we would Thy love proclaim

With every fleeting breath;

And triumph in Thy blessed name

Which quells the power of death."

The song finished; there was a tense silence for some moments. Then one, a professional singer, rose and stretched out his hand to the Christian, saying, "Shake hands, sir. I am not religious but I do admire a man who has the courage of his convictions." This gave our friend a good opportunity to tell out the glad tidings of salvation. One man present who was a Christian said to the singer afterward, "How did you do it? I should have been terrified." "I do not think you would," he replied, "if you thought of the Lord Jesus, who He is and what He has done for us; you would feel as if you must speak of Him."

The Need of Exercising Grace

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit" "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that this unity can be kept in a legal way. It must be grace. It must be the fruit of communion with Christ, and living of His life. I cannot take my own yardstick and measure everybody else by that. I cannot lay down my interpretations of Scripture and say every man must walk by this rule. That is to make a law of Scripture and put everybody on legal ground. And this is the worst kind of legalism.

If our minds are formed by the Word and Spirit of God, others will feel the power... and they will be edified.

If I am handling the Word of God in a legal way, I will only provoke the flesh, and no good will result. I cannot teach you the Word of God with a sledge hammer. The teaching must be through the operation of the Spirit. And grace characterizes this operation. So I must be gracious, patient, loving.

Let brotherly love abound, and bitterness be put away- edifying one another in love.

Not Under Law

A Christian is under the law for nothing whatever because he is under Christ dead and risen. Christ was under it once; but then I had nothing to say to Him. He passed out of it on the cross, and my association with Christ begins thenceforward. I am united with Christ in heaven, not on the earth. What has Christ in heaven to do with the law? Hence we are said to be under grace, not under law. Further, this doctrine is most practical. The walk is amazingly lowered where a mistake is made about it, and Satan tries to bring in the law after believing, if he cannot pervert it to hinder believing.

Martyrdom of Stephen

No heart that knows aught of the love of Christ can fail to be touched with the devotedness and faithfulness of Stephen, even unto death, as recorded in Acts 6 and 7. This blessed servant of God is first mentioned as a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and was therefore chosen with six others by the assembly at Jerusalem, and appointed by the apostles to the charge of caring for the temporal needs of the saints (Acts 6:1-6). A mighty work of God's Spirit followed. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people (Acts 6:7, 8). Satan, ever on the alert, stirred up certain men to dispute with him, but they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake (Acts 6:9, 10). Changing their tactics, his enemies charged him with uttering blasphemous words and, producing false witnesses, they brought him as a prisoner before the council.

God was behind all the scenes and, sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost, Stephen, the witness for Christ and Christianity, bore faithful testimony for his Master in the presence of the high priest and the people who had refused and murdered Him. It is a remarkable scene, and a deeply solemn moment in the history of the Jews.

All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him who was falsely accused, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Occupied with Christ in glory, in the power of the Holy Ghost, his very face reflects the rays of His glorious countenance before them all. Then said the high priest, "Are these things so?" (Acts 6:15; 7:1.)

Calmly and fearlessly he answered by reciting briefly the history of Israel. Profound silence reigned through the great assembly as he brought before them, point by point, from Abraham onward, the ways of the God of glory with His ancient people. Coming to the days of the building of the temple by Solomon, he said, "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?" (For he had been charged with speaking blasphemous words against this holy place.) And then, knowing the unrelenting hatred of his foes, with unquailing eye and unflinching courage he charges them solemnly in the presence of God: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7:48-53.) With irresistible wisdom and spirit he brings to bear upon their consciences Israel's four damning sins: the resistance of the Holy Ghost, the persecution of the prophets of God, the betrayal and murder of the Son of God, the Just One, and the breaking of His holy law.

They listen to him to this point, when suddenly their pent-up rage bursts forth in all its violence. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of

God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

His faithful testimony is received with every expression of the deep-seated enmity against God of which the heart of man is capable. Instead of being pricked in their heart, like many others (Acts 2:37), they were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth. But Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, gazing straight into the very glory of God (for the heavens were opened above him), beholds his beloved Master standing as the glorified Man, exalted at the right hand of God Himself. In living words he testifies of Him whom he saw, but his voice is drowned by the vociferous cries of the vast concourse before him. The high priest, the council, the elders, the scribes, the false witnesses, the people -all are against him, and not only so, but also against Christ. Rushing upon him like hungry wolves they "cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

Light from the glory shines before them. The Holy Ghost in Stephen bears witness to the glorified Man, Jesus, the Son of the living God, but they will have none of it. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (John 3:19). As their fathers had done, as Stephen had said, so do they (Acts 7:51). In longsuffering mercy God gave them one more opportunity to repent, and they use the occasion to dye themselves still deeper in wickedness; and their cup of iniquity, already full, flows over in the resistance of the Holy Spirit and the murder of Stephen. The awful enmity of man in the flesh against God in the death of Christ finds its expression once again in the death of His faithful servant. They are cut to the heart, and gnash on him with their teeth, cry with a loud voice, stop their ears, run upon him with their feet with one accord, and cast him out and stone him with their hands. Their hearts, their teeth, their voices, their ears, their feet, their wills, their hands, all are against him.

A young man, Saul, mentioned for the first time, stands calmly witnessing the awful deed. Himself ere long was to be taken up by the superabounding grace of God and become the most faithful witness for Christ the world has ever seen. But here, as a poor blinded religious devotee without Christ, he sees how a Christian can die for the truth of God, and an expression of the awful state of man in the flesh without Him. Afterward, he became the instrument in God's hand to bring the latter out for its world-wide publication in the forcible language of the epistle to the Romans. Chapter 3:10-18 was manifested before his very eyes.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:59, 60. How deeply blessed to see the calm of this beloved servant of God at this testing moment! He had drunk deeply of the spirit of his Master, and follows Him in the same lamb-like manner to a martyr's violent death. In spirit already in the presence of the Lord, he yields himself without a murmur to the hands of his enemies, swift to shed his blood. Bold in the defense of the precious truth of God, not a word escaped his lips in self-defense. Following closely in the footsteps of his Savior, as the stones in thick succession fly about him, doing their deadly work, he called upon God, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He commends his spirit to Him who gave it, and then calmly kneeling down, his last prayer in a loud voice ascends to God-a prayer for his foes. He pleads for mercy upon his murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." One moment

exposed to all the malice of a God-hating world, the next his spirit had passed away into the blissful presence of his Savior. He went to be with Christ, which is far better; absent from the body, present with the Lord. (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8.)

The key to all this is found in Stephen's occupation with Christ in glory in the power of the Holy Ghost. Saved by grace, and sustained by divine power, he bore an unflinching testimony that Jesus was indeed the Christ, glorified in the presence of God, sealing it with his blood. Hence, he became the first Christian martyr, and stands upon the page of Scripture throughout the hour of Christ's rejection from the world, an encouragement to faithfulness to every believer. May each believer be found having Christ at the right hand of God as the one object which fills the vision of his soul, so that in the power of the Holy Ghost we may follow Him as our model and example here, until we behold His blessed face

Oh! so Little: Comparative Value of Present Things

We want to know more of our true character as strangers here; it would remove many difficulties out of our path, and make many things pleasant which are now really very trying. People think but little of many inconveniences and hardships they have to endure while on a journey away from home, which, if at home, would not be so easy to put up with. We shall have plenty of rest and ease when at home in the Father's house. Besides, if we are looking onward with delight and joy to something which is coming, we do not feel the pressure of present things half so much as those who are not doing so; therefore we do well at all times to keep that bright day of glory before our souls, knowing that it will soon burst upon our view in all its eternal realities; and in the light of that glory, present things look so little-Oh, so little! But on the other hand, everything connected with Christ and His Church, so weighty-Oh, so weighty!

I wish these things had more power over us all, for I see very plainly that much of the weakness and failure among God's people is because these things are so little before our minds. We get to looking at the things which are seen, instead of the things which are unseen, and our souls get dragged down by them. It would not be so were we more occupied with Christ up there and His glory down here, ever ready to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

May the Lord keep us from looking for ease or satisfaction in this world, for, if we do, we shall be sadly disappointed, because it is not to be found in it. It is a plant that will not grow upon earth; earth is too ungenial a soil for it; but it grows freely in heaven, and we get, as it were, a small bud now and then from the tree; but we no sooner have it than it withers in our hand (the atmosphere of earth is so bleak and chilly), but we shall be able to enjoy it fully when we are with the Lord. It is in Him alone that joy is to be found, and we ought to be drawing from Him now, moment by moment; but we are prone continually to look for it in something down here. This is a great mistake, and we reap sorrow instead of joy in so doing. (Phil. 4:4.)

Opened Eyes

"Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see." 2 Kings 6:17.

"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them," says Pro. 20:12, and it is as much the work of God to open the one as the other. When, as the anointed of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus entered upon His blessed service to man, we read in Luke 4:18 that one of His works of goodness and grace was to open the eyes of the blind. His words in John 9:39-41 make it quite clear that physical blindness was not the only thing contemplated in that wondrous service, nor indeed the main thing, for He came into this world "that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

The beautiful incident recorded in 2 Kings 6, from which we quote the short direct prayer that stands at the head of this paper, has a most important lesson for us who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. How often do we feel ready to say, like the servant of the man of God, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"

The king of Syria had wondered how his plans should so frequently become known to the king of Israel with whom he was at war, but it was the work of no treacherous spy. One of his own servants let out the secret of "the prophet that is in Israel," that "tellethe the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber."

The Syrian king's next move, therefore, is to take the prophet, and accordingly he attempts to cut off all escape by surrounding the prophet's house with his army. What a sight met the astonished gaze of Elisha's servant on that early morning as he found the prophet's house compassed on all sides by the great host of Syrian horses and chariots! What could two defenseless men do in the face of such a mighty company? Yet Elisha answers with perfect calmness, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And he prays, not for deliverance, for that, with the opened eyes of faith, he already saw was amply provided; but that the eyes of his servant might be opened to see what God could do for those that trust in Him (Psalm 31:19, 20).

How often we find these words, "Fear not," on the lips of our blessed Master and Lord in the days of His sojourn here on earth. With them He heals the grief of Jairus, when he thought death had closed the door of hope as to the life of his beloved daughter (Luke 8:50); and with the same words He comforts the hearts of His disciples in view of apparent loss in this world through following Him (Luke 12:32). And again, "Fear not" is upon His lips when He lays His right hand of power upon the prostrate Apostle John in lonely Patmos, who, overcome by the awful majesty of His appearance, "fell at His feet as dead."

In each case too there is the same call for the faith that brings in God and His unfailing resources.

Elisha has no concern for himself, no fear of the Syrian hosts. It is delightful to think of that short prayer uttered in such simple faith: "LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see." And how immediate the answer! - "And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw." Saw

what? A very early forecast of the truth of the word repeated, or rather reproduced, in Rom. 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

But again Elisha prays, and this time it is a very great contrast: "Smite this people, with blindness," which is also immediately answered. But it is not for judgment on his enemies that he prays thus; the prophet leads them to Samaria, and then once more the prayer is uttered: "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see"; and with what consternation must the Syrians have found themselves "in the midst of Samaria."

But no thought of revenge or punishment is in the prophet's mind To the question of the king of Israel, "Shall I smite?" comes the wonderful answer, "Thou shalt not smite... set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." What a lesson for us, dear fellow Christian, as to the power of grace! "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." What conquest could have affected such a result as that?

There are two spheres in which we may get a salutary lesson from these striking incidents - one as to our individual path and prospects, and the other as to the Church's need and state today. How often for ourselves in our family cares, business experiences, everyday trials and infirmities, we need to have our eyes opened as to who is for us, to remind ourselves of that love "that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," and consequently, "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). Yet in times of pressure and loneliness, have we not to watch against the inclination to say, "Alas,... how shall we do?"

But this is even more felt perhaps when we are exercised as to the state of the Lord's people, the condition of Christian testimony generally, and the many signs of rapidly approaching apostasy.

Here we may well learn something from Balaam's history. Hired by Balak to curse Israel, he is powerless so to do, notwithstanding his own will and love of gain; and we find he repeats, again and again, that he speaks as the man "who had his eyes shut, but now opened" (Numb. 24:3; margin).

Can we think what he would have said had his eyes not been opened? But what a commentary all he says is on the words of the prophet Elisha: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." From the top of the rocks Balaam is made to bear an unwilling testimony to God's view of His earthly people, Israel. They are to Him a called, justified, and glory-destined people.

And, dear fellow-Christian, have we not an equal call to rise up to the thoughts of God about His people today? Think what they are to the heart of Him who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it," and waits expectantly for the moment when He shall "present it to Himself."

Our One Duty

There is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead away the soul from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin.

But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life-to serve Christ. And we should remember that if things on earth are dark, and the heart is tested in journeying through the world, all on the side of God is bright.

Our Standing

Do not be afraid of full grace. Be well sure that does not mar holiness; whatever deadens the conscience does, but this does not. Would a child's sense of a mother's love weaken its desire to please her? And as to power which we need, in grace alone it is found; then press consistency with our calling as much as you please; you cannot do better. Fellowship in the heart with Christ keeps the sense of our standing in Christ steady, and is the saving power of the heart practically in our walk. May He, oh, may He keep us near Himself!

Overcoming the World

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:4, 5.

Worldliness is a terrible hindrance to the saint. We have the threefold opposition -the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world is opposed to the Father, as the flesh opposes the Spirit, and the devil opposes Christ.

The difficulty lies in not maintaining nearness to Christ, which the world would come in and hinder. Then I am open to all sorts of error, for I shall not take the trouble to be right if I am not near Christ.... Gehazi in the king's court is a sad spectacle; his heart had drawn in the spirit of the world, and he was able to entertain the world with accounts of the mighty actings of the Spirit. The world must be entertained, and it will be entertained with religion if it cannot get anything else.

All that I know of the world's path, spirit, affections, and conduct, is that it has crucified my Lord, not in its affections and lusts merely, but by wicked hands it has crucified my Master. Suppose it were but yesterday that you had seen Pontius Pilate the governor, and the chief priests, and the elders, putting Christ to death - would you feel happy today in holding communion with them? The stain of Christ's blood is as fresh in God's sight as if it had been done but yesterday; the time which has elapsed since makes no difference in its moral guilt.

The question then is, Am I to get under the power of this world, or am I to overcome it (in my heart I mean)? When Christ was down here, in all the beauty and attractive grace in which God the Father could delight, there was not found in the world one thought or sentiment of common interest or feeling with Him. The world in all its classes-rulers, priests, Pharisees, and the multitude---have all been associated in hanging the Son of God upon a gibbet. Such is the world's heart. If I have seen the glory of Christ's

Person, and see that He is the very Son of God who came down and was turned out by the world, can I be happy with it? The link between the natural thoughts and affections and the world exists in every heart; so that in all kinds of things, even in walking through the streets, I constantly find that which attracts my eye, and my eye affects my heart.

Nothing will overcome the world in my heart but the deep consciousness of how it has treated Christ. Take my children, for instance. Do I want them to get on well in the world? must I have good places for them in it? Nothing but knowing the place Christ had in it will overcome the world in my heart. There is no possibility of getting on with God unless the world is given up, and the heart is satisfied with Christ. Christ must be everything.

Look at Abraham's history. He sojourned in a strange country where he had not a place so much as to set his foot on. So we are not of the world, and this is the test of our affections; for as we are not at once taken out of the evil, we must have our hearts exercised to godliness. It is very easy to

overcome the world when the love of Christ has made it distasteful. Satan is the god of this world. Perhaps you will say, This is true of the heathen world. Yes; but it is true of the whole world, although it was not till after the rejection of Christ that it was brought out-it was true before. God had spoken by His servants and prophets, and the world had beaten one, and stoned another, and killed another; then He said, "I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him." But Him they crucified, thus proving that Satan was the master of man. So the Lord said, "O righteous Father, the world hath known Thee." You will not have spiritual discernment or power of motive unless the heart be kept near to Christ. I shall not want the world if Christ is in my heart; if my delight is in that in which God delights - that is, in Christ - then I can overcome. "Whether therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

What! must I do everything to Christ? Oh, that very question proves a heart away from Christ, showing it is bondage for you to do all to the glory of God. It is not that we are to scorn the world in the least, for God's grace is for every poor sinner that will receive it. It is the spirit of the world in my own heart which I have to overcome-that which my heart is in danger of being led by.... We are to overcome the world. The heart. Resting on, looking to, eating, feeding on, Christ, gets the consciousness of what the world is, and overcomes.

The Lord keep us in humble dependence on Himself. His grace is sufficient for us; His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Pergamos

The church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17) settled down into the world, the scene of Satan's authority. This implies no outward or scandalous wickedness. Satan is quite content to see Christians becoming worldly. So long as they are untrue to Christ by admitting the world into their hearts, his object is gained quite as effectually as if he had betrayed them into the grossest sin. When the world, whether the religious world or any other, takes the place to which Christ is entitled, the ardent love for His Person and the bright hope of His return disappear, and coldness, deadness, toleration of evil, indifference to His claims, are sure to come in. Open evil may follow, but the mischief is done whether this is the case or not.

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." Psalm 119:59.

"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." Psalm 119:63.

Philip Findeth Nathanael: a Model of Simple Earnestness

There is a lovely, unshackled simplicity and naturalness in the way of the Spirit in John's Gospel. The divine life is seen acting in the most marked independence of everything like human rules and regulations; and yet all is in the most striking and beautiful moral order. 'What, for instance, can be more simple or natural than the expression, "Philip findeth Nathanael"? (John 1:45). There is nothing official, nothing mechanical, nothing of routine work here. But yet there is beautiful moral order. It is the energy of the implanted divine life manifesting itself in its own genuine simplicity and native force. It is the living power of grace in the heart, expressing itself after its own peculiar fashion.

"Philip findeth Nathanael." But we must bear in mind that ere Philip found Nathanael, he had found Christ. He was able to say in all assurance and confidence, "We have found Him." He does not say, "We are seeking Him and hope to find Him; come and help us in the good work of searching." This may be all well enough. It is surely well for those who want to find, to go and seek. But Philip was beyond this. His earnest searching had issued in a joyous finding, as is always the case; and having found Christ, he goes and finds Nathanael. Philip, having found Christ for himself, goes in search of a fellow sinner to bring him into the enjoyment of the same blessedness.

Now it is well to see that there is nothing official in this. No doubt, office has its own place and its own value. But there is nothing of office in Philip finding Nathanael. It is the power of life and not the function of office. It is the outflow of the stream of grace from an overflowing heart made happy by a newly discovered object. And why insist on this? Simply to answer the pleading of an indolent heart which would take refuge behind the claims of official authority, while failing to manifest the energy of divine life. A man may say, "I have no gift, no call, no office." Yes, but have you no life? You may not be called to stand before assembled thousands - often a very slippery place - but can you not find a Nathanael? Is there no one into whose ear you can drop those thrilling words, "We have found Him"? Is there no friend, neighbor, or relative to whom you can say, "Come"? You do not need to possess the gifts of a Paul, a Luther, a Whitfield, or a Chalmers, in order to say, "Come." What you really need is a heart filled to overflowing with the joy of a newly found treasure. This is what we all need.

If everyone would just do as Philip did, how blessedly would the work of evangelization go on! This is the way it should be; and this is the way it would be if persons were able to say with unclouded confidence, "We have found Him." It is the hesitancy as to this-it is the lack of holy confidence in the record of God-the absence of settled assurance as to the fullness and efficacy of the atonement, and its personal application-that produces such unwillingness and incapacity to testify of Christ to others. In a word, before ever Philip can find Nathanael, he must find Christ. The two findings go together. I must find my own way to the feet of the Savior before I can conduct my fellow sinner thither. It is one thing to talk about religion, and another thing to be able to say, "I have found Christ." This latter is the secret of all successful evangelization. For a man to set about preaching Christ to others, ere he has found Him for himself, is a most frightful delusion-yea, it is

positive folly and wickedness. There is no one in such an awfully dangerous position as a Christless preacher.

The Potter's Broken Vessel: Jeremiah and His Times

I feel and judge very distinctly that there is a special character in this present time through which we are passing. The great powers which are destined to fill out the action of Christendom's closing day are practicing themselves, each in its several sphere, with great earnestness and skill. I mean the civil and the ecclesiastical.

I do not doubt but that for a season the ecclesiastical will prevail. The woman is to ride again for a while—a prophetic symbol, as I believe, signifying ecclesiastical supremacy. And this present moment is marked by many efforts on the behalf of that which takes the place of the Church, or of the ecclesiastical theory, thus to exalt itself; and she is so adroitly directing those efforts that success may speedily await them, and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The civil power, however, is anything but idle. The wondrous advance that it is making every day in the cultivation of the world proves great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting itself, showing what it has done, and pledging what further it means to do.

I doubt not that the civil power will have to yield the supremacy for a time, and the woman will ride again, though her state and greatness will be but for a little; for the civil power will take offense, and remove her.

If we, in God's grace, keep a good conscience toward Christ and His truth, we may count upon it that no inheritance in the earth is worth, as people speak, many years' purchase. If we consent to become whatever the times would make us, of course we may go on, and that, too, advancing with an advancing world. (I speak simply of things as they are on the earth. I know that at any time, independently of them, the saints may be taken up to meet the Lord in the air.)

I have been sensible lately of how much the spirit of Jeremiah suits these times. He lived in the daily observation of evil iniquity was abounding in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name, and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a "den of thieves," though they still cried, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these." He knew that the judgment of God was awaiting it all, and he looked for happy days which lay in the distance, beyond the present corruption and the approaching judgment. Over all this corruption Jeremiah mourned; against it all he testified; and like his Master, he was hated for his testimony (John 7:7). He was, however, full of faith and hope; and in the strength of that (anticipating the future) he laid out his money in the purchase of Hanameel's field (Jer. 32). All this was beautiful—the present sorrow over the corruption of the daughter of his people, faith's certainty of the coming judgment, and hope's prospect of closing crowning glory.

This is a pattern for our spirit. And I observe another feature of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the conclusions of faith by occasional fair and promising appearances (see chap. 37). The Chaldean army had broken up their camp under the walls of Jerusalem because of the arrival of the Egyptian allies. This circumstance flattered the Jewish people into hopes; but Jeremiah left the city because he would still hold to the conclusion of faith—that Jerusalem was

doomed of God in righteous judgment.

All this is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God, not merely through darkness, but through darkness which seemed to be light.

All seems to be quiet around us at present and, even more than that, things are greatly and rapidly advancing, as far as all the accommodations of social life extend. But the moral of the scene, in the eye of faith, is more serious than ever. The apostate principles of man's heart are but ripening themselves into their most fruitful and abundant exhibition. There is something of rivalry in the different powers that are in action just at present. The secular and the religious are apart to a great extent. Each has its respective worshipers; but ere long confederacy will take the place of rivalry, I believe. The world must, even for its own ends, adopt religion for a time, that man's system may grow solid as well as extended and brilliant, and propose itself as that which has earned a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling- Church separation-separation because of heavenly citizenship and oneness with an already risen Christ. Abraham's separation was very peculiar; it was twofold. He was separated from the natural associations of Mesopotamia, "country," "kindred," and "father's house," and from the moral associations of Canaan, or its iniquity and its idols.

In the thought of these solemn truths, beloved, may the Lord Himself be more real and near to us! May the hope of His appearing be found lying more surely and calmly in the midst of the affections and stirrings of our hearts! All was reality with Jeremiah, to whom I have referred. The present corruption was a reality to him, for he rebuked it and bewailed it; the approaching judgment was a reality to him, for he wept at the thought of it, and deprecated it; the final glory was a reality to him, for he laid out his money upon it. He had occasional refreshments of spirit. His sleep and the dream that accompanied it in chapter 31 was, as he says, "sweet" unto him. It was a moment on the holy hill to him; for a light from the kingdom, or the glory, visited him. He had likewise revelations, and he could speak and write of them, but not only as thus refreshed and gifted in spirit he was real and true in moral power. He testified against this "present world" unto suffering, and laid out his money, his expectations, and labors, on "the world to come."

It was this which completed his character, and all would have been poor without it. We may speak of Christ, and teach about the kingdom-one's own soul knows it well-but to witness for Him against the world, and to be rich toward God, this is to fill out and realize our character as saints. We may covet these elements of the Christian character. Some of us, if one may speak, are but half Jeremiahs. We can talk of Christ, but can we suffer for Him? We can teach about the kingdom, but can we lay out our money upon it?

All this may admonish us, beloved, but I have another word in my heart just at present also.

The parable of the potter in Jeremiah 18 and 19 was designed to let Israel know that, though brought into covenant, they were still within the range and reach of the divine judgments, and that such judgments would overtake them because of their sins. In John Baptist's time, Israel is found in the like character of self-confidence. If in Jeremiah's day they would say, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these," in the Baptist's day they said, "We have Abraham to our father." But John, like Jeremiah, would again teach them that, though in covenant, judgment

could reach them. In the Lord's ministry we find the same. Israel still boasted. They talked of Abraham being their father, and of God being their Father (John 8), but we know how the Lord again and again warned them of the coming judgment. All this has a lesson for our learning.

Christendom, or Babylon, has taken this ancient place of Israel. She trusts in security in spite of unfaithfulness. She boasts in the Lord, though her moral condition be vile. She says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall, see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7), though blood, and pride, and all abominations, stain her. But Revelation 18 is another action. Like that of the prophet in the potter's house, it teaches the unfaithful one that the doom of the broken vessels, or of the millstone cast into the sea, awaits her. This is for our learning. God never sanctions disobedience. He did not go into the garden of Eden to accredit Adam's sin, but to bring relief in the way of grace for it. So in the gospel He utterly condemns sin, while delivering the sinner.

Nor does He ever commit Himself to His stewards. He commits Himself to His own gifts and calling (Rom. 11:29), but never to His stewards. They are always held responsible to Him, and disobedience works forfeiture. Christ is the only Steward that ever stood and answered for Himself in the conditional place, and in this respect, as in every other, He is the moral contradiction of man. In the temptation (Matt. 4) the devil sought to inspire the Lord with confidence in spite of disobedience. He partially cited Psalm 91, quoted the promised security, omitting the required obedience. But he was utterly defeated. The Lord in answering cited Deuteronomy 6, and acted accordingly; for in that chapter obedience is declared to be Israel's ground of security. In this way did Jesus keep His own blessings under Psalm 91, and His Israel's blessings under Deuteronomy 6. But all other stewards, in their several turn and season, have failed; and Babylon's boast, which we have already listened to, is a lie.

All this may nowadays be had in our remembrance seasonably; for we live at a time when Babylon is filling herself afresh with this boast, just before her overthrow, when she is to meet the doom of the millstone (Rev. 18:21). For the boast of "the eternal city," as she calls herself, only the more awfully signalizes her for the judgment of God. It is a favorite thought with her, that while other churches tremble for their safety, she is above such fears - she is God's city, and has His walls around her. This is imposing; but, when considered by the teaching of the Word, it only the more distinctly declares what she is, and witnesses her more advanced ripeness for the judgment of God. This boast is defiance. It is not faith in God, but disavowal of His rights and authority. It is the denial of her subjection to Him, of her stewardship or place of being answerable to Him and His judgment. The boast of being "the eternal city" so far identifies her with the Babylon that says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow," and it leaves her for the doom of the potter's vessel in the valley of the son of Hinnom, or of the millstone in the hand of the angel. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." Jer. 19:11.

Power for Following

Divine energy is needed to pursue the path marked out by Him who has gone before. The Apostle Paul, who knew Christ in glory, heard His voice speaking from glory, and had seen Him in glory, followed Him. He said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:14. The mark denoted the spot, as it were, whither he pressed; the prize was that for which he ran. He did not think of his eye or his feet. That on which his eye rested, and for which his feet pressed on, was everything to him: purpose of heart, earnestness, energy, there must be, as well as self-abnegation, every step of the course; diligence of soul and vigilance of heart too; but if Christ, seen and known in glory, does not form and maintain these in the heart, I know of no other motive or power. May we be kept hearing, and beholding, and following Christ, that the tastes suited to Him may be both formed and kept alive in us; and we ourselves, thus divinely strengthened to refuse everything of the first man, because we are so satisfied with the second Man; and that we may show forth His virtues, and glories, and excellencies in a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights (heavenly bodies) in the world, holding forth the Word of life.

The Practical Effect of Looking for the Lord

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple." Matt. 24:1. For what was it now? A corpse, and no more. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:38. "And His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The hearts of the disciples then, as too often now, were occupied with the present appearances and the great show of grandeur in God's service; the halo of associations was bright before their eyes. But Jesus passes sentence on all that even they admired on earth. In truth, when He left the temple, all was gone that gave it value in the sight of God. Outside Jesus, what is there in this world but vain show or worse? And how does the Lord deliver His own from the power of tradition and every other source of attraction for the heart? He opens out the communications of His own mind, and casts the light of the future on the present.

How often worldliness unjudged in a Christian's heart betrays itself by want of relish for God's unfolding of what He is going to do! How can I enjoy the coming of the Lord if it is to throw down much that I am seeking to build up in the world? A man, for instance, may be trying to gain or keep a status by his ability, and hoping that his sons may outstrip himself by the superior advantages they enjoy. On some such idea is founded all human greatness; it is "the world" in fact. Christ's coming again is a truth which demolishes the whole fabric; because, if we really look for His coming as that which may be from day to day-if we realize that we are set like servants at the door with the handle in hand, waiting for Him to knock (we know not how soon), and desiring to open to Him immediately ("Blessed are those servants") -if such is our attitude-how can we have time or heart for that which occupies the busy Christ-forgetting world?

Moreover, we are not of the world, even as Christ is not; and as for means and agents to carry on its plans, the world will never be in lack of men to do its work. But we have a higher business, and it is beneath us to seek the honors of the world that rejects our Lord. Let our outward position be ever so menial or trying, what so glorious as in it to serve our Lord Jesus Christ? And He is coming.

A Practical Question: Prayer

Let me ask you a practical question. How much, today, have you prayed for the Church of God? How much have you prayed for the saints of God? and how much do you pray every day of your life? How much is it upon your heart as a burden because it relates to the interests of Christ and the glory of Christ? How much do you seek solitude with God, and retirement with Him, and long to be at home with God, to shut the world out and yourself in, that you may be there with God about those wonderful interests of Christ, because you have got communion with His mind about that which is so dear to Him on this earth? I tell you, the lack of all this is simply the result of the want of separation; and it is not merely a person being separated outwardly. It is possible for saints to satisfy themselves if they have outwardly escaped from the wreck and the corruption that is all around. They say, "Oh well, I have escaped from the corruption that is outside; my body is not in it." But the question is, Is your heart outside the world, and is your spirit separated from it as much as your body? Do you think, if I may speak strongly, that what the blessed God wants is a number of individuals brought together into a place before Him, but whose hearts are far away elsewhere? Do you think it is a mere question of what is outside and seen? Beloved friends, what He is looking for is the affection of a heart and the earnestness of a soul that has found His own Son in heaven. If it is merely a question of your bodily presence, while your heart and affections are outside, what I say is, and I say it with all gentleness, "My son, give me thine heart." Pro. 23:26.

This is where the feebleness is; it is this want of separation. Inward separateness would lead to outward separateness; but outward separateness will never produce inward separateness. If your heart and affections, your intelligence, your inner man, are separated to God, then your body, as a vessel, will soon follow that which controls it.

The Present Place of the Lord Jesus: a Man in the Glory

I desire to bring a few scriptures before you that speak of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is now as a risen Man in the glory of God. Not a few of the Lord's people know the blessed truth of forgiveness of sins through His precious blood, and are trusting simply to His finished work on the cross; but they have never thought much of the glory of the Person who did the work, nor of the place where He is now.

Many, when they think of the Lord, only think of Him as on the cross dying for their sins; others think of Him as risen on earth, and then have a sort of vague, indistinct idea that after He left this earth He ceased to be a man, and is now in the form of God again, although still believing that He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Others have said, "I never thought of the Lord Jesus as a Man in heaven; I had always thought of Him more as a spirit."

This has led me to bring a few scriptures together that speak of this wonderful truth of Christ being a Man in the glory of God; for till this is seen there can be no growing in the things of God or in the understanding of His Word.

Many, I believe, spiritualize the Lord's second coming because they think of the Lord as a spirit, and thus His coming must be a spiritual one too.

The first scripture we will look at is Luke 24:36. Here we find the Lord Jesus appearing to His disciples after He had risen from the dead with the blessed words on His lips, "Peace be unto you." They saw Him who had died for their sins, and saw that He was alive again.

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." They thought, as some do now, that the Lord was a spirit; but what did the Lord say to them? Verse 38: "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet." Here we see the same Jesus that was on earth, now risen from the dead, He Himself with a body of flesh and bones which He assured them a spirit had not. Then verse 50: "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." And in Acts 1:9: "While they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Thus we see that the blessed Lord rose from the dead with a body of flesh and bones, and with that body went up into heaven. He did not vanish from their sight in an instant, but evidently they saw Him go up, as we gather from Acts 1:10: "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

This same Jesus was to come again as they had seen Him go. We can picture those disciples standing gazing up into heaven, their eyes following their Lord as He went up, till the cloud hid Him from their view. That same Jesus was to come back again, and so He will; but before that day comes we are permitted to look, so to speak, by faith on the other side of that cloud, and see this same Jesus where He is now.

Turn to Acts 7:55: "But he" (Stephen), "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

What a wonderful scene! Here is a man washed so clean in the precious blood of Christ that he can be filled with the Holy Ghost, and the heavens are opened for him to look in. And what does he see? He saw the glory of God, we are told; but he does not speak of that; his eyes are fixed upon a Person in that glory. There is no cloud to hide that blessed One from Stephen's sight; he sees "this same Jesus," the Son of man, in the glory of God. The disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, and the cloud received Him out of their sight; Stephen looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the Savior there—"the Son of man... on the right hand of God."

This same Jesus also spoke from heaven to the Apostle Paul when he was converted. "As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Acts 9:3-5.

Here is the same One that went up from Bethany, whom Stephen saw in the glory of God, speaking from heaven to his bitterest enemy on earth, to "show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. 1:16.

Another passage is Rev. 5:6, which, although the truth in it is given to us in figurative language, is nevertheless equally clear.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes." Here, in the midst of the throne of God and the heavenly saints, represented by the four and twenty elders, is the Lamb as it had been slain. The Lord Jesus, who has been slain but is now alive again, and has entered as man into the glory of God, is the object of praise and worship of all heaven. All power given to Him (seven horns), and the perfection of sight (seven eyes), nothing escapes His notice. The Lord Jesus said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye" (those that are His) "see Me." John 14:19. This is true now. "Ye see Me." Believers, not the world, see Him. Of course it is by faith. And where do we see Him? No longer on earth, but where He is now, in the glory of God. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Heb. 2:9.

But in case it might be thought that in pressing the manhood of the Lord Jesus, His Godhead glory has been overlooked, I will quote a verse in Colossians 2 where we have the Godhead glory and at the same time His manhood brought out in one short verse (v. 9): "For in Him" (Christ) "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (or in a bodily form); that is to say, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Person of "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

May the eyes of our faith be upon Him where He is in all His glory, that we by beholding it may be changed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

That is what takes place now. Beholding Him by faith where He is, we become morally more like Him till that day comes when He "shall change our vile body" (or body of humiliation), "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (or body of glory). Then we shall be like Him, conformed to His image and, although He will eternally be man, He must ever be the object of our worship and adoration, for He is "the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5:20.

Priesthood and Advocacy

The epistle to the Hebrews views the Christian as walking down here in weakness and trial, but as perfected forever by the work of Christ, no more conscience of sins, and the priesthood is exercised not to restore communion, but to find mercy and grace to help. 1 John speaks of communion with the Father and Son. This is interrupted by any sin, and Christ is our Advocate with the Father to restore it. The book of Hebrews is occupied with access to God within the veil, the conscience being perfect, and we enter with boldness; hence, failure and restoration are not in question. The Father is not spoken of. In John, as I have said, it is communion, and the actual state of the soul is in question.

Proof Not Needed

An infidel once said to a servant of Christ who was quoting portion after portion of the Scriptures to him, "Can you prove to me that that is the Word of God?" The man of God replied, "If I ran a sword through your body, would you need any proof of its being a sword?" and went on quoting the Scriptures. Years after, the two met again, and he who had been an infidel had to own that the sword had done its work, and that he needed no further proof that it was the Word of God.

"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." Heb. 4:12, 13.

Proportions of Truth in Scripture: Keeping a Balance

It is a wise thing to study the exactness and Scripture proportion of God's teaching, and not to deviate from it, even with the best intentions. The Spirit will not be with us if we distort or misapply the Word, even with the purpose of exalting Christ.

It is well to keep before us that while the grand leading theme of the Spirit in the Holy Scriptures is to tell forth God's thoughts about His Son, in His Person, work, relationships, and glories, yet if there had been no redeemed saints on earth, there would have been no Scriptures written; and God would not have them to be overlooked.

The Old Testament was given to Israel; and both Old and New Testaments were given to the Church. What happened in the past has been written for the present. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Luke tells us that the Lord, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets,... expounded unto, them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (and to give an exposition of Scripture was the first work of the risen Savior); yet 1 Corinthians 10:11 tells us that besides "the things concerning Himself" there are things in these Scriptures, concerning the people of Israel, which are "written for our admonition." The saints of the Church were an object to the Holy Ghost in His causing these things to be written.

I set down these two or three things as samples of due proportion in the Holy Scriptures, that I may beseech my brethren to observe the divine proportion and balance of the truth in the Word of God for the revelation of God and the guidance of man, and to be careful to act upon it, and avoid distorting, dislocating, alienating, or exaggerating Scripture; for this can be only displeasing to God, and damaging to His saints. Such an interpretation, for example, as that we find Christ everywhere in the book of Psalms, and the remnant of the coming day nowhere, cannot be pleasing to the Spirit, nor honoring to Him, because it is not true; nor is it pleasing to Him that we should ignore all that the Spirit says regarding ourselves and our practical everyday life, by way of exalting Him.

Let us not dare to improve upon the Holy Ghost's method, variety, and fullness from a false notion that our way is more glorifying to Christ; for not only is Christ before the mind of the Spirit in His testimony, but Christians in their privilege and responsibility are so too, though in their own subordinate, yet important, place.

The teaching that sees nothing but Christ and His glory in God's Holy Scriptures is apt to lead to antinomianism. It has become a grave question why there is so much of loose living in connection with the enjoyment of high truth in our day; and it has become a question whether teachers can have been rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving the practical side of truth in the same proportion and with the same frequency as we find it in the Holy Scriptures. It is, no doubt, difficult for weak, erring creatures like us to take in God's Word as He has written it, and to hold the balance even between what speaks of God's grace and what speaks of the saints' responsibility,

and yet not to exaggerate the one side nor to abate one jot from the other. (John 14:26; 16:13.) The Scripture proportion of both grace and responsibility is the thing that is wanted. How much we all need the teaching of the Holy Ghost to give us power to divide the Word correctly, take it in spiritually, and live it out practically in our daily life!

The teaching of the Puritans exaggerated the Spirit's work in the soul, and its progress in knowledge and experience; and while there was much seeking after God, there was little deliverance known; but some of the present teaching seems to ignore the exigencies of the inner life, or its health, growth, and progress, and discountenances all thought of spiritual advancement in divine attainment of Christ, and dwells all but exclusively on objective truth. But the Word of God has it otherwise; and all honest saints who are really spiritual know that it is a very different thing from this too in their practical experience. There must be growth, progress, and attainment of Christ, if Scripture injunctions are heeded by us.

The Word gives exhortations to grow, to fight, to run, to make progress, etc. "Grow up into Him in all things"; "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"; "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"; "Your faith groweth exceedingly"; "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12; see also vv. 13, 14); "Whereto we have already attained (in like-mindedness] let us walk by the same"; "We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more"-in love. "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"; "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (See also Titus 2:11-15.)

Purpose of Heart: the Great Moral Regulator

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (Deut. 6:6) -at the very source of all the issues of life. This is peculiarly precious. Whatever is in the heart comes out through the lips, and in the life. How important then to have the heart full of the Word of God, so full that we shall have no room for the vanities and follies of this present evil world. Thus shall our conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Hence we can judge of what is in the heart by what comes out of the mouth. The tongue is the organ of the heart-the organ of the man. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." When the heart is really governed by the Word of God, the whole character reveals the blessed result. It must be so, inasmuch as the heart is the mainspring of our entire moral condition; it lies at the center of all those moral influences which govern our personal history and shape our practical career.

In every part of the divine volume, we see how much importance God attaches to the attitude and state of the heart, with respect to Him or to His Word, which is one and the same thing. When the heart is true to Him, all is sure to come out right; but, on the other hand, we shall find that where the heart grows cold and careless as to God and His truth, there will, sooner or later, be open departure from the path of truth and righteousness. There is, therefore, much force and value in the exhortation addressed by Barnabas to the converts at Antioch: "He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

How needful, then, now, always! This "purpose of heart" is most precious to God. It is what we may venture to call the grand moral regulator. It imparts a lovely earnestness to the Christian character, which is greatly to be coveted by all of us. It is a divine antidote against coldness, deadness, and formality, all of which are so hateful to God. The outward life may be very correct, and the creed may be very orthodox; but if the earnest purpose of heart be lacking - the affectionate cleaving of the whole moral being to God and His Christ -all is utterly worthless.

It is through the heart that the Holy Ghost instructs us. Hence, the Apostle prayed for the saints at Ephesus that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened (J.N.D. Trans.). And again, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

One Reapeth, Another Soweth

It was just an ordinary piece of land, grown over with weeds of every description and sadly neglected for years. Accepting the offer of the ground, we set to work to clear it, and weeks of real hard work it was. Then it was duly planted, hoed, and looked after, and the results were most satisfactory in the quality and quantity of the crops that were reaped.

There were also other things learned in working this old piece of ground which have greatly encouraged us in a wider sphere of cultivation. The servant of Christ is often discouraged as he surveys the ground of his labor which the Lord has assigned to him. But in hope he plows, and digs, and cleans, and back-aching and heartbreaking work it oftentimes is. This may be your line of things and as far as you are concerned no fruit will ever be seen as a result of your labor. But it is after all the most important, this breaking up, this preparation for the seed to be sown.

Again, beloved servant of Christ, you too may not be privileged to see any result of the sowing year after year of t h e precious, incorruptible seed, but this too is most necessary. Or your part may be to watch over the first shoots as they appear, and how gentle and patient must you be, giving each its proper treatment, in order to bring them on and get them established. And yet again, you may see no fruition to your labors.

And now finally the fruit, the blooms, the harvest-here it is, and to you, most honored of all servants, it is given to gather. Souls are yours, and joy in heaven as each and all are brought in, but in bringing these to the Lord of the harvest remember His word, "Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." He that soweth and he that reapeth will rejoice together, and He who sent them will tell each and all to enter into the joy of their Lord.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

We often hear it said that the death of Christ was necessary in order to reconcile God to man. This is a pious mistake arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Ghost, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile." God never changed- never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abides faithful. There was, and could be, no derangement, no confusion, no alienation as far as He was concerned; and hence there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy, and needed to be reconciled. But this was wholly impossible if sin were not righteously disposed of; and sin could only be disposed of by death-even the death of the One who, as being a man, could die, and being God, could impart all the dignity, value, and glory of His divine Person to the atoning sacrifice which He offered.

Wherefore then as might be expected, Scripture never speaks of reconciling God to man. There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world" (in its broad aspect-men and things) "unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5:19. And again, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." In a word, it is God in His infinite mercy and grace, through the atoning death of Christ, bringing us back to Himself and placing us not merely in the original place, or on the original footing, or in the original relationship, but as was due to the work of Christ, giving us back far more than we had lost, and introducing us into the marvelous relationship of sons, and setting us in His presence in divine and eternal righteousness, and in the infinite favor and acceptableness of His own Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amazing grace! Stupendous and glorious plan! What a ministry! And yet, need we wonder when we think of the death of Christ as the foundation of it all? When we remember that Christ was made sin for us, it seems but the necessary counterpart that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It would have been no adequate result of such a work as Christ accomplished, to have brought man and things back to the Adamic or old creation ground. This would never have satisfied the heart of God in any way, whether as respects Christ's glory or our blessing. It would not have furnished an answer to that omnipotent appeal of John 17: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (vv. 4, 5). Who can gauge the depth and power of those accents as they fell upon the ear of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Little remains to be said as to the objects of the ministry of reconciliation, inasmuch as we have, in a measure, anticipated them by speaking of "men and things," for these are, in very deed, the objects, and they are included in that comprehensive word "world." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." We would merely add here that it is utterly impossible for any creature under heaven to exclude himself from the range of this most precious ministry. Before the reader can shut himself out from the application of all this grace to himself, he must prove that he does

not belong to the world. This he cannot do, and hence he must see that God is beseeching him to be reconciled.

Religion: What God's Word Says About It

This is a word often found upon men's lips, but seldom in the Scriptures. By men it is used in different ways, some building their thoughts of happiness and hopes of eternal bliss upon it; as it is erroneously said-

"'Tis religion that can give

Sweetest pleasures while we live;

'Tis religion can supply

Solid comfort when we die."

Other men affect to despise religion, thinking that it is ever vain. Now, though Scripture seldom uses the word, it corrects both these extreme and erroneous notions.

We read of "the Jews' religion" (Gal. 1:13, 14). When Paul stood before Agrippa, he said, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Acts 26:5. To this sect then we must look for the perfection of religion according to the flesh. We read much of it in the four gospels. These Pharisees were so scrupulous in the observance of religious ceremonies that they would not eat without washing or baptizing their hands. They ceremonially cleansed the vessels which contained their food, the couches upon which they reclined to take it, and their hands by which they partook of it (Mark 7). They were so particular as to the tithes which were due to God that they tithed even mint and anise and cummin (Matt. 23:23). Yet, for all that, they knew not God, nor practiced His ways in judgment, mercy, and faith. When His Son was among them, they condemned Him as irreligious because He performed His acts of mercy upon the Sabbath day and, at the last, clamored for His death as a blasphemer. He said, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." Matt. 12:7. That is, the manifestation of God's character is more pleasing to Him than any outward rites or ceremonies. But, alas! how could they exhibit His character whom they knew not?

In this "straitest sect" of religion Paul had the very chiefest place (see Phil. 3). And yet, when his eyes were opened, how vain all his religion appeared! Pursuing it in the most zealous way, he found himself in open rebellion against God, His Christ, and His saints. The highest degree attainable in religion according to the flesh is worth no more than this. With all his boasted privileges and zeal he found himself the chief of sinners, dependent for salvation wholly upon that Jesus of Nazareth whom he had despised, and whose followers he had persecuted. He obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief; and his heart rejoiced in that faithful saying which he wrote for others, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:15.

Now James speaks in his epistle of "pure religion and undefiled" (chap. 1:27). What is that? The reproduction of God's own character in mercy and holiness. And in whom does that take place? In those who can say, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." v. 18. They are be. gotten

of God. Only in those who are partakers of the divine nature can the divine character be manifested. Many use the epistle of James in a very bad way, avowing that religion and works can render a sinner acceptable to God. But let us begin where he begins. Let us listen to him as he says, "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." He therefore exhorts us to be swift to hear. Wherefore? Because the Word of God, coming to us from Himself, is the instrument by which we are begotten, and by which all that is pleasing in His sight is wrought in us. All comes from Him. Let us never lose sight of this momentous principle in reading the epistle of James.

The Word acts upon the heart and thus produces the results which are according to God. Others see the results and judge accordingly. Thus he says, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." How perfect an expression of this we have in the Pharisees of whom we have spoken. Their

religious appearance was wonderful. But their words to the Son of God, spoken out of the abundance of the heart, betrayed their ignorance of God and His ways. "Go ye," He bade them, "and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Matt. 9:13.

He would have them know their ignorance and need, that they might come to Him as the Physician who alone could heal them. Alas! they refused, and He could only pronounce judgment upon them as hypocrites whose hearts were deceived, and whose appearance deceived others (Matt. 23).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

It is said of God, "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Hos. 14:3. We were as fatherless in this world of sin and sorrow, for our hearts were bereft of all true comfort and blessing. There was not a thing we turned to for protection and solace but death struck it sooner or later. We turned to Him as prodigals who had sought joy in a far-off country, but had found only deepening misery. We turned to Him who received us more graciously than tongue can tell, and took away by the sacrifice of Christ all our iniquity. We have obtained mercy. Now, as knowing Him our Father, we may turn to this weary world to find objects of compassion in the fatherless and widows. We may follow Him of whom it is written, He "went about doing good." Precious occupation!

Are we religious in this way? Has this word its true place in our hearts? Do we diligently seek out those whom death has afflicted, whom sorrow has stricken? and do we take pleasure in ministering to them, not as an act of mere philanthropy, but as expressing the kindness of God? Note that we are not bidden to form or join charitable institutions, benevolent societies, or the like. Donations or subscriptions are not sought. It is said, "to visit." What is insisted upon is the personal manifestation of the compassions of God in individual intercourse with the afflicted. And how sweetly may all do this who are abiding in communion with that heart from whence all true comforts flow, though some may have to say, with an apostle of Christ, "Silver and gold have

I none; but such as I have give I thee." Acts 3:6. He gave more than money to that poor cripple, for he linked him with the all-powerful name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. That precious name of Him who meets all need may be borne by the poorest saint that loves it into the house of the afflicted and sorrowing.

But while the grace of the Father is manifested, the holiness of God is to be maintained. How perfectly this was so in Jesus! The Father was fully manifested in Him in perfect love and grace; yet even demons owned Him as "the Holy One of God." The world has cast off God to do its own will in corruption and violence. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Jas. 4:4. Solemn words! How many allow what are called "charitable purposes" to link them with worldly ways and worldly people. Let us remember this, that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father consists not alone in visiting the afflicted, but also in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. It has its two elements which cannot be separated; we are to visit in the activity of love and grace; but we are also to keep ourselves in the unrelenting exclusivism of holiness.

This is a day of much religion. The heart wearies amid that which has a form of godliness, but denies its power. May God our Father grant that our hearts may be abiding in holy separation to Himself, and in the full enjoyment of His love and infinite goodness, so that we may be found practicing in this world pure religion and undefiled.

Repentance

Repentance, however deep and sincere, is not the ground or procuring cause of a sinner's forgiveness. A convicted prisoner might truly repent the doing of the deed of which he had been found guilty, but no judge would be justified in letting him go free on that account. Another might recklessly go into debt, and then repent of his folly, but his repentance would not pay his debts or release him from financial obligations. So it is with the sinner. The most profound repentance, the most acute sorrow for sin, witnessed as it might be by many and bitter tears, furnish no ground for pardon. Were it otherwise we should need no Savior and no atonement. The one sole ground of forgiveness is the precious blood of Christ shed judicially upon the cross of Calvary. It is that, and that alone, which maintains inviolate the justice of God, and at the same time enables Him to justify the ungodly. (Rom. 3:26; 4:5.) Kindly read those two passages with care, and also 1 John 2:12.

Still repentance has its place. A repentant soul is one who has not only undergone a change in all his thoughts about sin and God, but he also sides with God against himself, and owns with anguish of heart that he is guilty and lost. But with it there is always the thought, however feeble, that in God alone must help be found. So the repentant prodigal said that in his father's house there was "bread enough and to spare": he knew there was none for him elsewhere. Simon Peter too, when confessing himself a sinful man, nevertheless clung all the while to Jesus-"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5:8. It is always so. The repentant sinner hopes in God, though at the time he may know but little of the goodness of God, and nothing of the joy He has in welcoming His prodigals back.

Repentance and Faith: God's Way of Dealing With the Sinner

When the Lord Jesus commenced His ministry, He cried, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. The Apostle Paul also said, when addressing the elders from Ephesus, that he had testified "both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21. The Lord's commission indeed to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead was that repentance and remission of sins (which could only be on faith in the message) should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). It is therefore according to the divine order that these two things should be conjoined in preaching the gospel to sinners; and it might be added with perfect truth that these two things are also connected, of necessity, in the soul that divinely receives the glad tidings of the grace of God. Whether repentance has been sufficiently insisted on, or whether the essential bond between repentance and faith has been maintained in modern evangelistic preaching, we do not here inquire, as it is our object rather to expound the meaning of these two things, and their mutual relationship in the word of the gospel.

The first thing then that meets the soul is the demand for repentance toward God. This very fact implies the condition of those on whom the demand is made. If, for example, the Lord cried, "Repent ye," there was something in those to whom He spoke that needed repentance. It is evident, in a word, that such a message could only be addressed to sinners. The Lord speaks indeed, in another place, of just persons (if there were such) who need no repentance.

It is then because men are sinners that repentance is necessary - repentance toward God for it is against Him that they have sinned, and under His just judgment that they have consequently fallen.

The preaching of repentance is, on this very account, designed to awaken the sinner to a sense of his condition by bringing before his soul the claims of a holy God, as well as the provisions of His grace. The presentation of God in the gospel as the One who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, is surely calculated to touch the most obdurate heart. A God coming in judgment to deal with sinners, even the natural conscience could understand, for the soul, whatever its subterfuges, knows its deserts. But a God appearing in grace, sending His beloved Son into the world, making Him to be sin on the cross, and publishing the glad tidings of grace and salvation far and wide, is so contrary to all human thoughts that the sinner may well be arrested and compelled to consider. Justice is a well-known principle, even in the world; but grace is so beyond its experience that it can hardly fail to beget a desire to trace out its source and origin. If God then proclaims the necessity of repentance, He Himself seeks to produce it by bringing the soul under the appeals of His grace in the gospel.

But let us inquire what repentance is. It is most important to be careful as to this, owing to the loose and insufficient answers frequently given to this question. Some say that it is sorrow for sin; some that it is a change of mind, dwelling upon the literal meaning of the word; while others affirm

that it comprises the determination both to forsake sin and also to do the will of God in time to come. In truth it is none of these, nor all of them combined, though some of the things mentioned may constitute a part of scriptural repentance. That sorrow for sin does not amount to repentance, is seen from the Apostle's words: "Godly sorrow [sorrow according to God] worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." 2 Cor. 7:10. Mere sorrow for sin may spring from a sense of shame, or from the bitter consequences which sin often entails, and may often have no reference to God; and even sorrow according to God, as in the above scripture, is not, though it works, repentance. Much less could change of mind, or the vain effort to forsake sins and to do the will of God, be accepted as answering to it. No; scriptural repentance is nothing less than our identification with God in His judgment of our sins, our taking His part against ourselves, and our consequent bowing in the dust before Him in true self-judgment. This involves our hatred of sin, inasmuch as the moment, through grace, we side with God in His judgment upon our deeds, we are so far in communion with Him, as to His thoughts and feelings, about our sins. When we thus repent, we justify God and condemn ourselves. This can never take place but in His presence, when His light, the light of His holiness, reveals sin to us as it appears in His sight, so we are able to say with Job: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5, 6. Or again, with the psalmist: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." Psalm 51:4.

The reader, however, must remember that we are explaining what scriptural repentance is, and that we are by no means affirming that even true repentance always answers to this description. There may indeed be but a feeble sense of sin, a very imperfect self-judgment, when the soul is first awakened; but let none on this account be discouraged, for God who requires nothing, but gives everything in this day of grace - will deepen His own work in His own time, and give a truer estimate of sin to all who seek it. Peter thus proclaimed to his nation concerning Christ, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. So also, when Peter had explained to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem the reasons and the effect of his visit to Cornelius, they said, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18. If, however, repentance is the gift of God, it is a gift He is ever ready to bestow; and we learn from our Lord Himself that "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Indeed, it is the father himself that says concerning the returned prodigal, "Let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:23, 24.)

Now faith, as we have seen, is always conjoined with repentance; and while repentance is toward God, faith is toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The explanation of this is very simple. It is against God we have sinned, and it is He who has passed judgment upon our sins, so that when we are convicted of our guilt it is to Him we turn with confession and self-judgment. In this state our one need is to learn the way of salvation, just as when the jailor, conscience-smitten, rushed into the presence of Paul and Silas, and cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer was the presentation of Christ. "Believe," they said, "on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16:30, 31. This, as the reader may perceive, is a summary of what was said, for we read in the next verse that they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. But the fact of the term-the Lord Jesus Christ being used, shows that it was a full gospel

they preached- the gospel concerning His Person, His death and resurrection, and His present exaltation as Lord at the right hand of God. The jailor received, through grace, the testimony thus delivered, and there was therefore in his soul faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed God's testimony to the finished work of Christ on the cross, to the value of that work before God as having made full and perfect atonement for sin, and also to the testimony to His resurrection; so that he could then say, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

And it is with faith, as so exercised, that remission of sins is always connected. This will be at once understood if the reader will turn to the passage already cited from Luke 24 where repentance and remission of sins are linked together, both to be preached in the name of the risen Christ. For the moment there is the reception of God's testimony concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, forgiveness of sins is enjoyed. Repentance brings into a right state of soul before God; faith identifies the soul with all the value of the work of Christ. Both therefore are absolutely necessary for salvation.

The question, however, is often asked, whether repentance must always precede faith. The very form of the question, as a few words will show, is misleading. If the true nature of repentance has been apprehended, the reader will see that it cannot be dissociated from faith. For what produces repentance? It is God's testimony, received in power, concerning me as a sinner. Somehow or other light has entered into my soul, and convicted me before God; I bow to all He says of me, as a lost sinner, in His Word. This faith -faith in God's Word as to the truth of my condition - must always be connected with repentance. The two things are indissolubly united. But the soul may remain in a state of repentance, if it may be so described, a long time before accepting God's further testimony as to His beloved Son; and it need scarcely be said that, as long as it thus continues, there will be no peace or liberty. Hence repentance in such a case precedes faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is undoubtedly the general order of the soul's experience.

We say the general order, for it cannot be denied that there would seem to be many exceptions. Repentance is so little preached, and the forgiveness of sins, or, in other cases, eternal life, without even raising the question of sin, is so often pressed upon souls especially in so-called revival preaching - that many appear to be converted with scarcely any exercise as to the state of their souls before God, almost without ever having had the burden of sin upon their conscience. Fully granting that there are genuine cases of this kind, it yet must be said that all such will have conscience work as to sin sooner or later. With them, what answers to repentance will undoubtedly follow after their conversion. But the divine order is repentance toward God first, and then faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; and wherever the truth of the gospel is proclaimed according to God, this order will be maintained in the experience of souls. Take, for example, the epistle to the Romans, which in an especial manner presents the gospel. In the first place, after unfolding his theme, the Apostle proves that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; then - but not till then - he expounds the provisions of God's grace for the sinner's guilt, and thereon he proceeds to explain how God has met also the sinner's state as well as the sinner's guilt. We do not here enter into this, beyond calling attention to the fact that the demonstration of our guilt precedes his description of how God has set forth Christ Jesus as a propitiation through faith in His blood.

The Epistle to the Romans

The circumstances under which the epistle to the Romans was written gave occasion to the most thorough and comprehensive unfolding, not of the Church, but of Christianity. No apostle had ever yet visited Rome. There was somewhat as yet lacking to the saints there; but even this was ordered of God to call forth from the Holy Ghost an epistle which more than any other approaches a complete treatise on the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, and especially as to righteousness.

Would we follow up the heights of heavenly truth, would we sound the depths of Christian experience, would we survey the workings of the Spirit of God in the Church, would we bow before the glories of the Person of Christ, or learn His manifold offices, we must look elsewhere - in the writings of the New Testament no doubt, but elsewhere rather than here.

The condition of the Roman saints called for a setting forth of the gospel of God; but this object, in order to be rightly understood and appreciated, leads the Apostle into a display of the condition of man. We have God and man in presence, so to speak. Nothing can be more simple and essential. Although there is undoubtedly that profoundness which must accompany every revelation of God, and especially in connection with Christ as now manifested, still we have God adapting Himself to the very first needs of a renewed soul- even to the wretchedness of souls without God, without any real knowledge either of themselves or of Him. Not, of course, that the Roman saints were in this condition; but that God, writing by the Apostle to them, seizes the opportunity to lay bare man's state as well as His own grace.

From the very first we have these characteristics of the epistle disclosing themselves. The Apostle writes with the full assertion of his own apostolic dignity, but as a servant also. "Paul, a bondman of Jesus Christ" - an apostle "called," not born, still less as educated or appointed of man, but an apostle "called," as he says-"separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets." The connection is fully owned with that which had been from God of old. No fresh revelations from God can nullify those which preceded them; but as the prophets looked onward to what was coming, so is the gospel already come, supported by the past. There is mutual confirmation. Nevertheless, what is, is in no wise the same as what was or what will be. The past prepared the way, as it is said here, "which God had promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord [here we have the great central object of God's gospel, even the Person of Christ, God's Son], which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (v. 3). This last relation was the direct subject of the prophetic testimony, and Jesus had come accordingly. He was the promised Messiah, born King of the Jews.

But there was far more in Jesus. He was "declared," says the Apostle, "to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (v. 4). It was the Son of God not merely as dealing with the powers of the earth, Jehovah's King on the holy hill of Zion, but after a far deeper manner. For, essentially associated as He is with the glory of God the Father, the full deliverance of souls from the realm of death was His also. In this too we have the blessed connection of the Spirit (here peculiarly designated, for special reasons, "the Spirit of

holiness"). That same energy of the Holy Ghost which had displayed itself in Jesus, when He walked in holiness here below, was demonstrated in resurrection; and not merely in His own rising from the dead, but in raising such at any time no doubt, though most signally and triumphantly displayed in His own resurrection.

The bearing of this on the contents and main doctrine of the epistle will appear abundantly by-and-by. Let me refer in passing to a few points more in the introduction in order to link them together with that which the Spirit was furnishing to the Roman saints, as well as to show the admirable perfectness of every word that inspiration has given us. I do not mean by this its truth merely, but its exquisite suitability; so that the opening address commences the theme in hand, and insinuates that particular line of truth which the Holy Spirit sees fit to pursue throughout. To this then the Apostle comes, after having spoken of the divine favor shown himself, both when a sinner, and now in his own special place of serving the Lord Jesus. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith." This was no question of legal obedience, although the law came from Jehovah. Paul's joy and boast were in the gospel of God. So therefore it addressed itself to the obedience of faith; not by this meaning practice, still less according to the measure of a man's duty, but that which is at the root of all practice faith-obedience - obedience of heart and will, renewed by divine grace which accepts the truth of God. To man this is the hardest of all obedience; but when once secured, it leads peacefully into the obedience of every day. If slurred over, as it too often is in souls, it invariably leaves practical obedience lame, and halt, and blind.

It was for this then that Paul describes himself as apostle. And as it is for obedience of faith, it was not in any wise restricted to the Jewish people - "among all nations, for His [Christ's] name: among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ" (vv. 5, 6). He loved even here at the threshold to show the breadth of God's grace. If he was called, so were they-he an apostle, they not apostles but saints. But still, for them as for him, all flowed out of the same mighty love of God. "To all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called saints." v. 7. To these then he wishes, as was his wont, the fresh flow of that source and stream of divine blessing which Christ has made to be household bread to us: "Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." v. 7. Then, from verse 8, after thanking God through Jesus for their faith spoken of everywhere, and telling them of his prayers for them, he briefly discloses the desire of his heart about them -his long cherished hope according to the grace of the gospel to reach Rome-his confidence in the love of God that through him some spiritual gift would be imparted to them that they might be established and, according to the spirit of grace that filled his own heart, that he too might be comforted together with them "by the mutual faith both of you and me" (vv. 11, 12). There is nothing like the grace of God for producing the truest humility, the humility that not only descends to the lowest level of sinners to do them good, but which is itself the fruit of deliverance from that self-love which puffs itself or lowers others. Witness the common joy that grace gives an apostle with saints he had never seen, so that even he should be comforted as well as they by their mutual faith. He would not therefore have them ignorant how they had lain on his heart for a visit (v. 13). He was debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise; he was ready, as far as he was concerned, to preach the gospel to those who were at Rome also (vv. 14, 15). Even the saints there would have been all the better for the gospel. It was not merely "to those at Rome," but "to you that be at Rome." Thus it is a mistake to suppose that saints may not be

benefited by a better understanding of the gospel, at least as Paul preached it. Accordingly he tells them now what reason he had to speak thus strongly, not of the more advanced truths, but of the good news. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." v. 16.

Observe, the gospel is not simply remission of sins, nor is it only peace with God, but "the power of God unto salvation." Now I take this opportunity of pressing on all that are here to beware of contracted views of "salvation." Beware that you do not confound it with souls being quickened, or even brought into joy. Salvation supposes not this only, but a great deal more. There is hardly any phraseology that tends to more injury of souls in these matters than a loose way of talking of salvation. "At any rate he is a saved soul," we hear. "The man has not got anything like settled peace with God; perhaps he hardly knows his sins forgiven; but at least he is a saved soul." Here is an instance of what is so reprehensible. This is precisely what salvation does not mean; and I would strongly press it on all that hear me, more particularly on those that have to do with the work of the Lord, and of course ardently desire to labor intelligently, and this not alone for the conversion, but for the establishment and deliverance of souls. Nothing less, I am persuaded, than this full blessing is the line that God has given to those who have followed Christ without the camp, and who, having been set free from the contracted ways of men, desire to enter into the largeness and at the same time the profound wisdom of every word of God. Let us not stumble at the starting point, but leave room for the due extent and depth of "salvation" in the gospel.

There is no need of dwelling now on "salvation" as employed in the Old Testament, and in some parts of the New, as the Gospels and Revelation particularly, where it is used for deliverance in power or even providence and present things. I confine myself to its doctrinal import, and the full Christian sense of the word; and I maintain that salvation signifies that deliverance for the believer which is the full consequence of the mighty work of Christ, apprehended not, of course, necessarily according to all its depth in God's eyes, but at any rate applied to the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not the awakening of conscience, however real; neither is it the attraction of heart by the grace of Christ, however blessed this may be. We ought therefore to bear in mind that if a soul be not brought into conscious deliverance as the fruit of divine teaching, and founded on the work of Christ, we are very far from presenting the gospel as the Apostle Paul glories in it, and delights that it should go forth. "I am not ashamed," etc.

And he gives his reason: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." That is, it is the power of God unto salvation, not because it is victory (which at the beginning of a sours career would only give importance to man even if possible, which it is not), but because it is "the righteousness of God." It is not God seeking, or man bringing righteousness. In the gospel there is revealed God's righteousness. Thus the introduction opened with Christ's Person, and closes with God's righteousness. The law demanded, but could never receive righteousness from man. Christ is come, and has changed all. God is revealing a righteousness of His own in the gospel. It is God who now makes known a righteousness to man, instead of looking for any from man. Undoubtedly there are fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, and God values them -I will not say from man, but from His saints; but here it is what, according to the Apostle, God has for man. It is for the saints to learn, of course; but it is that which goes out in its own force and necessary aim to the need of man-a divine righteousness which justifies instead of condemning him who believes it.

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." It is for the lost, therefore; for they it is who need salvation; and it is time to save-not merely to quicken but to save-and this because in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed.

Hence it is, as he says, herein revealed "from faith," or by faith. It is the same form of expression exactly as in the beginning of Rom. 5 -"being justified by faith." But besides this he adds, "to faith." The first of these phrases, "from faith," excludes the law; the second, "to faith," includes everyone that has faith within the scope of God's righteousness. Justification is not from works of law. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith; and consequently, if there be faith in any soul, to this it is revealed, to faith wherever it may be. Hence, therefore, it was in no way limited to any particular nation, such as those that had already been under the law and government of God. It was a message that went out from God to sinners as such. Let man be what he might, or where he might, God's good news was for man. And to this agreed the testimony of the prophet: "The just shall live by faith" (not by law). Even where the law was, not by it but by faith the just lived. Did Gentiles believe? They too should live. Without faith there is neither justice nor life that God owns; where faith is, the rest will surely follow.

The Epistle to the Romans

This accordingly leads the Apostle into the earlier portion of his great argument, and first of all in a preparatory way. Here we pass out of the introduction of the epistle. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." v. 18. This is what made the gospel to be so sweet and precious and, what is more, absolutely necessary if the sinner would escape certain and eternal ruin. There is no hope for man otherwise, for the gospel is not all that is now made known. Not only is God's righteousness revealed, but also His wrath. It is not said to be revealed in the gospel. The gospel means His glad tidings for man. The wrath of God could not possibly be glad tidings. It is true, it is needful for man to learn, but in nowise is it good news. There is then the solemn truth also of divine wrath. It is not yet executed. It is "revealed," and this too "from heaven." There is no question of a people on earth, and of God's wrath breaking out in one form or another against human evil in this life. The earth, or at least the Jewish nation, had been familiar with such dealings of God in times past. But now it is "the wrath of God from heaven"; and consequently it is in view of eternal things, and not of those that touch present life on the earth.

Hence, as God's wrath is revealed from heaven, it is against every form of impiety - "against all ungodliness." Besides this, which seems to be a most comprehensive expression for embracing every sort and degree of human iniquity, we have one very specifically named. It is against the "unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." To hold the truth in unrighteousness would be no security. Alas! we know how this was in Israel, how it might be, and has been, in Christendom. God pronounces against the unrighteousness of such; for if the knowledge, however exact, of God's revealed mind was accompanied by no renewal of the heart, if it was without life toward God, all must be vain. Man is only so much the worse for knowing the truth, if he holds it ever so fast with unrighteousness. There are some that find a difficulty here, because the expression "to hold" means holding firmly. But it is quite possible for the unconverted to be tenacious of the truth, yet unrighteous in their ways; and so much the worse for them. Not thus does God deal with souls. If His grace attracts, His truth humbles, and leaves no room for

vain boasting and self-confidence. -What He does is to pierce and penetrate the man's conscience. If one may so say, He thus holds the man, instead of letting the man presume that he is holding fast the truth. The inner man is dealt with, and searched through and through.

Nothing of this is intended in the class that is here brought before us. They are merely persons who plume themselves on their orthodoxy, but in a wholly unrenewed condition. Such men have never been wanting since the truth has shone on this world; still less are they now. But the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them preeminently. The judgments of God will fall on man as man, but the heaviest blows are reserved for Christendom. There the truth is held, and apparently with firmness too. This, however, will be put to the test by-and-by. But for the time it is held fast, though in unrighteousness. Thus t h e wrath of God is revealed from heaven against (not only the open ungodliness of men, but) the orthodox unrighteousness of those that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

And this leads the Apostle into the moral history of man -the proof both of his inexcusable guilt, and of his extreme need of redemption. He begins with the great epoch of the dispensations of God (that is, the ages since the flood). We cannot speak of the state of things before the flood as a dispensation. There was a most important trial of man in the person of Adam; but after this, what dispensation was there? 'What were the principles of it? No man can tell. The truth is, those are altogether mistaken who call it so.

But after the flood man as such was put under certain conditions - the whole race. Man became the object, first, of general dealings of God under Noah; next, of His special ways in the calling of Abraham and of his family. And what led to the call of Abraham, of whom we hear much in the epistle to the Romans as elsewhere, was the departure of man into idolatry. Man despised at first the outward testimony of God, His eternal power and Godhead, in the creation above and around him (vv. 19, 20). Moreover, he gave up the knowledge of God that had been handed down from father to son (v. 21). The downfall of man, when he thus abandoned God, was most rapid and profound; and the Holy Spirit traces this solemnly to the end of chapter 1 with no needless words in a few energetic strokes summing up that which is abundantly confirmed (but in how different a manner!) by all that remains of the ancient world. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," etc. (vv. 22-32). Thus corruption not only overspread morals, but became an integral part of the religion of men, and had thus a quasi-divine sanction. Hence the depravity of the heathen found little or no check from conscience, because it was bound up with all that took the shape of God before their mind. There was no part of heathenism, practically viewed now, so corrupting as that which had to do with the objects of its worship. Thus, the true God being lost, all was lost, and man's downward career becomes the most painful and humiliating object, unless it be, indeed, that which we have to feel where men, without renewal of heart, espouse in pride of mind the truth with nothing but unrighteousness.

In the beginning of chapter 2 we have man pretending to righteousness. Still, it is "man" - not yet exactly the Jew, but man-who had profited, it might be, by whatever the Jew had; at the least, by the workings of natural conscience. But natural conscience, although it may detect evil, never leads one into the inward possession and enjoyment of good-never brings the soul to God. Accordingly, in chapter 2 the Holy Spirit shows us man satisfying himself with pronouncing on what

is right and wrong - moralizing for others, but nothing more. Now God must have reality in the man himself. The gospel, instead of treating this as a light matter, alone vindicates God in these eternal ways of His, in that which must be in him who stands in relationship with God. Hence therefore, the Apostle, with divine wisdom, opens this to us before the blessed relief and deliverance which the gospel reveals to us. In the most solemn way he appeals to man with the demand, whether he thinks that God will look complacently on that which barely judges another, but which allows the practice of evil in the man himself (chap. 2:1-3). Such moral judgments will, no doubt, be used to leave man without excuse; they can never suit or satisfy God.

Then the Apostle introduces the ground, certainty, and character of God's judgment (vv. 4-16). He "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile."

It is not here a question of how a man is to be saved, but of God's indispensable moral judgment which the gospel, instead of weakening, asserts according to the holiness and truth of God. It will be observed therefore that in this connection the Apostle shows the place both of conscience and of the law-that God in judging will take into full consideration the circumstances and condition of every soul of man. At the same time he connects in a singularly interesting manner this disclosure of the principles of the eternal judgment of God with what he calls "my gospel." This also is a most important truth, my brethren, to bear in mind. The gospel at its height in no wise weakens but maintains the moral manifestation of what God is. The legal institutions were associated with temporal judgment. The gospel, as now revealed in the New Testament, has linked with it, though not contained in it, the revelation of divine wrath from heaven, and this, you will observe, according to Paul's gospel. It is evident, therefore, that dispensational position will not suffice for God who holds to His own unchangeable estimate of good and evil, and who judges the more stringently according to the measure of advantage possessed.

But thus the way is now clear for bringing the Jew into discussion. "But if [for so it should read] thou art named a Jew," etc. (v. 17). It was not merely that he had better light. He had this, of course, in a revelation that was from God; he had law; he had prophets; he had divine institutions. It was not merely better light in the conscience, which might be elsewhere, as is supposed in the early verses of our chapter; but the Jew's position was directly and unquestionably one of divine tests applied to man's estate. Alas! the Jew was none the better for this unless there were the submission of his conscience to God. Increase of privileges can never avail without the soul's self-judgment before the mercy of God. Rather does it add to his guilt; such is man's evil state and will. Accordingly, in the end of the chapter, he shows that this is most true as applied to the moral judgment of the Jew; that none so much dishonored God as wicked Jews, their own Scripture attesting it; that position went for nothing in such, while the lack of it would not annul the Gentile's righteousness, which would indeed condemn the more faithful Israel; in short, that one must be a Jew inwardly to avail, and circumcision be of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is of God, and not of men.

The Epistle to the Romans

The question then is raised in the beginning of chapter 3, If this be so, what is the superiority of the Jew? Where lies the value of belonging to the circumcised people of God? The Apostle allows this privilege to be great, specially in having the Scriptures, but turns the argument against the boasters. We need not here enter into the details; but on the surface we see how the Apostle brings all down to that which is of the deepest interest to every soul. He deals with the Jew from his own Scripture (vv. 9-19). Did the Jews take the ground of exclusively having that word of God-the law? Granted that it is so, at once and fully. To whom, then, did the law address itself? To those that were under it, to be sure. It pronounced on the Jew then. It was the boast of the Jews that the law spoke about them, that the Gentiles had no right to it, and were but presuming on what belonged to God's chosen people. The

Apostle applies this according to divine wisdom. Then your principle is your condemnation. -What the law says, it speaks to those under it. What then is its voice? That there is none righteous, none that doeth good, none that understandeth. Of whom does it declare all this? Of the Jew by his own confession. Every mouth was stopped; the Jew by his own oracles, as the Gentiles by their evident abominations, shown already. All the world was guilty before God.

Thus, having shown the Gentile in chapter 1 manifestly wrong, and hopelessly degraded to the last degree- having laid bare the moral dilettantism of the philosophers, not one whit better in the sight of God, but rather the reverse-having shown the Jew overwhelmed by the condemnation of the divine oracles in which he chiefly boasted, without real righteousness, and so much the more guilty for his special privileges, all now lies clear for bringing in the proper Christian message, the gospel of God. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." vv. 20, 21.

Here again the Apostle takes up what he had but announced in chapter 1-the righteousness of God. Let me call your attention again to its force. It is not the mercy of God. Many have contended that so it is, and to their own great loss, as well as to the weakening of the Word of God. "Righteousness" never means mercy, not even the "righteousness of God." The meaning is not what was executed on Christ, but what is in virtue of it. Undoubtedly divine judgment fell on Him; but this is not "the righteousness of God," as the Apostle employs it in any part of his writings any more than here, though we know there could be no such thing as God's righteousness justifying the believer, if Christ had not borne the judgment of God. The expression means that righteousness which God can afford to display because of Christ's atonement. In short, it is what the words say -"the righteousness of God," and this "by faith of Jesus Christ."

Hence it is wholly apart from the law, while witnessed to by the law and prophets; for the law with its types had looked onward to this new kind of righteousness; and the prophets had borne their testimony that it was at hand, but not then come. Now it was manifested, and not promised or predicted merely. Jesus had come and died; Jesus had been a propitiatory sacrifice; Jesus had borne the judgment of God because of the sins He bore. The righteousness of God then could now go forth in virtue of His blood. God was not satisfied alone. There is satisfaction; but the work of Christ goes a great deal farther. Therein God is both vindicated and glorified. By the cross God has a deeper moral glory than ever-a glory that He thus acquired, if I may so say. He is, of course, the same absolutely perfect and unchangeable God of goodness; but His perfection has displayed

itself in new and more glorious ways in Christ's death, in Him who humbled Himself, and was obedient even to the death of the cross.

God therefore having not the least hindrance to the manifestation of what He can be and is in merciful intervention on behalf of the worst of sinners, manifests it as His righteousness "by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." v. 22. The former is the direction, and the latter the application. The direction is "unto all"; the application is, of course, only to "them that believe"; but it is to all them that believe. As far as persons are concerned, there is no hindrance; Jew or Gentile makes no difference, as is expressly said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the [passing over, or pretermission, not] remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." vv. 23-26. There is no simple mind that can evade the plain force of this last expression. The righteousness of God means that God is just, while at the same time He justifies the believer in Christ Jesus. It is His righteousness, or, in other words, His perfect consistency with Himself, which is always involved in the notion of righteousness. He is consistent with Himself when He is justifying sinners, or, more strictly, all those who believe in Jesus. He can meet the sinner, but He justifies the believer; and in this, instead of trenching on His glory, there is a deeper revelation and maintenance of it than if there never had been sin or a sinner.

Horribly offensive as sin is to God, and inexcusable in the creature, it is sin which has given occasion to the astonishing display of divine righteousness in justifying believers. It is not a question of His mercy merely, for this weakens the truth immensely, and perverts its character wholly. The righteousness of God flows from His mercy, of course; but its character and basis is righteousness. Christ's work of redemption deserves that God should act as He does in the gospel. Observe again, it is not victory here, for that would give place to human pride. It is not a soul's overcoming its difficulties, but a sinner's submission to the righteousness of God. It is God Himself who, infinitely glorified in the Lord that expiated Our sins by His one sacrifice, remits them now, not looking for our victory, nor as yet even in leading us on to victory, but by faith in Jesus and His blood. God is proved thus divinely consistent with Himself in Christ Jesus whom He has set forth a mercy-seat through faith in His blood.

Accordingly the Apostle says that boast and works are completely set aside by this principle which affirms faith, apart from deeds of law, to be the means of relationship with God (vv. 27, 28). Consequently the door is as open to the Gentile as to the Jew. The ground taken by a Jew for supposing God exclusively for Israel was that they had the law, which was the measure of what God claimed from man; and this the Gentile had not. But such thoughts altogether vanish now because, as the Gentile was unquestionably wicked and abominable, so from the law's express denunciation the Jew was universally guilty before God.

Consequently all turned not on what man should be for God, but what God can be and is, as revealed in the gospel, to man. This maintains both the glory and the moral universality of Him who will justify the circumcision by faith, not law, and the uncircumcision through their faith, if they believe the gospel. Nor does this in the slightest degree weaken the principle of law. On the

contrary, the doctrine of faith establishes law as nothing else can; and for this simple reason, that if one who is guilty hopes to be saved in spite of the broken law, it must be at the expense of the law that condemns his guilt; whereas the gospel shows no sparing of sin, but the most complete condemnation of it all, as charged on Him who shed His blood in atonement. The doctrine of faith therefore, which reposes on the cross, establishes law instead of making it void, as every other principle must (vv. 2731).

But this is not the full extent of salvation. Accordingly we do not hear of salvation as such in chapter 3. There is laid down the most essential of all truths as a groundwork of salvation; namely, expiation. There is the vindication of God in His ways with the Old Testament believers. Their sins had been passed by. He could not have remitted heretofore. This would not have been just. And the blessedness of the gospel is, that it is (not merely an exercise of mercy, but also) divinely just. It would not have been righteous in any sense to have remitted the sins until they were actually borne by One who could and did suffer for them. But now they were; and thus God vindicated Himself perfectly as to the past. But this great work of Christ was not and could not be a mere vindication of God; and we may find it otherwise developed in various parts of Scripture which I here mention by the way to show the point at which we are arrived. God's righteousness was now manifested as to the past sins He had not brought into judgment through His forbearance, and yet more conspicuously in the present time, when He displayed His justice in justifying the believer.

But this is not all; and the objection of the Jew gives occasion for the Apostle to bring out a fuller display of what God is. Did they fall back on Abraham? "What shall we then say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he bath whereof to glory; but not before God." Did the Jew fancy that the gospel makes very light of Abraham, and of the then dealings of God? Not so, says the Apostle. Abraham is the proof of the value of faith in justification before God. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. There was no law there or then, for Abraham died long before God spoke from Sinai. He believed God and His word, with special approval on God's part; and his faith was counted as righteousness (v. 3). And this was powerfully corroborated by the testimony of another great name in Israel (David) in Psalm 32:

"For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest t h e iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye."

In the same way the Apostle disposes of all pretense on the score of ordinances, especially circumcision. Not only was Abraham justified without law, but apart from that great sign of mortification of the flesh. Although circumcision began with Abraham, manifestly it had nothing to do with his righteousness, and at best was but the seal of the righteous ness of faith which he had in an uncircumcised state. It could not therefore be the source or means of his righteousness. All then that believe, though uncircumcised, might claim him as father, assured that righteousness will be reckoned to them too. And he is father of circumcision in the best sense, not to Jews, but to

believing Gentiles. Thus the discussion of Abraham strengthens the case in behalf of the uncircumcised who believe, to the overthrow of the greatest boast of the Jew. The appeal to their own inspired account of Abraham turned into a proof of the consistency of God's ways in justifying by faith, and hence in justifying the uncircumcised no less than the circumcision.

The Epistle to the Romans

The Apostle takes up a third feature of Abraham's case; that is, the connection of the promise with resurrection. Here it is not merely the negation of law and of circumcision, but we have the positive side. Law works wrath because it provokes transgression; grace makes the promise sure to all the seed, not only because faith is open to the Gentile and Jew alike, but because God is looked to as a quickener of the dead. What gives glory to God like this? Abraham believed God when according to nature it was impossible for him or for Sarah to have a child. The quickening power of God therefore was here set forth, of course historically in a way connected with this life and a posterity on earth, but nevertheless a very just and true sign of God's power for the believer-the quickening energy of God after a still more blessed sort. And this leads us to see not only where there was an analogy with those who believe in a promised Savior, but also to a weighty difference. And this lies in the fact that Abraham believed God before he had the son, being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. But we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is done already. It is not here believing on Jesus, but on God who has proved what He is to us in raising from among the dead Him who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification (vv. 13-25).

This brings out a most emphatic truth and special side of Christianity. Christianity is not a mere system of promise, but rather of promise accomplished in Christ. Hence it is essentially founded on the gift not only of a Savior who would interpose, in the mercy of God, to bear our sins, but of One who is already revealed, and the work done and accepted, and this known in the fact that God Himself has interposed to raise Him from among the dead - a bright and momentous thing to press on souls, as indeed we find the apostles insisting on it throughout the Acts. Were it merely Romans 3, there could not be full peace with God as there is. One might know a most real clinging to Jesus, but this would not set the heart at ease with God. The soul may feel the blood of Jesus to be a yet deeper want, but this alone does not give peace with God. In such a condition what has been found in Jesus is too often misused to make a kind of difference, so to speak, between the Savior on the one hand and God on the other- ruinous always to the enjoyment of the full blessing of the gospel. Now there is no way in which God could lay a basis for peace with Himself more blessed than He has done it. No longer does the question exist of requiring an expiation. That is the first necessity for the sinner with God. But we have it fully in Rom. 3 Now it is the positive power of God in raising up from the dead Him that was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justifying. The whole work is done.

The soul therefore now is represented for the first time as already justified and in possession of peace with God. This is a state of mind, and not the necessary or immediate fruit of Romans 3, but is based on the truth of Romans 4 as well as 3. There never can be solid peace with God without both. A soul may as truly, no doubt, be put into relationship with God-be made very happy, it may be, but it is not what Scripture calls "peace with God." Therefore it is here for the first time that we find salvation spoken of in the grand results that are now brought before us in chapter 5:1-11.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is entrance into favor, and nothing but favor.

The believer is not put under law, you will observe, but under grace, which is the precise reverse of law. The soul is brought into peace with God, as it finds its standing in the grace of God and, more than that, rejoices in hope of the glory of God. Such is the doctrine and the fact. It is not merely a call then; but as we have by our Lord Jesus Christ our access into the favor wherein we stand, so there is positive boasting in the hope of the glory of God. For it may have been noticed from chapter 3 to chapter 5 that nothing but fitness for the glory of God will do now. It is not a question of creature-standing. This passed away with man when he sinned. Now that God has revealed Himself in the gospel, it is not what will suit man on earth, but what is worthy of the presence of the glory of God. Nevertheless, the Apostle does not expressly mention heaven here. This was not suitable to the character of the epistle; but the glory of God he does. We all know where it is and must be for the Christian.

The consequences are thus pursued; first, the general place of the believer now, in all respects, in relation to the past, the present, and the future. His pathway follows; and he shows the very troubles of the road become a distinct matter of boast. This was not a direct and intrinsic effect, of course, but the result of spiritual dealing for the soul. It was the Lord giving us the profit of sorrow, and ourselves bowing to the way and end of God in it, so that the result of tribulation should be rich and fruitful experience.

Then there is another and crowning part of the blessing: "And not only so, but also boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." It is not only a blessing in its own direct character, or in indirect though real effects, but the Giver Himself is our joy, and boast, and glory. The consequences spiritually are blessed to the soul; how much more is it to reach the source from which all flows! This, accordingly, is the essential spring of worship. The fruits of it are not expanded here; but, in point of fact, to joy in God is necessarily that which makes praise and adoration to be the simple and spontaneous exercise of the heart. In heaven it will fill us perfectly; but there is no more perfect joy there, nor anything higher, if so high, in this epistle.

The Epistle to the Romans

The Epistle To The Romans: Introductory Lectures by W. Kelly (Part 5 Chapter 5:12-21)

At this point we enter upon a most important part of the epistle, on which we must dwell for a little. It is no longer a question of man's guilt, but of his nature. Hence the Apostle does not, as in the early chapters of this epistle, take up our sins, except as proofs and symptoms of sin. Accordingly, for the first time, the Spirit of God from chapter 5:12 traces the nature of man to the head of the race. This brings in the contrast with the other Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have here not as One bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, but as the spring and chief of a new family. Hence, as is shown later in the chapter, Adam is a head characterized by disobedience, who brought in death, the just penalty of sin; as on the other hand we have Him of whom he was the type, Christ, the obedient Man, who has brought in righteousness, and this after a singularly blessed sort and style - "justification of life."

Of it nothing has been heard till now. We have had justification, both by blood and also in virtue of Christ's resurrection. But "justification of life" goes farther, though involved in the latter, than the

end of Romans 4; for now we learn that in the gospel there is not only a dealing with the guilt of those that are addressed in it; there is also a mighty work of God in the presenting the man in a new place before God, and in fact too for his faith, clearing him from all the consequences in which he finds himself as a man in the flesh here below.

It is here that you will find a great failure of Christendom as to this. Not that any part of the truth has escaped: it is the fatal brand of that "great house" that even the most elementary truth suffers the deepest injury; but as to this truth, it seems unknown altogether. I hope that brethren in Christ will bear with me if I press on them the importance of taking good heed to it that their souls are thoroughly grounded in this, the proper place of the Christian by Christ's death and resurrection. It must not be assumed too readily. There is a disposition continually to imagine that what is frequently spoken of must be understood; but experience will soon show that this is not the case. Even those that seek a place of separation to the Lord outside that which is now hurrying souls on to destruction are, nevertheless, deeply affected by the condition of that Christendom in which we find ourselves.

Here then it is not a question at all of pardon or remission. First of all the Apostle points out that death has come in, and all this was no consequence of law, but before it. Sin was in the world between Adam and Moses, when the law was not. This clearly takes in man, it will be observed; and this is his grand point now. The contrast of Christ with Adam takes in man universally as well as the Jew; and man in sin, alas! was true, accordingly, before the law, right through the law, and ever since the law. The Apostle is therefore plainly in the presence of the broadest possible grounds of comparison, though we shall find more too.

But the Jew might argue that it was an unjust thing in principle - this gospel, these tidings of which the Apostle was so full-for why should one man affect many, yea, all? "Not so," replies the Apostle. Why should this be so strange and incredible to you? for on your own showing, according to that word to which we all bow, you must admit that one man's sin brought in universal moral ruin and death. Proud as you may be of that which distinguishes you, it is hard to make sin and death peculiar to you, nor can you connect them even with the law particularly; the race of man is in question, and not Israel alone. There is nothing that proves this so convincingly as the book of Genesis; and the Apostle, by the Spirit of God, calmly but triumphantly summons the Jewish scriptures to demonstrate that which the Jews were so strenuously denying. Their own scriptures maintained as nothing else could that all the wretchedness which is now found in the world, and the condemnation which hangs over the race, is the fruit of one man, and indeed of one act.

Now if it was righteousness in God (and who will gainsay it?) to deal with the whole posterity of Adam as involved in death because of one, their common father, who could deny the consistency of one Man's saving? who would defraud God of that which He delights in-the blessedness of bringing in deliverance by that One Man, of whom Adam was the image? Accordingly then, he confronts the unquestionable truth, admitted by every Israelite, of the universal havoc by one man everywhere with the One Man who has brought in (not pardon only, but as we shall find) eternal life and liberty-liberty now in the free gift of life, but a liberty that will never cease for the soul's enjoyment until it has embraced the very body that still groans, and this because of the Holy Ghost who dwells in it.

Here then it is a comparison of the two great heads-Adam and Christ-and the immeasurable superiority of the second Man is shown. That is, it is not merely pardon of past sins, but deliverance from sin, and in due time from all its consequences. The Apostle has come now to the nature. This is the essential point. It is the thing which troubles a renewed conscientious soul above all, because of his surprise at finding the deep evil of the flesh and its mind after having proved the great grace of God in the gift of Christ. If I am thus pitied of God, if so truly and completely a justified man, if I am really an object of God's eternal favor, how can I have such a sense of continual evil? why am I still under bondage and misery from the constant evil of my nature, over which I seem to have no power whatever? Has God then no delivering power from this? The answer is found in this portion of our epistle (that is, from the middle of chapter 5).

The Epistle to the Romans

Having shown first then the sources and the character of the blessing in general as far as regards deliverance, the Apostle sums up the result in the end of the chapter: "That as sin hath reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life," the point being justification of life n o w through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is applied in the two chapters that follow. There are two things that might make insuperable difficulty: the one is the obstacle of sin in the nature to practical holiness; the other is the provocation and condemnation of the law. Now the doctrine which we saw asserted in the latter part of chapter 5 is applied to both. First, as to practical holiness, it is not merely that Christ has died for my sins, but that even in the initiatory act of baptism the truth set forth there is that I am dead. It is not, as in Ephesians 2, dead in sins, which would be nothing to the purpose. This is all perfectly true-true of a Jew as of a pagan-true of any unrenewed man that never heard of a Savior. But what is testified by Christian baptism is Christ's death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ we r e baptized unto His death?" Thereby is identification with His death. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of should walk in newness of life."

The man who, being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or Christian baptism, would assert any license to sin because it is in his nature, as if it were therefore an inevitable necessity, denies the real and evident meaning of his baptism. That act denoted not even the washing away of our sins by the blood of Jesus, which would not apply to the case, nor in any adequate way meet the question of nature.

Baptism sets forth more than that, and is justly found, not in Romans 3, but in chapter 6. What the Apostle has given in fullness is the great truth, however fundamental it may be, that I am entitled, and even called on in the name of the Lord Jesus, to know that I am dead to sin; not that I must die, but that I am dead-that my baptism means nothing less than this, and is shorn of its most emphatic point if limited merely to Christ's dying for my sins. It is not so alone; but in His death, unto which I am baptized, I am dead to sin. And "how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Hence then we find that the whole chapter is founded on this truth. "Shall we sin," says he, proceeding yet farther (v. 15), "because we are not under the law, but under grace?" This were indeed to deny the value of His death, and of that newness of life we have in Him risen, and a return to bondage of the worst description.

In chapter 7 we have the subject of the law discussed for practice as well as in principle, and there again meet with the same weapon of tried and unfailing temper. It is no longer blood, but death - Christ's death and resurrection. The figure of the relationship of husband and wife is introduced in order to make the matter plain. Death, and nothing short of it, rightly dissolves the bond. We accordingly are dead, says he, to the law; not (as no doubt almost all of us know) that the law dies, but that we are dead to the law in the death of Christ. Compare verse 6 (where the margin, not the text, is substantially correct) with verse 4. Such is the principle. The rest of the chapter (vv. 7-25) is an instructive episode in which the impotence and the misery of the renewed mind which attempts practice under law are fully argued out till deliverance (not pardon) is found in Christ.

Thus the latter part of the chapter is not doctrine exactly, but the proof of the difficulties of a soul who has not realized death to the law by the body of Christ. Did this seem to treat the law that condemned as an evil thing? Not so, says the Apostle; it is because of the evil of the nature, not of the law. The law never delivers; it condemns and kills us. It was meant to make sin exceeding sinful. Hence, what he is here discussing is not remission of sins, but deliverance from sin. No wonder, if souls confound the two things together, that they never know deliverance in practice. Conscious deliverance, to be solid according to God, must be in the line of His truth. In vain will you preach Romans 3, or even 4 alone, for souls to know themselves consciously and holily set free.

From verse 14 there is an advance. There we find Christian knowledge as to the matter introduced; but still it is the knowledge of one who is not in this state pronouncing on one who is. You must carefully guard against the notion of its being a question of Paul's own experience, because he says, "I had not known," "I was alive," etc. There is no good reason for such an assumption, but much against it. It might be more or less any man's lot to learn. It is not meant that Paul knew nothing of this, but that the ground of inference, and the general theory built up, are alike mistaken. We have Paul informing us that he transfers sometimes in a figure to himself that which was in nowise necessarily his own experience, and perhaps had not been so at any time. But this may be comparatively a light question. The great point is to note the true picture given us of a soul quickened, but laboring and miserable under law, not at all consciously delivered. The last verses of the chapter, however, bring in the deliverance-yet not the fullness of it, but the hinge, so to speak. The discovery is made that the source of the internal misery was that the mind, though renewed, was occupied with the law as a means of dealing with flesh. Hence the very fact of being renewed makes one sensible of a far more intense misery than ever, while there is no power until the soul looks right outside self to Him who is dead and risen, who has anticipated the difficulty, and alone gives the full answer to all wants. Chapter 8 displays this comforting truth in its fullness.

The Epistle to the Romans

From the first verse we have the application of the dead and risen Christ to the soul, till in verse 11 we see the power of the Holy Ghost which brings the soul into this liberty now, applied by-and-by to the body, when there will be the complete deliverance. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

condemned sin in the flesh." A wondrous way, and most blessed! And there (for such was the point) it was the complete condemnation of this evil thing, the nature in its present state, so as, nevertheless, to set the believer as before God's judgment free from itself as well as its consequences. This, God has wrought in Christ. It is not in any degree settled as to itself by His blood. The shedding of His blood was absolutely necessary; without that precious expiation all else had been vain and impossible. But there is much more in Christ than that to which too many souls restrict themselves, not less to their own loss than to His dishonor. God has condemned the flesh. And here it may be repeated that it is no question of pardoning the sinner, but of condemning the fallen nature; and this so as to give the soul both power and a righteous immunity from all eternal anguish about it. For the truth is that God has in Christ condemned sin, and this for sin definitely, so that He has nothing more to do in condemnation of that root of evil. What a title then God gives me now in beholding Christ, no longer dead but risen, to have it settled before my soul that I am in Him as He now is, where all questions are closed in peace and joy! For what remains unsolved by and in Christ? Once it was far otherwise. Before the cross there hung out the gravest question that ever was raised, and it needed settlement in this world; but in Christ sin is forever abolished for the believer, and this not only in respect of what he has done, but in what he is. Till the cross, well might a converted soul be found groaning in misery at each fresh discovery of evil in himself. But now to faith all this is gone-not lightly, but truly-in the sight of God, so that he may live on a Savior that is risen from the dead as his new life.

Accordingly Romans 8 pursues in the most practical manner the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. First of all, the groundwork of it is laid in the first four verses, the last of them leading into everyday walk. And it is well for those ignorant of it to know that here in verse 4 the Apostle speaks first of walking, "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The latter clause in the first verse of the authorized version mars the sense. In the 4th verse this could not be absent; in the first verse it ought not to be present. Thus the deliverance is not merely for the joy of the soul, but also for strength in our walking after the Spirit who has given and found a nature in which He delights, communicating withal His own delight in Christ, and making obedience to be the joyful service of the believer. The believer, therefore, unwittingly though really, dishonors the Savior if he be content to walk short of this standard and power; he is entitled and called to walk according to his place, and in the confidence of his deliverance in Christ Jesus before God.

Then the domains of flesh and Spirit are brought before us: the one characterized by sin and death practically now; the other by life, righteousness, and peace, which is, as we saw, to be crowned finally by the resurrection of these bodies of ours. The Holy Ghost, who now gives the soul its consciousness of deliverance by its place in Christ, is also the witness that the body too, the mortal body, shall be delivered in its time. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [or because of] His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Next, he enters upon another branch of the truth-the Spirit not as a condition contrasted with flesh (these two, as we know, being always contrasted in Scripture), but as a power, a divine Person that dwells in and bears His witness to the believer. His witness to our spirit is this: that we are children of God, but if children, we are His heirs. This accordingly leads, as connected with the deliverance of the body, to the inheritance we are to possess. The extent is what God Himself, so to speak, possess-the universe of God, whatever will be under Christ -and what will not? As He

has made all, so He is heir of all. We are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Hence the action of the Spirit of God in a double point of view comes before us. And He is the spring of our joy, He is the power of sympathy in our sorrows, and the believer knows both. The faith of Christ has brought divine joy into his soul; but in point of fact, he is traversing a world of infirmity, suffering, and grief. Wonderful to think the Spirit of God associates Himself with us in it all, deigning to give us divine feelings even in our poor and narrow hearts. This occupies the central part of the chapter, which then closes with the unfailing and faithful power of God for us in all our experiences here below. As He has given us through the blood of Jesus full remission, as we shall be saved by this life, as He has made us know even now nothing short of present conscious deliverance from every whit of evil that belongs to our very nature, as we have the Spirit the earnest of the glory to which we are destined, as we are the vessels of gracious sorrow in the midst of that from which we are not yet delivered, but shall be, so now we have the certainty that whatever betide, God is for us, and that nothing shall separate us from His love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Epistle to the Romans

In chapters 9, 10, and 11 the Apostle handles a difficulty serious to any mind, especially to the Jew, who might readily feel that all this display of grace in Christ to the Gentile as much as to the Jew by the gospel seems to make very cheap the distinctive place of Israel as given of God. If the good news of God goes out to man, entirely blotting out the difference between a Jew and a Gentile, what becomes of His special promises to Abraham and to his seed? What about His word passed and sworn to the fathers? The Apostle shows them with astonishing force at the starting point that 'he was far from slighting their privileges. He lays down such a summary as no Jew ever gave since they were a nation. He brings out the peculiar glories of Israel according to the depth of the gospel as he knew and preached it; at least, of, His Person who is the object of faith now revealed. Far from denying or obscuring what they boasted of, he goes beyond them-"Who are Israelites," says he, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the _ service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever." Here was the very truth that every Jew, as such, denied. What blindness! Their crowning glory was precisely what they would not hear of. What glory so rich as that of the Christ Himself duly appreciated? He was God over all blessed forever, as well as their Messiah. Him who came in humiliation, according to their prophets, they might despise; but it was vain to deny that the same prophets bore witness to His divine glory. He was Emmanuel; yes, the Jehovah, God of Israel. Thus then, if Paul gave his own sense of Jewish privileges, there was no -unbelieving Jew that rose up to his estimate of them.

But now, to meet the question that was raised, they pleaded the distinguishing promises to Israel. Upon what ground? Because they were sons of Abraham. But how, argues he, could this stand, seeing that Abraham had another son, just as much his child as Isaac? What did they say to Ishmaelites as joint heirs? They would not hear of it. No, they cry, it is in Isaac's seed that the Jew was called. Yes, but this is another principle. If in Isaac only, it is a question of the seed, not that was born, but that was called. Consequently the call of God, and not the birth simply, makes the real difference.

Did they venture to plead that it must be not only the same father, but the same mother? The answer is that this will not do one whit better; for when we come down to the next generation, it is apparent that the two sons of Isaac were sons of the same mother; yes, they were twins. What could be conceived closer or more even than this? Surely if equal birth tie could ensure community of blessing - if a charter from God depended on being sprung from the same father and mother, there was no case so strong, no claim so evident, as that of Esau to take the same rights as Jacob. Why would they not allow such a pretension? Was it not sure and evident that Israel could not take the promise on the ground of mere connection after the flesh? Birthright from the same father would let in Ishmael on the one hand, as from both parents it would secure the title of Esau on the other. Clearly then, such ground is untenable. In point of fact, as he had hinted before, their true tenure was the call of God, who was free, if He pleased, to bring in other people. It became simply a question whether in fact God did call the Gentiles, or whether He had revealed such intentions.

But he meets their proud exclusiveness in another way. He shows that on the responsible ground of being God's nation, they were wholly ruined. If the first book in the Bible showed that it was only the call of God that made Israel what they were, its second book as clearly proved that all was over with the called people, had it not been for the mercy of God. They set up the golden calf, and thus cast off the true God, their God, even in the desert. Did the call of God then go out to Gentiles?

Has He mercy only for guilty Israel? Is there no call, no mercy, of God for any besides?

Hereupon he enters upon the direct proofs, and first cites Hosea as a witness. That early prophet tells Israel that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-ammi were of awful import for Israel; but in presence of circumstances so disastrous, there should not be merely a people, but sons of the living God, and then should Judah and Israel be gathered as one people under one head. The application of this was more evident to the Gentile than to the Jew. Compare Peter's use in his first epistle, chapter 2:10. Finally he brings in Isaiah, showing that far from retaining their blessing as an unbroken people, a remnant alone would be saved. Thus one could not fail to see these two weighty inferences: the bringing in to be God's sons of those that had not born His people, and the judgment and destruction of the great mass of His undoubted people. Of these only a remnant would be saved. On both sides therefore the Apostle is meeting the grand points he had at heart to demonstrate from their own Scriptures.

For all this, as he presses further, there was the weightiest reason possible. God is gracious, but holy; He is faithful, but righteous. The Apostle refers to Israel to show that God would "lay in Zion a stumbling-stone." It is in Zion that He lays it. It is not among the Gentiles, but in the honored center of the polity of Israel. There would be found a stumbling-stone there. What was to be the stumbling-stone? Of course, it could hardly be the law; that was the boast of Israel. What was it? There could be but one satisfactory answer. The stumbling-stone was their despised and rejected Messiah. This was the key to their difficulties-this alone- and fully explains their coming ruin as well as God's solemn warnings.

The Epistle to the Romans

In the next chapter (10) the Apostle carries on the subject, showing in the most touching manner his affection for the people. He at the same time unfolds the essential difference between the righteousness of faith and that of law. He takes their own books and proves from one of them (Deuteronomy) that in the ruin of Israel the resource is not going into the depths, nor going up to heaven. Christ indeed did both; and so the word was nigh them, in their mouth and in their heart. It is not doing, but believing; therefore it is what is proclaimed to them, and what they receive and believe. Along with this he gathers testimonies from more than one prophet. He quotes from Joel that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. He quotes also from Isaiah-"Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." And mark the force of it-"Whosoever." The believer, whosoever he might be, should not be ashamed. Was it possible to limit this to Israel?

But more than this--"Whosoever shall call." There is the double prophecy. Whosoever believed should not be ashamed; whosoever called should be saved. In both parts, as it may be observed, the door is opened to the Gentile.

But then again he intimates that the nature of the gospel is involved in the publishing of the glad tidings. It is not God having an earthly center, and the peoples coming up to worship the Lord in Jerusalem. It is the going forth of His richest blessing. And where? How far? To the limits of the holy land? Far beyond. Psalm 19 is used in the most beautiful manner to insinuate that the limits are the world. Just as the sun in the heavens is not for one people or land alone, no more is the gospel. There is no language where their voice is not heard. "Yea verily, their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." The gospel goes forth universally. Jewish pretensions were therefore disposed of-not here by new and fuller revelations, but by this divinely skillful employment of their own Old Testament scriptures.

Finally he comes to two other witnesses-as from the Psalms, so now from the law and prophets. The first is Moses himself. Moses saith, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people," etc. How could the Jews say that this meant themselves? On the contrary, it was the Jew provoked by the Gentiles-"By them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." Did they deny that they were a foolish nation? Be it so then; it was a foolish nation by which Moses declared they should be angered. But this does not content the Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, for he goes on to point out that Isaiah "is very bold" in a similar way; that is, there is no concealing the truth of the matter. Isaiah says, "I was found of them who sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me." The Jews were the last in the world to take such ground as this. It was undeniable that the Gentiles did not seek the Lord, nor ask after Him; and the prophet says that Jehovah was found of them that sought Him not, and was made manifest to them that asked not after Him. Nor is there only the manifest call of the Gentiles in this, but with no less clearness there is the rejection, at any rate for a time, of proud Israel. "But unto Israel He saith, All day long have I stretched out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Thus the proof was complete. The Gentiles-the despised heathen - were to be brought in; the self-satisfied Jews are left behind, justly and beyond question, if they believed the law and the prophets.

But did this satisfy the Apostle? It was undoubtedly enough for present purposes. The past history of Israel was sketched in Romans 9; the present more immediately is before us in chapter 10. The

future must be brought in by the grace of God; and this he accordingly gives us at the close of chapter 11. First he raises the question, "Has God cast away His people?" Let it not be! Was he not himself, says Paul, a proof to the contrary? Then he enlarges and points out that there is a remnant of grace in the worst of times. If God had absolutely cast away His people, would there be such mercy? There would be no remnant if justice took its course. The remnant proves then that even under judgment the rejection of Israel is not complete, but rather a pledge of future favor. This is the first ground.

The second plea is not that the rejection of Israel is only partial, however extensive, but that it is also temporary, and not definitive. This is to fall back on a principle he had already used. God was rather provoking Israel to jealousy by the call of the Gentiles. But if it were so, He had not done with them. Thus the first argument shows that the rejection was not total; the second, that it was but for a season.

But there is a third. Following up with the teaching of the olive tree, he carries out the same thought of a remnant that abides on their own stock, and points to a reinstatement of the nation. And I would just observe by the way that the Gentile cry that no Jew ever accepts the gospel in truth is a falsehood. Israel is indeed the only people of whom there is always a portion that believe. Time was when none of the English, nor French, nor of any other nation believed in the Savior. There never was an hour since Israel's existence as a nation that God has not had His remnant of them. Such has been their singular fruit of promise; such it is at present, even in the midst of all their misery. And as that little remnant is ever sustained by the grace of God, it is the standing pledge of their final blessedness through His mercy, whereon the Apostle breaks out into raptures of thanksgiving to God. The day hastens when the Redeemer shall come to Zion. He shall come, says one Testament, out of Zion. He shall come to Zion, says the other. In both Old and New it is the same substantial testimony. Thither He shall come, and thence go forth. He shall own that once glorious seat of royalty in Israel. Zion shall yet behold her mighty, divine, but once despised Deliverer; and when He thus comes, there will be a deliverance suited to His glory. All Israel shall be saved. God, therefore, had not cast off His people, but was employing the interval of their slip from their place, in consequence of their rejection of Christ, to call the Gentiles in sovereign mercy, after which Israel as a whole should be saved. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."

The Epistle to the Romans

The rest of the epistle takes up the practical consequences of the great doctrine of God's righteousness, which had been now shown to be supported by, and in no wise inconsistent with, His promises to Israel. The whole history of Israel- past, present, and future-falls in with, although quite distinct from, that which he has been expounding. Here I shall be very brief.

Chapter 12 looks at the mutual duties of the saints. Chapter 13 urges their duties toward what was outside them, more particularly to the powers that be, but also to men in general. Love is the great debt that we owe, which can never be paid, but which we should always be paying. The chapter closes with the day of the Lord in its practical force on the Christian walk. In chapter 14 and the

beginning of 15 we have the delicate theme of Christian forbearance in its limits and largeness. The weak are not to judge the strong, and the strong are not to despise the weak. These things are matters of conscience, and depend much for their solution on the degree to which souls have attained. The subject terminates with the grand truth which must never be obscured by details-that we are to receive one another, as Christ has received us, to the glory of God. In the rest of chapter 15 the Apostle dwells on the extent of his apostleship, renews his expression of the thought and hope of visiting Rome, and at the same time shows how well he remembered the need of the poor at Jerusalem. Chapter 16 brings before us in the most instructive and interesting manner the links that grace practically forms and maintains between the saints of God. Though he had never visited Rome, many of them were known personally. It is exquisite, the delicate love with which he singles out distinctive features in each of the saints, men and women, that come before him Would that the Lord would give us hearts to remember, as well as eyes to see, according to His own grace! Then follows a warning against those who bring in stumbling blocks and offenses. There is evil at work, and grace does not close the eye to danger; at the same time it is never under the pressure of the enemy, and there is the fullest confidence that the God of peace will break the power of Satan under the feet of the saints shortly.

Last of all, the Apostle links tip this fundamental treatise of divine righteousness in its doctrine, its dispensational bearings, and its exhortations to the walk of Christians, with higher truth, which it would

not have been suitable then to bring out; for grace considers the state and the need of the saints. True Ministry gives out not merely truth, but suited truth to the saints. At the same time the Apostle does allude to that mystery which was not yet divulged, at least, in this epistle. But he points from the foundations of eternal truth to those heavenly heights that were reserved for other communications in due time.

(The end)

R.S.V. and the Jews: the Editor's Column

Another chapter is being written in that long, tragic history of the Jews. No other people on earth have ever suffered as they, and all under the governmental hand of God; first, for their idolatry in the Old Testament times; second, for their rejection of their Messiah when He came to them in love and grace. From that fateful moment when they clamored for His death, and cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children," judgment was decreed. It was withheld, however, until after they stoned Stephen, and thus "sent a message after Him"-their Christ whom they rejected- "saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." They have been scattered among the nations as prophesied, and they have proved Hos. 8:8 to be true: "Now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure." From time to time they have been persecuted in one nation after another. It is estimated that 6,000,000 Jews were put to death under Hitler, or one out of every three Jews on earth.

Now another systematic program of persecution of that people, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," is gathering momentum in Russia and her satellite countries. Arrests, trials, purges, and afflictions seem to be the order of the day. Truly our hearts grieve over the afflictions of the beloved people, although we know they are reaping for their sin. This is not the first or the second time that the Jews have been persecuted in Russia. The pogroms under the Czars were dreadful, and at another time they were persecuted under the present regime.

There appear to be several reasons for the present outbreak in Communist countries of what is mistakenly called anti-Semitism, for the Jews are only one branch of the Semitic people. (1) Jews are never completely assimilated by any nation; they remain Jews, and as such are bound to have Jewish ties, which in the present instance might be with the Jews in the West. Russia will not tolerate such connections. (2) Russia sees an opportunity to curry favor with former Nazis in Western Germany by oppressing Jews, and thus stir up trouble for the West in that country. (3) Perhaps, most important is her desire to ingratiate herself with the Arab world whose antipathy to the Jew is well known. The whole of the Near East is rumbling with unrest, and Russia would like to bring on chaos to the discomfiture of the West by turning the Arabs against the Jews.

Everything is moving in the direction of the time of the end. The West is destined to be the protector of the Jews against the Arab hordes, who will probably be stirred and agitated by Russia, who will herself come against them in their land after Christ returns, only to fall in such a slaughter that it will require seven months to bury the dead (Eze. 38; 39).

It is indeed a sad commentary on Christendom that at this time, when the Jews are under attack in some quarters, and facing that dreadful time of "Jacob's trouble" shortly, a modern version of the Bible should be brought out which would only tend to further their blindness as to the Lord Jesus, their Messiah. It is ironical that the Bible which should open their eyes to see that Jesus was truly their Messiah has been tampered with in the very places that unmistakably point out His deity, and His atoning sufferings. What will a Jew searching for the light think when he finds that the new R.S.V., which claims to be the correct version, is so altered in the Old Testament prophecies that

the obvious references to Jesus of Nazareth are almost lost? Instead of finding that Jesus is the key to unlock all the deep secrets of the Old Testament, he will find the R.S.V. Old Testament largely in accord with the Jewish unbelief he has been taught all his life.

There was a time when the light from God was entrusted to the Jews, but the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews' inconsistencies. Now Gentiles, with greater light committed to them, are casting a stumbling block before the Jews, in the Revised Standard Version.

Surely God will not hold any man guiltless who tampers with His Word.

Some additional information and more questions regarding the Revised Standard Version of the Bible have reached us; therefore, it seems advisable to add some supplementary remarks to our review.

In the preface of the R.S.V. whole Bible (not the New Testament volume alone) is found this statement: "The revisers in the 1870's had most of the evidence that we now have for the Greek Text, though the most ancient of all extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament were not discovered until 1931." Obviously, this would tend to silence all criticism of the changes made in the R.S.V. New Testament, which had not been made in the Revised Version, which first appeared as a whole Bible in 1885, for if only the later revisers had access to the oldest manuscripts extant, then perhaps such changes were warranted.

To test this statement (from the preface), we turned to the library of the University of Chicago, because Prof. Edgar J. Goodspeed, one of the revisers, is listed as being connected with that institution. To our inquiry, "How are these recently discovered manuscripts listed?" we received the reply that they are known as the "Chester Beatty papyri nos. P. 45-46 and 47." They are classified as of the third century of this era—a date at which the whole canon of the New Testament had been established. Later, we sent the University Library a chart which outlined all the books of the New Testament, and requested information on what portion of the New Testament was contained in these manuscripts. From their notes made on our chart, we learned that the following books are not included: 2 Thessalonians; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; Jude—a sizeable part missing in its entirety. Of the books that were contained in these manuscripts, they gave us this information: "The MSS P. 45, P. 46, and P. 47 are all very fragmentary. No one of them contains the complete books checked. They were discovered in 1933," instead of 1931 (*italics are ours*). All of this raises a great doubt as to their value being any greater than that of those which were previously known to exist, and makes the revisers' claim seem rather presumptuous.

Even if these Chester Beatty manuscripts were of special value, they certainly were obtainable to the Catholic translators of the Confraternity version, and Ronald Knox who translated the New Testament in English, as also to Gerrit Verkuyl, Ph.D., who brought out the Berkeley Version of the New Testament in modern English, in 1945. While mistakes may be found in any literary work, as there must be in the three versions just named, yet there does not appear to be in them the biased renderings and slanted readings which we have noticed in the R.S.V. It is our judgment that the revisers' statement regarding these papyri is an attempt to justify any and all changes they made, which others did not make, but with very, very little real evidence in hand to support them.

Another change in the R.S.V. that has troubled many Christians is the deletion of the close of Mark's Gospel from the regular text-verses 9-20 of the last chapter. These verses are printed in small italics as a questionable supplement, and they are preceded by a note which says: "Some texts and versions add as 16. 9-20 the following passage." We shall quote from others on this subject.

W. Kelly says on Mark 16:

9-20: "I am aware that men have tampered with the closing verses, as they have sullied with their unholy doubts the beginning of John 8.... I admit that there are certain differences between this portion and the previous part of chapter 16. But, in my judgment, the Spirit purposely put them in a different light. Here, you will observe, it is a question of forming the servants according to that rising from the dead for which He had prepared them. Had the Gospel terminated without this, we must have had a real gap, which ought to have been felt.... 'This wonderful Gospel of His ministry would have left off with as impotent a conclusion as we could possibly imagine. Chapter 16 would have closed with the silence of the women and its source, 'for they were afraid.' What conclusion less worthy of the servant Son of God! What must have been the impression left, if the doubts of some learned men had the slightest substance in them? Can anyone, who knows the character of the Lord and of His ministry, conceive for an instant that we should be left with nothing but a message baulked through the alarm of women?"

Speaking further of the internal evidence for the Holy Spirit's authorship through the Evangelist Mark, W. Kelly says, "The very freedom of the style, the use of words not elsewhere used, or so used by Mark, and the difficulties of some of the circumstances narrated, tell to my mind in favor of its genuineness; for a forger would have adhered to the letter, if he could not so easily catch the spirit of Mark.... I am not aware that in all the second Gospel there is a section more characteristic of this Evangelist than the very one that man's temerity has not feared to seize upon, endeavoring to root it from the soil where God planted it.

"Accepting these words [vv. 9-20] as the words of God, you have a termination that harmonizes with a truly divine gospel; but not merely that- here you have a divine conclusion for Mark's Gospel, and for no other. There is no other gospel that this conclusion would suit but Mark's; for observe here what the Spirit of God finally gives us. He says, 'After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.' As the Gospel of Mark exhibits emphatically Jesus the workman of God, so even in the rest of glory He is the workman still.... While they went forth upon their mission, they were to take up the work which the Lord had left them to do. 'They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the words with signs following.' Thus Mark, and no one else, gives us the picture most thoroughly, the whole consistent up to the last. Would a forger have kept up the bold thought of 'the Lord working with them,' while every other word intimates that He was then at least quiescent?"

Mr. Kelly concludes his remarks by saying, "The positive external proofs, and the internal, prove not only that it is inspired Scripture, but from none other than Mark himself To allow that these verses are authentic Scripture, but not Mark's own writing, seems to me the lamest supposition possible."

Mr. J. N. Darby says in a footnote of his translation, "I do not enter on the question of the authenticity of verses 9-20 here. I read them as Scripture. Burgon has pretty well demolished the authorities against them." Then, after naming four manuscripts that omit or qualify them, he says, "All other uncials and cursives and versions have the passage. It is quoted by Irenaeus and also by Hippolytus of the second or third century."

Ronald Knox gives this footnote in his translation: "It seems that the manuscripts of St. Mark were mutilated at the end in very early times; the whole of this chapter being sometimes omitted.... And in a few of our existing manuscripts these last twelve verses are wanting, which fact (together with the abruptness of their style) has made some critics think that they were added from another source. But they are evidently of primitive account, and there is no reason why we should not ascribe their inclusion here to St. Mark."

R.S.V. gives John 7:53 to 8:11 the same treatment which it accorded those closing verses of Mark 16. It casts a blight on that portion of the Word of God by first remarking that most authorities either omit these verses or insert them with variation elsewhere, and then by printing them in small italics in the form of a foot note. By way of challenging the revisers' handling of this portion of the Word of God, we shall again quote the words of others who have before written on this subject.

Augustine (354-430), the celebrated bishop of Hippo, who so faithfully withstood the Pelagian heresy which denied mankind's fall and depravity, said that there were persons of small faith, or rather enemies of the faith, who had taken the above mentioned portion away for fear of allowing immorality. (Such persons never felt the heat of the light that the Lord that day turned on the woman's accusers, or they would never have thus spoken.)

W. Kelly, a well-known authority on Greek and Greek manuscripts, says that it was the incredulity of some copyists that indisposed them to reproduce the story of the adulteress. He adds, "This is plain from some copies which leave a blank—a fact wholly inexplicable, if the scribe had not been aware of a paragraph which he knew to exist, but for reasons of his own thought fit to omit." He gives a list of Greek uncials (those written in all capital letters) which do include the disputed for-

Lion, and also says that 330 cursives (those written in a running hand) and many versions have it.

Taking up another form of objection to these verses, W. Kelly says, "Many alleged verbal peculiarities have acted on the minds of a considerable number, and led them to question its title to a place in the genuine Gospel of John.... I have examined with care, and satisfied myself, that the alleged weightiest argument against the passage, in its entire diversity from the style of John's narrative, is superficial and misleading. Some peculiar words are required by the circumstance; and the general cast and character of the passage, so far from being alien to the Evangelist's manner, seems to me, on the contrary, in his spirit, rather than in any other inspired writer's, no matter in which of the manuscripts we read it.... Mature as well as minute consideration of them fails to raise the slightest doubt in my own mind, and therefore to me it seems so much the more a duty to defend it, where the alternative is a dishonor to what I believe God has given us."

The statement that "most manuscripts" omit this portion (also found as a side note in the Revised Version of 1885) is challenged by the same writer, when he says, "The idea of many distinct and independent texts (as distinguished from abundance of various readings) seems an evident exaggeration." He then goes on to explain the method by which such a computation is

accomplished, and says that it is "eked out" by putting many manuscripts together and classifying them as one group.

The remaining point which should be examined is the internal evidence about which W. Kelly says: "The moral and spiritual indications are incomparably graver and more conclusive than any evidence of an external sort. Not that the external evidence is really weak, far from it. That which gives such an appearance is capable of reasonable, unforced, and even of what seems almost to amount to a historical solution.... The account is exactly in harmony with the scripture that follows it.... There is here an indissoluble link of connected truth between the facts related and the communication our Lord makes afterward.... Choose for me in all Scripture a preface of fact so suited to the doctrine of the chapter that follows. The whole chapter from first to last, beams with light-the light of God and His word in the Person of Jesus. Is not this undeniably what comes out in the opening incident? Does not Christ present Himself in discourse just after as the light of the world, as God's light by His word in Himself, infinitely superior to law, yet at the same time giving law its fullest authority? Only a divine person could act in perfect grace, and at the same time maintain immaculate holiness, and so much the more because it was in One full of grace.

"The scribes and Pharisees manifest no holy hatred of evil, and certainly feel no pity for the poor sinner. 'They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.' Their hope was to ensnare Christ, and to leave Him only a choice of difficulties: either a useless repetition of the law of Moses, or open opposition to it Enmity to His Person was their motive. To agree with Moses or to annul him seemed to them inevitable, and almost equally prejudicial to the claims of Jesus.... But the fact is, the grace of God never conflicts with His law, but, on the contrary, maintains its authority in its own sphere."

The Lord's all-perfect way of handling both the accusers and the accused is well known, so we shall say little. Again, from the pen of Mr. Kelly we quote: "His words were few, simple, and self-evidencing. 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' It was the light of God cast on their thoughts, words, and life. The effect was immediate and complete.... Why did not some of the witnesses rise and do the office? What! not one? 'They..., being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.' The law had never done this.... But here was the light of God shining full on their sinful condition." Oh, the perfection of the Lord and His ways in this incident, and of the way in which it is dovetailed into the divine record at this very point! How can any devout Christian question either its divine authorship or the special place it has in John's Gospel?

A footnote in the new Berkeley Version is worthy of note here. While it admits that some old manuscripts omit the passage, this conclusion is appended: "The incident has such a Christ-like ring, the omission of it would be a great loss. We accept it as a true report."

We stand by our earlier statements that the R.S.V. is untrustworthy, and strongly advise against its use, except as a reference book, and then only with great caution.

Separation and Worship

In order to give Egypt such a character before God as would allow the display of His judgment, Egypt must have the blessing through Joseph; for it is despised or neglected blessing that matures sin. As the Lord says, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father"; that is, they had despised the riches of love and goodness. So Judas perfected his sin by remaining unmoved at the gift of the sop, the token of personal kindness. Thus another king arose, "which knew not Joseph." The goodness of God, toward her by Joseph, Egypt had forgotten; thus her sin was full, and she was ripe for judgment. Without the previous ministry of Joseph, therefore, the fullness of her sin could not have come, as now the world is convinced of sin because they did not believe in Jesus. This makes Egypt a sample of the world.

The Exodus is the separation of the people of God from the world. And I was lately struck with this feature in the scene, that Israel was to go out of Egypt in order to serve, or hold, a feast to the Lord (Exod. 5:1; 3:18; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 9), for they could not serve Him or do sacrifice to Him in the land of their bondage and before that people (8:25-27). Their religious service was of such a character that Egypt would not tolerate it. It was something that so entirely went across all the thoughts of that people that they would persecute and destroy them if they were the witnesses of it. They must therefore go forth.

Now what a character does this simple fact give Egypt or the world! God had no sanctuary there. The thoughts and ways of that land were so opposed to Him that He could not set His name among them. His people must go forth ere they could open His temple or raise His altar, because the very things which Israel would, as it were, sacrifice or crucify, Egypt was wont to worship (8:26, 27). Israel must therefore be separated from Egypt before they could hold their feast to the Lord.

And so it was afterward.

There was a fence all around the Holy Land, a wall of partition that separated Israel in Canaan from the nations. No stranger could eat the Passover, no uncircumcised one could hold the feast of the Lord. And so it is still. We must worship "in spirit and in truth." No man can call on God aright but by the Spirit which gives adoption, nor call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is still on the principle of separation that God is to be served or worshipped, as much as when Israel had to go into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to do so, or to distinguish themselves from all the nations by circumcision to do so.

The wall of partition now is different, it is true; the place outside the land is not a mere desert, it is true; but the place of service is as distinct as ever it was. "Ye must be born again." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." "To whom coming, as unto a living stone,... ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood." Here is the desert, the separated place, the sanctuary of God, within the partition wall. The Holy Ghost raises it now.

Union with Christ forms it; and within that place the abominations of the world are sacrificed now, as the abominations of Egypt were sacrificed in the desert of old. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are to be crucified there, though they are all of the world.

And what was the full feast which Israel held to the Lord when they got out into the desert? Why, it was actually furnished to them by Egypt herself. As soon as they stood on the banks of the Red Sea, they began to hold their feast. They did not wait to reach the mountain (Exod. 3:12). It is quite true, they did afterward serve, or do sacrifice to God, under that mountain (Ex. 19:40; Lev. 1-9). But Egypt herself gave them a song before they reached the appointed place. Egypt was bold enough to resist them so far as to follow them into the very jaws of the Red Sea. Her enmity was perfect; but all this ended in giving Israel a song of triumph over Egypt (Exod. 15). Before they reached the place to which they had been called, this joy was theirs. And so with us, beloved. Satan has done his worst, but Jesus, by death and resurrection, has overthrown him. Had not Satan drawn out his chariots and his horses, all the strength and power of his kingdom, to the hill of Calvary, the song which the resurrection puts into our mouths would not have been ours. But it is ours now, and he can never silence it. It has been raised by himself, and he can never silence it; and we too carry the echo of it in our hearts all through the place, till we reach the mountain of the Lord. In this sense Egypt gave Israel that song; in this sense the god of this world gives our hearts this song; for the eater himself yields meat, the strong man himself, sweetness. And let me add that what

livingly and practically separates us day by day from the world is communion with Jesus. Faith, or the Spirit, or the new nature, is the first great exodus-our first going into the wilderness, out of Egypt, to hold our feast to the Lord-our act of separation from the world; but the place of separation can be maintained daily only by communion with Jesus, through the same Spirit who first drew us out.

Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment

As God said to Cain, "Where is... thy brother?" so He asks the world, "What have you done to My Son?" and the world answers, "Crucified Him." That is man.

The Holy Ghost convinces or demonstrates to the world its sin, as above (John 16:8). Next, He demonstrates righteousness. Man's? No, God's righteousness. We have just to believe what it says. God is always righteous. How is it demonstrated? "Because I go to the Father." Christ glorified God on the cross (John 13), and God glorifies Him at His right hand. That is the demonstration of God's righteousness. You might have had

God's righteousness, man set aside, and no love, or you might have had man's idea of love forgiving sins, but where would righteousness be? But in the cross you have both.

What have we got then? When He glorified God on the cross, He was made sin for us. Then the Redeemer when glorified wants His redeemed. Thus I am made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Last, there is demonstration of judgment. The proof that Satan is the prince of this world, is the cross, and as such he is judged-judgment not executed yet, but he is judged.

The Source of Defilement

As to things that defile, they come out of man. This is true in all things and all acts of evil. They invariably spring from within, from the corrupt will of man. Thus, for instance, it is plain that if the law executes the capital sentence on a criminal, it is not murder but contrariwise the vindication of God's authority in the earth. It is not a question of evil feeling against the culprit, and there is nothing defiling in it. But if you were so much as to injure a man in deed, word, or thought, there you have what defiles. The moment there is that which is a part of yourself, without God, which comes out of you, and you yield to it, there is the taint of defilement. "Murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man." Mark 7:21-23.

In a word, we have the doctrine most plainly laid down here that man-that is, man in his present state-is only the source of that which is evil. I require an absolutely perfect One who is outside me to be my life, and such a One I have in Christ. If I am a Christian at all, Christ is my life, and the business for me thenceforth is to live on and according to that good which I have found in Christ. Therefore, the happy man is he who is always thinking of and delighting himself in Christ. The man, on the contrary, who is striving to find some good in himself is under the error of the disciples before they learned to bow to the word of the Lord. His light was too bright, too searching, too severe, too unsparing, for the will of the disciples. They did not accept the truth with simplicity, and therefore they found it a hard saying.

Revised Standard Version: the Editor's Column

Many requests have come to us for an evaluation of the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible which was placed on sale September 30, 1952. It would obviously be impossible to make a thorough study of such a large work in a short time; hence, our observations must necessarily be sketchy and fragmentary.

Before commenting on the new revision itself, we unequivocally state that we believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. They are as a whole and in all their parts inspired. The thoughts given and the words used to convey them were God-breathed - "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:21. It is true that the words and doings of wicked men and of Satan are therein recorded, and these doings were not inspired, but the records are given by inspiration of God for our learning.

The Old Testament was written largely in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. Translation into English has been a laborious and difficult task. Often there is no equivalent in English of the original expression in Hebrew or Greek; but it is important to get as near as possible to the exact words which God caused to be written. We are only sure of the truth of God when we have it in the words He caused to be written. The search that has been conducted by devout men to ascertain the original wording, and then to convert it into the understandable language of peoples of various tongues is most admirable. How few would be able to read the Word of God if it were only obtainable in Hebrew and Greek! This was the situation at one time, and then it was translated into Latin. The first complete Bible in English was the work of Miles Coverdale, and was printed in 1535-6.

Certain educational standards are absolutely necessary to the work of translating the Bible, or of making a revision; yet no amount of learning alone will suffice for the great task. Only by the Spirit of God can the things of God be understood. The greatest scholar on earth, if unsaved, has not the Spirit of God; he therefore cannot be trusted where spiritual perception is necessary for making a correct translation. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14.

English-speaking people have been much blessed by God in having the King James Version (often called t h e Authorized Version) since 1611. For 350 years it has stood with its elegance of diction, as a masterpiece of English literature. It has probably done more than any other work to stabilize the English language. Its fidelity to the original texts has brought us the Word of God in truth. However, due to constant changes in a living language, many words used in the King James Version are not now current, and are not easily understood. The meanings of some words have changed; for instance, "let" no longer means "hinder"; neither does "prevent" now mean "precede"; nor "conversation," "manner of life"; etc.

In the 17th century the pronouns thee, thou, thy, and thine, were in common daily use; today these pronouns are archaic, except as they have come to express solemnity and reverence. It is quite fitting that this solemn form should be used today when addressing God or the Lord Jesus Christ.

The King James Version is a revision of earlier English translations - Coverdale's, Matthew's, the Geneva, and the Great Bible. The new Revised Standard Version (R.S.V.) is the third revision of the King James Bible; the first came out in England in 1885, and the second in the United States in 1901, but neither of them became generally popular. The present revision (R.S.V.) has been launched with an initial half million dollar advertising publicity program to insure its general acceptance, but time and other factors will determine that.

Some critical translations have been made wherein words and phrases were more literally translated, although doing so has in some measure spoiled the poetic beauty and smoothness of the beloved King James Version. One of the foremost of these is the J. N. Darby New Translation (1881), which is still obtainable. A sample of the way it at times sacrifices smoothness for literalness of translation may be found in 2 Cor. 9:5. The Apostle tells the Corinthian saints that he wished them to have their contribution for the poor saints ready when he and others came to Corinth, so that it would be seen that it was readily given and "not as got out of you." J.N.D. Trans. It is much smoother to say with the King James, "and not as of covetousness," but the meaning is not the same. The one implies, not as being forcibly extracted, while the other may mean that he was not desirous of having the gain. Mr. Darby's translation was the work of a man of God who approached the task with the unshod foot of reverence and holy fear, and his translation is a valuable aid in the proper understanding of the true meaning of some words and phrases. Mr. William Kelly (1821-1906), a man of rare intellectual stature, has also translated most of the Bible from the originals, and his work very closely resembles that of Mr. Darby's. His translation is found mostly in his expository books.

A number of modern English translations have been brought out; such as, Moffat, 20th Century, Smith and Goodspeed, and Weymouth. Most of these are untrustworthy and objectionable in that they have taken undue liberty with the real meaning when changing it into common English phrases. There is little to be gained from any of these, and there is a constant danger of being misled by them, even in vital points. Some of them may be branded as thoroughly dangerous.

There are a few mistakes in the time-honored and much-loved King James Version, but nothing that would undermine any basic truth. The translators' ecclesiastical background led them to use the word "Easter" instead of "Passover" in Acts 12, and "Calvary" instead of "The Skull" in Luke 23:33. They also failed to comprehend the true meaning in 1 John 3:4, and mistakenly said, "Sin is the transgression of the law"; whereas, it should read, "Sin is lawlessness." This is perhaps the most serious mistake in it, for it would limit sin to breaking the law; but Romans 5 clearly tells us that there was sin in the world between Adam and Moses when there was no specific law to break. Sin is doing one's own will. The King James Version also wrongly renders Rev. 22:14, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life," etc. This has been seized by the Seventh Day Adventists to bolster their false teaching of the law. The verse should read, "Blessed are they that wash their robes."

It would seem a good thing if the King James Version could have obsolete and archaic words replaced with words that would convey the meaning which was intended by the original

manuscripts. This would improve the understanding of the Word of God for many people-those who are not diligent to check the rendering with a more literal translation, such as Mr. Darby's. There is no special benefit in retaining the archaic pronouns thee, thou, etc., except as they are addressed to the Persons of the Godhead.

With these thoughts in mind we have read extensively in the new Revised Standard Version, to see if perchance archaisms were deleted, fidelity to the original texts maintained, and smoothness and ease of reading retained. We have approached the matter with an open mind, hopeful of finding a useful version.

We must admit, however, that the list of the scholars who worked on this latest revision is not one to invite confidence. Many of these revisers are openly known as liberals and modernists, and come from schools where doubt and infidelity prevail. Another thing that would put one on his guard in reading R.S.V., is the fact that in the advertising material from the publishers, Thomas Nelson and Sons, came an enthusiastic endorsement by a rank modernist preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick - a man who openly scoffs at the sacred and supernatural fundamentals of our faith. The revising has been done under the auspices of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in U.S.A. This organization embraces some of the most modern and heterodox churches in the nation. In spite of this background, it does seem that these revisers attempted to do a thoroughly scholarly work, and to render a fair translation of the original texts.

Whether these great scholars could render a faithful and unbiased revision or not, is at least questionable, for as we have already said, spiritual discernment is a requisite to proper translation of the Holy Scriptures. The Hebrew of the Old Testament is such an old language that here and there are found words that are now of uncertain meaning. Then there are those words and phrases in both Greek and Hebrew for which there are no equivalents in English; this causes a translator to use circumlocution and sometimes put in a whole phrase to make the sense in English. (You will notice in the King James Version many words are printed in italics; this means was used by the translators to show that they had to add these words to complete the sense in English. Mr. Darby used brackets to indicate the added words. One serious objection to the R.S.V. is that words supplied by the revisers have not been indicated, thus leaving the unsuspecting reader to believe he has an exact word-for-word translation.)

Another problem confronting translators and revisers is that the old manuscripts were all written by hand, and mistakes of copying did slip in- sometimes through mere human failure and sometimes from prejudice on the part of the scribe. Many old manuscripts must be compared, and often more than scholarship is needed to discern what was originally given, and what was tampered with by the scribes. Obviously the closer the copy was to the original, the nearer it would come to being correct; but here, again, discernment is needed, for a later copy may have been made from a more ancient manuscript than one copied much earlier.

In all these difficulties the bias of the translators would be inclined to influence their judgment. It is almost impossible for a man to get away from himself; if he writes history he will see the events from his own viewpoint, and so his history will be colored accordingly. A man who does not believe the Bible to be the Word of God, absolute and unerring, has a bias that ill-befits him for revising the Bible. One who does not accept the Lord Jesus as deity-God manifest in the flesh, God Himself present on earth in human form-will undoubtedly stumble at such a point if there is a difficulty in

the old manuscripts, or if he finds one that has been tampered with.

No true-hearted Christian wants a translator to tamper with the original text to prove such truths as the deity of Christ; at least he should not. The miraculous and supernatural things concerning the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ do not require a translator to force the true original to prove these things. We need a faithful reproduction of what God has given, but through the ages the tampering has been done by those whose prejudice has been against these precious truths.

Having stated some of the background of translations and revisions, we shall now make a brief examination of the R.S.V. New Testament. In eliminating obsolete words and phrases, the revisers have succeeded well. They have replaced "prevent" with "precede" in 1 Thess. 4:15; "letteth" with "restrains" in 2 Thess. 2:7; and "we do you to wit" with "we want you to know" in 2 Cor. 8:1. 1 John 3:4 is correctly translated, "sin is lawlessness."

Some minor mistakes in the King James Version have been properly corrected; for instance, "holy child Jesus" in Acts 4 has been translated "holy servant Jesus." Where the King James scholars used three words (perhaps for variety and smoother reading) in John 5 to translate only one word in the original, the R.S.V. uses only "judgment," instead of "judgment," "condemnation," and "damnation." A clause which crept into the text by mistake in Matt. 25:13 - "wherein the Son of man cometh" - has been dropped; so has the interpolation-"which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" -from Rom. 8:1. References to the Son of man coming, properly belong in other portions of the prophecies of Matthew 24 and 25; but not in that place; and the clause deleted from Rom. 8:1 properly belongs in verse 4. The word "again" has been correctly dropped from Acts 13:33, for it is not the raising of Jesus from the dead that is the point, but rather having sent Him into this world in the first place in accordance with the promises made to the fathers. We noted some other places where corrections could have been made. Nearly all the good alterations have been made years ago in one or another of the revisions and translations; such as, the Revised Versions of 1885 and 1901, J.N.D.'s New Translation of 1881, and others.

We regret to say, however, that we must make some unfavorable comments regarding the R.S.V. There is considerable evidence in it that the bias of the modern scholars has caused some portions to be slanted toward modernism, liberalism, and neo-orthodoxy -all simply gradations of the infidel principle. This is deplorable, for it spoils what may otherwise have been a very useful work.

In our comments on the use of thee, thou, thy, and thine, we suggested that they be retained by us in addressing God, or the Father and the Son. We are told that this has been done in the Revised Standard Version, and this is partly correct. Here was one place where the revisers had to take a stand on the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the preponderance of weight among them being against this truth, they quite naturally decided against using the pronoun for deity in addressing Him; thus, the words of that blessed statement from the lips of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" now read, "You are t h e

Christ," etc. Satan, when addressing the Lord in the temptations, is made to use the pronouns you and your. This can be traced throughout the New Testament, except that in some unexplainable way, a very few times it is otherwise; for instance, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well

pleased" stands in Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22. A strange incongruity appears in Revelation 18, in that the corrupt religious system - Babylon the Great - is addressed with the reverential pronouns.

The words of the centurion who watched the crucifixion have been rendered, "Truly this was a son of God," instead of "the Son of God" as in the King James Version. This is a plain case of a wrong interpretation, for there is no indefinite article in the Greek; what the Greek says is, "Truly this was Son of God," and so J. N. Darby in his literal translation gives it. No doubt this lacks something in English, but it also supplied an opportunity for bias to display itself. Even the Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech (of which we have spoken, and in which there is a tendency to liberalism) did

better on this verse, and rendered it, "Truly this was indeed God's Son." The centurion had heard the taunting words addressed to the Lord Jesus about His being the Son of God, and letting God deliver Him, and when he saw the convulsions of nature at the death of that blessed One, he was moved to exclaim that He indeed must have been the Son of God. There is absolutely no room for such a thought in this verse of "a son of God." It is a clever device of the enemy to detract from His deity. Those who would call Him only a son of God would doubtless tell us all men are sons of God.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" in John 9:35 has been changed to, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" Why this change has been made is not understandable in the light of the fact that the previous revised versions, J.N.D., W. Kelly, the Catholic Douay Version, and Weymouth all render it, "the Son of God," also two new Catholic versions which are as late as the R.S.V. (Confraternity and Ronald Knox) retain "the Son of God," although they also had access to any lately discovered manuscripts.

"Great is the mystery of godliness," in 1 Tim. 3:16, has been changed to read, "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion." This may not seem like a serious change, but all the other versions mentioned above use either godliness or piety in the verse. Godliness and piety may be far removed from mere religion, but the natural man rises no higher than religion.

In Rom. 9:5 the R.S.V. has changed the reading from "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever," to "God who is over all be blessed forever." The King James Version, along with previous revised versions, J.N.D., W. Kelly, Douay, Confraternity, and Ronald Knox, all understand the reference to be to Christ, the One who is over all, God blessed forever, but R.S.V. by a few little changes removes the ascription of deity from the doxology in this verse. Perhaps the revisers found some manuscript that gave their predisposition a chance to show itself, although W. Kelly says of this verse, "Manuscripts and versions proclaim the truth with an unwavering voice: Christ is over all, God blessed forever." Unbelief often stumbles where simple faith finds everything clear and precise.

John 3:13 furnished an excellent opportunity for men lacking allegiance to the cornerstone of our faith - the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ - because some manuscripts had left out the clause, "the Son of man which is in heaven." It can readily be conceived that some early copyists, along with modern revisers, stumbled over His being in heaven when He was upon earth, and so left it out; however, the weight of evidence for its proper inclusion was so strong that all the other versions we have before mentioned include it. We should state that the R.S.V. gives a footnote wherein

they state some manuscripts do include it, although they chose to leave it out of the text.

We also noticed that the R.S.V. left out the little word and in Titus 2:13, thus making our blessed hope-the coming of the Lord for His Church- to be one and the same thing with the appearing of the glory - His coming back in power and great glory with His saints, as is well established by many scriptures. This change, although it does not directly affect the glory of His Person, makes confusion of a most beautiful distinction of the prophetic word.

We might add comments on other verses where we believe the R.S.V. has strayed from the correct meaning-simple cases of misinterpretation through lack of spiritual perception, but we forbear, as this is only a sketchy review.

With all that we have said regarding the R.S.V. New Testament, we believe that the revisers think they acted objectively and gave an honest and fair translation. Their scholarship is apparent, and we do not charge them with forming a cabal to mutilate the Holy Scriptures. That there are errors in it, and some serious ones, we do assert; consequently, we advise that it be treated with suspicion and distrust. If one had an acquaintance who occasionally told him an untruth, he would be wary of anything the acquaintance said.

(We regret that we cannot publish our whole review in this issue, but, the Lord willing, it will be concluded next month. We urge that it also be read, for it deals with the Old Testament of the REVISED STANDARD VERSION.)

Revised Standard Version: the Editor's Column

(This month we conclude our review of the new REVISED STANDARD VERSION of the Bible, which began in this column last month. The Lord willing, the two parts of this review will be printed as one article in pamphlet form, and be ready for sale shortly.)

We shall now come to a fragmentary review of the Old Testament of the new Revised Standard Version. Here we shall say at the outset that we find it more objectionable than the New Testament. Perhaps we can discover a reason for this in some observations of the list of scholars who worked upon it. The revision committee was larger than the one which worked on the New Testament. It was almost entirely composed of liberals and modernists, and even included a Jewish scholar, Harry M. Orlinsky, of the Jewish Institute of Religion, New York. This is a reform Jewish seminary, which corresponds to the thoroughly modernist theological schools among the Protestants.

The Old Testament would furnish many opportunities for the opponents of all the truth of God that centered in the revelation of Himself in the Person of His Son, who was to come as the seed of the woman, and of the seed of Abraham, through J a c o b, Judah, a n d David, for it abounds in its prophetic and typical testimony to Him The allusions to Him are clear and unmistakable, and that without a discordant note. Every section of the book points forward to Him in perfect unison with every other part.

When the Lord Jesus came into the world according to the prophecies that went before, He was forthwith rejected by the very people to whom these oracles were entrusted. They looked for a Messiah to come in power, but failed to believe "all that the prophets had spoken"; they overlooked His first coming in humiliation; and His rejection took place as foretold. Even when the Lord was

here, the Jews were incensed at His claim to deity; and those who at this day still look for the Messiah, look only for an outstanding man-not One who is Jehovah as well.

Jewish opposition to the prophecies concerning "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write" is well known, and very deep-seated. Jewish scribes, translators, and expositors have worked unceasingly at changing the wording or altering the obvious meaning through dexterous manipulations. Some of their reasonings to explain away the self-evident truths concerning the Lord Jesus are "not violent merely, but pitiable" (quotation from W. Kelly).

This deeply ingrained antipathy toward the prophetic word concerning Jesus of Nazareth would be natural to a Jewish scholar, and it would find a like spirit in the anti-Christian modernists among Protestants. Now these men, even though they had good intentions of rendering an honest translation, would be inhibited by their predilections. Handling an older language than the New Testament Greek, these Old Testament scholars had more difficulties with a dead language, and also found a great variety of manuscripts and translations that had undergone tampering in past centuries. All this added up to some difficulties, and to others that were difficulties in their own minds. A Spirit-taught Christian with less scholarship would have had less occasion for stumbling.

In our judgment, when these difficulties, or supposed difficulties, arose, there was a tendency with these revisers to resolve them along the line of their natural bent - a thing quite understandable, and even excusable, if it were not so serious.

One change from the King James Version which the R.S.V. revisers did not make, was one that had been adopted by the American Revision in 1901, and prior to that by J.N.D. New Translation in 1881, also W. Kelly followed it; that was, using a translation of the Hebrew name by which God revealed Himself to Israel - "Jehovah." King James has used "Lord" instead, except in four places, and the R.S.V. adopts "LORD" exclusively. This we believe to be a mistake. The Hebrew word probably was "YHWH" before the vowels were added to make it "Yahweh." It is a precious part of the divine truth that God chose thus to reveal Himself to His earthly people with whom He had made a covenant; the meaning of that name is basically, "Who is, who was, who is to come" - the one unchanging and unchangeable One. How precious that God should deign to thus certify to Israel that He who had made a covenant with them would never change. The name of God, "I AM," found in Exod. 3:14, expresses the same thought; compare also Exod. 6:3 where King James uses "Jehovah," but the new R.S.V. adopts "Lone."

A book we have reviewed, *The Story of Bible Translations*, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, calls the 1901 revision's use of "Jehovah," "a questionable innovation." Now we read in the preface to the R.S.V. that one reason they did not use "Jehovah" was that "the use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from which he had to be distinguished, was discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church." What if it was discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era? Shall we give up the correct translation to please the Jews who dislike it, and who dropped it 2000 years ago? God used it in His inspired Word, and that should settle the matter. But here we trace the effort to blend Judaism and Modernism of Christianity into one pattern. It reminds us that when the lying prophet comes to Jerusalem claiming to be their Messiah, apostate Christendom will also accept him to their ruin. (See Dan. 11:36-45 and 2 Thess. 2:9-12.)

In the Old Testament the R.S.V. likewise uses thee, thou, thy, and thine in addresses to deity, and carefully avoids the use of such pronouns when the Lord Jesus Christ is addressed prophetically. This can be seen in the Psalms; for instance, "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron." Psalm 2:7-9. "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.... You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" Psalm 110:1-4. And in that beautiful psalm that describes His glory as the coming King, Psalm 45, we read in R.S.V., "You are the fairest of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one [not "Most High"], in your glory and majesty," and so on through the 9th verse. This has been done in another Messianic psalm - the 91st - you and your are used 21 times in direct address to Him.

A very strange and incomprehensible application of the rules concerning these pronouns is to be found when some of these verses are quoted in the New Testament. The revisers of the New Testament followed the same plan of not addressing the Lord Jesus as deity when the 91st Psalm is quoted to Him by Satan in the temptations (see Matt. 4:6 and Luke 4:11), but then in quoting from Psalm 110 in Acts 2:35, thy is used, and thou in Heb. 5:5, 6, and 7:17, 21; also in quoting from Psalm 2 in Acts 13:33 and Heb. 1:5 and 5:5, thou is used.

A regrettable change has been made in Psalm 2 In this psalm the Lord Jesus, when He came into the world as man, is addressed by God as His Son; then the kings and rulers are called upon to be wise and to "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." v. 12. The R.S.V. changed "Kiss the Son" to "Kiss his feet," evidently harking back to the word "Lord" in verse 11. The context should have made any difficulty in translating the Hebrew quite clear-it is the Son whom the rulers are called upon to honor. The word could not possibly mean "feet."

Why the R.S.V. should have changed Psalm 8:5 from "For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels," to "Yet thou hast made him a little less than God" is not understandable. The psalm speaks of the same glorious Person, but in that special character as Son of man-a much broader title than Messiah. He was made a little lower than the angels; that is, He became a man, and that (as we read in Heb. 2:9) for the suffering of death. The quotation from the 8th Psalm in Hebrews 2 is correct-"a little lower than the angels."

The 22nd Psalm which so graphically sets forth the sufferings of that blessed One on the cross, is changed in verse 21. As it is in King James and J.N.D. New Translation, God's hearing Him at the end of His sufferings is noted - "Thou hast heard Me" - and He is answered (in resurrection) and immediately He speaks of declaring the Father's name to His brethren; but the answer from God is deleted from the verse in the R.S.V.

Another serious alteration is made in Psalm 45:6. The coming King is addressed as God in verse 6, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," in King James, J.N.D., and Douay versions, but the R.S.V. has removed His deity by rendering it, "Your divine throne." Yet, the quotation of this verse in Heb. 1:8 is correct. This is one case where the Old Testament revision seems to deliberately err, but it is in keeping with modernistic thoughts. A true Christian - one whose eyes were anointed with eyesalve (Rev. 3:18) - would have no difficulty here. The Spirit of God makes it clear in Heb. 1:8, what is meant and to whom it was addressed: "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God,"

etc.

Another objectionable change is found in Psalm 69-a psalm of the sufferings of the Lord just before and on the cross- where "Save Me, O God; for the waters are come in unto My soul," is altered to read, "For the waters have come up to my neck." Surely the idea of waters coming up to the neck is not the same as the Lord's sorrows entering into His soul. We have checked a number of other psalms where the same Hebrew word *nephesh* is found, to see how the revisers translated it elsewhere, and in all cases which we noticed they translated the word *nephesh*, soul. Some of these are, "My soul is also sore vexed" (6:3); "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul" (19:7); "He restoreth my soul (23:3); "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (42:5, 11); "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (103:1, 2, 22). It is quite obvious that the word neck would be out of place in any of the above quoted passages, as also in Psalm 69:1.

Lack of spiritual understanding was abundantly evident in the way the revisers handled Psalm 102. The psalm declares the rebuilding and glory of Zion, and then the Messiah (the Lord Jesus in His humiliation) says, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days." Was Jerusalem to be re-established and the Messiah to be cut off? Then God answers Him: "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end." vv. 24-27. What a beautiful answer to His prayer about being cut off-He was the Creator, and His years would have no end. There can be no reasonable doubt to any open-minded child of God that this is the meaning of these verses, but the R.S.V. by a clever manipulation changes the whole meaning, and again removes a clear statement of the deity of Christ. It reads, "O my God, I say, take me not hence in the midst of my days, thou whose years endure," etc. Thus the Messiah is made to address God as the unchanging One, rather than to be addressed as such.

We must pass over other points in the Psalms and come to the book of Proverbs for a few comments. Pro. 8:22-36 has long been enjoyed by believers as setting forth the eternal place occupied by the Lord Jesus before coming into this world. He is doubtless referred to as Wisdom personified. Here, however, we meet with an affront in the R.S.V. All other translations which we have checked render the 22nd verse thus: "The LORD [or, Jehovah] possessed Me in the beginning of His way"; now R.S.V. changes possessed to created-an entirely different thought. If it be Christ who is referred to, then certainly possessed is demanded, for He cannot be referred to as having been created. R.S.V. also has altered the wording and meaning of the next verse -the 23rd-so that instead of saying, "I was set up from everlasting" (King James), or "I was set up from eternity" (J.N.D. and Douay), it reads, "Ages ago I was set up." Ages ago has a beginning, but not eternity.

We shall now come to Isa. 7:14. Here we find R.S.V. has changed "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel," to "... Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son." W. Kelly says of this verse: "It is well known that the Jews have made desperate efforts to evade this luminous testimony to the Incarnation in their own prophet." Jews and rationalists have made much out of the difference between two Hebrew words, *be thuwlah*, and *almah* (used here). The former is often

used for a virgin, but not exclusively so; the latter is seldom used, but beyond question it is used for a virgin. Both words are used of Rebecca in Genesis 24--one in verse 16 and the other in verse 43. Both refer to the same person, and evidently virgin or maiden is intended. Almah is also found in the Hebrew text of The Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8, and it is worthy of note that the R.S.V. uses an equivalent of virgin in both of these verses; that is, maiden. The word *be thuwlah* which the R.S.V. wants to be exclusively known as virgin is used in Joel 1:8 where the meaning could not be virgin.

Now when this verse is quoted in Matthew 1, the R.S.V. does give it as virgin, but this may not reflect any credit to it, for the New Testament quotation was made from a Greek translation of the Old Testament, often called the Septuagint, and it definitely gives *parthenos*, or virgin. A translation of the Greek of Matthew 1 could only be virgin from the word *parthenos*.

The Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament was completed in or before the second century before Christ, so that it cannot be said to have been influenced by Christianity in so translating *almah* as *parthenos*, or virgin. The Hebrew scholars who worked on translating the Hebrew of the Old Testament into Greek, understood the word to mean virgin.

Ponticus Aquila, a Greek proselyte to Judaism in about 138 A.D., translated the Old Testament, and utilized the Septuagint in his work. He, as was his bent, changed virgin of Isa. 7:14 into young woman, so the R.S.V. is not alone in doing this; but the weight of evidence is against them and it.

Another point to consider is, in the words of W. Kelly, "In the present instance the context requires the sense of virgin with the utmost precision; for in a young married woman's bearing a son, there is no sign or wonder." This was to be the sign God would give of His interposition on behalf of Israel. And the virgin's Son was to be Immanuel, or "God with us."

The wonderful prophecy of the "seventy weeks" in Daniel 9 has been altered somewhat from what it is in King James Version, where the time for the appearance of "the Messiah the Prince" is foretold. R.S.V. reads instead, "an anointed one, a prince." This is in line with what we have discovered elsewhere in the version. We know that Messiah means anointed, but the use of the indefinite articles before anointed one and prince indicates the disposition of the scholars who worked upon it, for in the 26th verse, after speaking of the Messiah's being cut off, it goes on to a Roman prince, and there uses the definite article - "the prince who is to come."

In Mic. 5:2 it was foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but the Spirit of God hastens to add: "Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (King James Version); Mr. J. N. Darby, and Douay, translate the last clause, "from the days of eternity." A wonderful safeguard against any misunderstanding about the deity of the Christ - His goings forth have been from the days of eternity. Here again we find the R.S.V. in conflict with the testimony of the other capable and trustworthy translators, for the R.S.V. says, "Whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." Here we have the revisers dropping in again (as in Proverbs 8) the thought of His beginning- "whose origin"; that is, His beginning, or creation (which is utterly false) - and then bringing it down from an unknown and unknowable eternity to merely "ancient days." Much more could not be done to this plain prophetic utterance of the deity, and eternity of being, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall glance at one more book-Zechariah-to see some twisted references to the Person of the Lord Jesus. In Zech. 11:13, after giving a prophetic picture of the Jewish leaders making a bargain with Judas for the betrayal of the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, the prophet was told to "Cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD." We know how accurately this was fulfilled, and the Jews bought the field, called the potter's field, in which to bury strangers. But the R.S.V. has dropped any mention of the potter from this verse.

The coming of the Messiah in lowliness and humiliation, when He came the first time, is adjusted in Zech. 9:9, for instead of rendering it as others do, "Thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation," the R.S.V. says, "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he." That is the way Israel looked for Him, but the prophets also foretold of the sufferings of Christ as well as of the glory that should follow.

Also in chapter 12:10 the R.S.V. has changed the wording to that which is pleasing to Jews and liberals. Jehovah speaks of the day when the house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem shall see the One whom they pierced, and says, "They shall look upon ME whom they have pierced." What could be plainer than that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth was Jehovah Himself. Israel shall yet see Him thus, and believe this very truth. But here the R.S.V. followed earlier doubters, and rendered it, "When they look on him whom they have pierced"; they thus remove the statement that the One who was pierced was Jehovah. W. Kelly comments on the same change made at earlier dates: "The reading of the Keri 'on him' instead of 'on Me,' seems evidently to bear the stamp of a correction designed to remove an apparent anomaly from the construction as well as to get rid of the plain truth, as the text stands, that the pierced One is Jehovah. Hence the correction has crept into the text of not a few manuscripts.... The truth is that these tamperings with the reading and the efforts of others to enfeeble the translation only show the deep moment of what is here written by the Holy Spirit."

Then in Zech. 13:6, "What are these wounds on your back?" has been substituted for "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" The marks in His blessed hands, which were put there through the wickedness of men, on the cross, shall yet be apparent. The change to "on your back" strikes at the crucifixion.

Perhaps it should not be overlooked that the R.S.V. says, "And there shall be a priest by his throne" (6:13), instead of His being a priest upon His throne. The thought of combining priesthood and kingship in Him did not enter their minds, but that is precisely what is meant, and many scriptures give support to this truth. It is then that He shall act in His Melchisedec, or royal, priesthood character.

Now, Christian reader, we leave these observations with you and trust you may weigh them in the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, but not of the wisdom of this world. We had hoped we might find a useful version that we could recommend, but alas, it is otherwise. We feel it would be a great mistake if the Revised Standard Version should replace the King James Version for one's regular reading of the Word of God. While there are mistakes in the King James, as we said, yet it is free from liberal bias and slanted renderings which wrest the Scriptures.

Perhaps this new revision may be helpful to some when used strictly as a reference book, but even then the user should be on his guard, and he should be one who is able to discern both good and evil. We strongly advise reading regularly and diligently the King James Version, and we feel that the reader would be wise to check any difficult passage with a more literal translation from God-fearing men, such as J. N. Darby and W. Kelly.

Perhaps God may overrule and permit the publicity for this R.S.V. Bible to promote the reading of it by some who may therein find the way to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He is sovereign and can do as He pleases, and if He blesses unsaved people through it, to Him be the praise.

Stored Treasures

I remember hearing of a dear old Christian who was troubled with a bad memory. He seemed to forget everything he wanted to remember. At last a happy thought struck him. Why not ask the Lord to remember for him? Accordingly, the next time he heard anything good which he desired to retain, he simply looked up and said, "Now Lord, keep that for me till I need it," and he continued this practice to the end.

"The time of need" evidently did not come to the dear old saint till he was lying on his deathbed; then the blessed truths which he had "banked" with the Lord were again returned to him, no doubt with interest, for the comfort and joy of his own soul. But not only so; they rolled out of his lips for the comfort, joy, and blessing of others also.

Often have I thought of the dear old man! What a wise thing to do! What a safe bank to put his spiritual treasures in! What a gracious God to commit them to! He knows best when we need them, and when to return them to us. When He does that, it is real food for the soul.

Storms and Disasters: the Editor's Column

A record number of tornadoes in the United States for the first half of the year has affected parts of 34 states, left more than 400 dead, and more than \$200,000,000 worth of property destroyed. To all the questions that have been raised regarding the unusual frequency of these disastrous storms, scientists have given explanations showing that there is really nothing unusual about it, but that whenever certain atmospheric conditions exist, a tornado is born. This is very plausible, and perhaps is the logical explanation, but there is one notable fact that is overlooked; namely, "The LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm." Nah. 1:3. The scientists of today are much like the magicians of Moses's day; for every supernatural phenomenon, they have a natural explanation. In common they both exclude God from the works of His own hands. Thus those who would be exercised by the storms, feeling that God is speaking through them, are lulled to sleep by scientific explanations.

There are many references in the Word of God to His using the elements to further His purposes, either in blessing or in judgment. It was an east wind that blew all day and all night that brought up the swarms of locusts on the land of Egypt (Exod. 10:13), and an east wind blew all night and dried up the Red Sea so the hosts of Israel could cross on dry ground (Exod. 14:21).

Psalms 107 tells how God commands and raises up the stormy wind which in turn lifts up the waves to the end that mariners might turn to Him. Then He makes "the storm a calm." Yes, "He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries." Psalm 135:7. "Fire, and hail; snow, and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling His word." Psalm 148:8.

Everything today is explained on the basis of cause and effect, but has God no hand in either cause or effect? Is He not rather the First Cause? The trouble is that scientists stop short and only see the cause that God produced.

The tornado, the lightning, or any other divine visitation cannot strike without His ordering or permission, regardless of man's deification of the cause and effect principle. A verse in the book of Job is important on this point: "His hands He covereth with lightning, and commandeth it where it is to strike." Chap. 36:32; J.N.D. Trans. Even the erratic strike of the lightning is controlled by God. In all these visitations the child of God is to see the hand of the omnipotent Creator, and that One is our Father. Not one thing can come to His child without His overruling hand.

This much blessed nation- blessed with temporal things and with a ready access to the truth of God-is by and large given over to pleasure, self-ease, and forgetfulness of God, and when He speaks through such visitations, they are blandly explained away.

There is one other aspect of such storms of which we would do well to speak; that is, Satan as prince of the power of the air has and exercises limited power over the elements. True, he is a usurper, but his power is to be reckoned with. Take, for instance, the history of Job. When Satan had permission to touch Job's possessions he brought a great wind from the wilderness and smote the house in which Job's sons and daughters were feasting. A tornado, born of certain

natural causes, scientists would say, destroyed the house and killed Job's sons and daughters, yet all was under the direction of Satan, within the limits allowed of God.

However great and real Satan's power is, there is this comfort to the child of God; Satan can only go as far as God permits, and no further. As soon as Job's afflictions were accomplished by which God was teaching him his own wretchedness, Satan disappears from the scene. He would have gladly put his hand to take Job's life, but was forbidden by God. Satan then could not go beyond a certain point, as was also true when he desired to have Peter in his sieve, but God triumphed in the end for blessing to both Job and Peter. Now, more than ever, the believer may rest in this, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the conqueror of Satan; He went down into death, Satan's stronghold, and rose triumphantly, breaking Satan's power. He shall yet bruise the serpent's head, and when He does, the saints shall be associated with Him. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. 16:20.

Rev. 9:11 gives some further light on Satan and his activities: "Whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon [destruction], but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon [destroyer]." He is the destroyer, and if he were permitted unrestrained power in this world, he would fill the world with catastrophes and destruction from one end to the other. It is only the restraining hand of God and the presence of the restraining power of the Spirit of God that holds him and his legions of wicked spirits in check; but woe be to the world when the Spirit of God with the Church leaves it. Then when Satan is cast to the earth it will be said, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. 12:12.

We who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior shall not be here then, but be above the destruction, with our blessed Lord; and in the meanwhile, we know that He is the victor and conqueror of Satan, and that not one thing can touch one of His own blood-bought ones without specific permission, and that for our good.

"The Whole Head Is Sick, And The Whole Heart Faint." Isa. 1:5.

Metaphorically, the world is a very sick man. His ailments are numerous; he has a fever, high blood pressure, a serious nervous disorder, St. Vitus dance, and many acute local infections that threaten to spread and bring on a complete collapse. Oddly, certain parts give evidence of malnutrition, and even starvation, while others indicate he has been living "sumptuously every day" (Luke 16:19) and spending all in "riotous living" (Luke 15:13).

Ever since the fall the old man has periodically been racked with convulsions, but never before in his 6000 years' history has he been so generally sick. Many modern physicians have prescribed one treatment after another, only to be proved "physicians of no value." Some, however, admit his case is serious, and others go so far as to say they see no hope of improvement, and prophesy the worst.

Surely the words of Isaiah may be appropriately applied to the present state: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isa. 1:5, 6.

Diagnosis is simple, however. All the alarming symptoms that are now present can be traced back to the original virulent disease-sin. This is the first great cause of the general malady, but there is a second cause of even greater gravity; namely, the rejection of the only remedy-the grace of God. The Great Physician came in love seeking to heal, but the world cried, "Away with Him, away with Him," we "will not have this Man," nor has it ever repented of its act. The fine clothes of respectability, and the trimmings of religion cannot disguise its innate hatred of God's Christ. Is it any wonder that its present condition is critical?

Wherever one may look there is confusion and strife: Korea, Indo-China, China, Palestine, Iran, Egypt, Germany, Austria, North Africa, South Africa, parts of South America, not to mention the unrest and moral degeneration in the most stable of the Western nations. But amidst it all God is taking out of the world a people for His name (Acts 15:14). The Holy Spirit is here seeking and winning a bride for Christ (see Gen. 24), for the One who went to the cross to glorify God in respect of sin, and to cleanse every repentant sinner who trusts in Him and His blood. This work goes on unnoticed in general, but it is definitely progressing; soon the last member of the Church shall be saved, and the whole, both "sleeping" and living saints, together with the Holy Spirit, shall leave the world. The fast approaching day will indeed be a happy one for every Christian, but a solemn doom-sealing one for the world. Then "The hour of temptation,... shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10. So terrible will be the judgments of that time that unless limited to a very short duration, "there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22).

So the Christian need not look around and be distracted by all the strife and turmoil; he may look up where all is bright and serene, even to Christ at the Father's right hand, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus as the Savior of our bodies (Phil. 3:20, 21).

The world is still in darkness, the moral night still envelops the scene, but our hope is the appearing of the bright Morning Star-the One who will come to claim His own just before the break of day. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." May our response be, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"That bright and blessed morn is near

When He, the Bridegroom, shall appear,

And call His bride away.

Her blessing then shall be complete

When with her Lord she takes her seat

In everlasting day.

"The days and months are gliding past,

Soon shall be heard the trumpet's blast

Which wakes the sleeping saints.

The dead in Christ in glory rise,

When we with them shall reach the skies

Where Jesus for us waits.

"What wonder, joy, and glad surprise

Shall fill our hearts as thus we rise

To meet Him in the air,

To see His face, to hear His voice,

And in His perfect love rejoice,

Whose glory then we'll share!

"No more deferred our hope shall be,

No longer through a glass we'll see,

But clearly, face to face.

We'll dwell with Jesus then above,

Whom absent we have learned to love,

Blest samples of His grace.

"O may this hope our spirits cheer,

While waiting for our Savior here;

He'll quickly come again.

O may our hearts look for that day,

And to His word responsive say,

`Come, Jesus, Lord. Amen.' "

A Stranger in Jerusalem: Two on Their Way to Emmaus

"Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?" (Luke 24:18) said Cleopas to the unknown traveler by whom he and his companion were accosted as they journeyed toward Emmaus on that eventful first day of the week.

Three days had elapsed since the Lord Jesus had been crucified, and for that long had the sorrowing disciples mourned, not only their loss, but the blighting of all their hopes as to the redemption of the nation of Israel.

On the morning of this day, however, strange things had happened. Certain women had gone early to the sepulcher of their loved Lord in order that they might embalm His body with the spices which they had prepared.

But they found the sepulcher empty. Their Lord was not there. Moreover, they had seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

Again, certain of the disciples had also gone to the sepulcher and found that the report of the women was correct; "but Him they saw not.*"

These were strange and startling events indeed, and proved themselves such to the two who walked these sixty furlongs that lay between Jerusalem and Emmaus.

And why did they take that road? How came they to leave the place where, of all others, this mystery would certainly be solved? Why abandon the society of their fellow disciples at such a juncture?

The reason was best known to themselves; and so they moved away with perplexed and heavy hearts until "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them."

He had come up from behind; and as He was making for the same point they did not object to His company.

"And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

He remarked upon that sadness as He asked the manner of their conversation. Alas! unbelief was the cause of both.

Their reasoning, their sadness, and their weary walk would all have been obviated had they only believed what they had so often heard.

It is also our highest wisdom to believe the Word of God. If we fail to do so we only land ourselves in vain reasonings or speculations, and fill our hearts with sadness and depression.

But Cleopas could not understand how that anyone could be ignorant of the things that engrossed the minds of all, and so he said, "Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the

things which are come to pass there in these days?"

Little did Cleopas know how deeply acquainted this "Stranger" was with these things. The exquisite sequel shows, while their hearts burned, how the unknown speaker attracted them, as by a magnet, to the Scriptures which they had unbelievably overlooked.

At length the disclosure came. "They knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight."

But that glimpse was enough; they hurried back to the place they never should have left in order to tell their tale of that wonderful interview and, as eyewitnesses, to corroborate the facts of Christ's resurrection. They returned and found the eleven assembled and were informed by them that "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

Thus their news was not new. Simon had preceded them. Had their walk only been shorter they might have forestalled him; but they had to suffer the consequences of their unnecessary departure to Emmaus, and learn that they were not the only eyewitnesses of the risen Lord.

Yet the title, "Stranger in Jerusalem," applied in ignorance by Cleopas, had a new meaning now that he could not conceive. It was only too true that Jesus was a stranger in Jerusalem! He had come to His own, and His own had received Him not. He was Lord of that very temple where thieves and exchangers of money and grasping merchants found a place, while He had none.

He had come - the Son - seeking fruit from the husbandmen to whom the vineyard had been let out, and was encountered by the unanimous cry, "Come, let us kill Him."

Verily He was a "Stranger in Jerusalem." Her rightful Lord was refused, rejected, crucified. He for whom there was no room in the inn, and who had not where to lay His head, was thrust aside for Barabbas the robber. For His love, He had hatred; and how deeply pathetic was His complaint when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,... how often would I have gathered thy children together,... and ye would not!" He had their blessing at heart but they would have none of Him; and hence naught remained but judgment for them, while He became morally a stranger in their city. Yet He who is a stranger in Jerusalem, seeks to be a resident in the hearts of His people. "If a man love Me," He declares, "he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23. Or again, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17)-that Christ may be no stranger there; no, not even a visitor, but a dweller in the heart by that faith which makes His company more real and intelligible than sight or touch.

If He be a stranger in Jerusalem, He seeks an abiding place in the heart. If He be unknown there, He would be well known, and loved, and enjoyed here. If cruel unbelief prefer a robber, or a Judas, or a world there, faith may bid Him welcome-Him who died to save, and lives to keep, and whose love passeth knowledge.

May He be no "stranger," no mere visitor, but rather a constant, welcome resident in your heart, dear fellow believer, until you and all His own are in His mansion, His abode, and like Him on high.

Striving for Power: the Editor's Column

A greater power than that possessed by Premier Josef Stalin has done its work, and the reins of government have fallen from his cold, still hands. The world's greatest ruler of all time has gone. It has had its great rulers in the past, and usually those called "great" have achieved that doubtful honor through daring conquests, and great destruction and blood-shedding; but never in all history has one man controlled the destinies of so many people. No one ever before approached the enormity of power wielded by Dictator Stalin, whose merest word had the power of life and death over more than 800,000,000 people.

Many have striven for power, but few attained it. Now the man who acquired most of it has succumbed to the power of death, and passed away from his glory, never to return. What an emptying thing death is! Truly, "all is vanity" (Eccles. 1:2). His body is to be preserved by refrigeration and lie in a glass casket beside that of his mentor and prototype, Nikolai Lenin; and perhaps a great monument will be erected to his memory, but that will be but a hollow and vain show, for his soul has gone to that place beyond the great gulf (Luke 16), and he is beyond the reach of the plaudits and acclamations of men.

Moses was within the reach of power in his day as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," but he had respect unto the reward (Heb. 11:24-26), and forsook Egypt to cast in his lot with a company of slaves. Had he not done so, his mummy might be in an English museum today; but he would never have been on the "glory mount" with the Lord Jesus, and still have a great reward coming in the light of God's Word and of eternity, Moses made a wise choice.

We are impressed at this time with the futility of man's greatest efforts to avert death. Russian scientists and doctors worked at feverish speed to perfect a serum that would preserve the life of Josef Stalin. They used "human guinea pigs" in their experiments, but to no avail.

As we reflect on the history of the most ruthless dictator the world has known, some verses come to mind in Revelation: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Chap. 20:12-15. Yes, the man who sought to obliterate the name of God from the earth has gone to meet that God whom he defied. He who began his early manhood in training in a Greek Orthodox Theological Seminary, and then turned against God, knows better now.

NOTE: There are some ways in which the empires spoken of in Daniel excelled even the triumphs of Premier Stalin. Nebuchadnezzar was the "head of gold" of the image (Dan. 2), as having his grant of power direct from God; and the kingdoms of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome successively dominated the known world. While they did not control as many square miles, or rule as many people, yet each in its heyday had no real rival. World domination is the one thing that Russia seeks, and which it will never acquire. The Western world will not fall before Russia; it is

reserved to fall before the Son of man in His day, as the first of His acts of judgment

Speculation is rife in the world as to the possible outcome of Stalin's demise on Russian and world affairs. We are not prophets, and before this issue reaches the hands of our readers many things will have already taken place, but we venture a few remarks. History has shown that it is almost impossible for a dictator to transfer his power, and often a battle for supremacy ensues among his top advisers. This, however, is not apt to change the policy within Russia or the course taken in international affairs. Russia is thoroughly controlled by a police system and, in all likelihood, the man who can gain control of that will become the future dictator. Furthermore, any of the men who are in a position to seek the dictatorship are thoroughly indoctrinated with the same communist ideology. It is almost certain that no leader could emerge that would change the set of the sails of their ship of state. The next ruler will be younger than Premier Stalin was at the end, and a younger man is apt to be more aggressive and less cautious. If this happens, there will be a worsening of international relations.

Of one thing we are sure; namely, God is behind the scenes, and moving those scenes. "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." In approximately one year, the King of England died and was replaced by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth; the President of the United States was changed; the President of Israel died; the King of Egypt was overthrown; and now the Dictator of Russia has died. We may not see how all these things are working together to further God's purposes and plans, but there can be no doubt that they are. They are all in vital areas in the global struggle. The end is approaching, and things are moving rapidly. Soon we shall hear that shout for which we are waiting, and shall leave this world without regret; then only a circumstance or two will be required to bring in that awful time when men's hearts shall fail them for fear of what is coming (Luke 21:26). We did not think the Church of God would be here to see as much as has already taken place. No sign is looked for before the appearance of the Bright Morning Star.

Just one day before Premier Stalin was stricken, we had a Jewish paper put into our hands. In it were reminiscences of Israel's past, particularly reflecting on those who oppressed the Jews. Frequent reference was made to Haman (the man who sought to exterminate the Jews in his day) in the book of Esther. One rabbi said, "Hamans come in all sizes." The editor said: "Haman, repeating for what to us alive today seems quite familiar, accused the Jews of Persia of plotting against the king.... Haman, like so many future potential and actual dictators wanted the Jews to conform-to bow to man instead of God-and thus opened the path to his self-destruction.... Many Hamans have arisen and fallen in our age-long history.... We must not forget that within a decade of the destruction of the modern Haman, Hitler, another Haman-a Russian Haman- has arisen in the Kremlin, and world Jewry must now transform itself to Esthers and Mordecais; otherwise there may be no Jewish people left to celebrate another Purim."

We looked in vain for reference to the help of God, but found instead a leaning on their own power and wisdom. But that people who are "beloved for the fathers' sakes" are being watched over from above, and all God's purposes concerning them will be fulfilled. Nevertheless, it is wholesome to reflect on how many who have put their hands to the Jews, have fallen. God is chastising that people for their sins, but woe be to the man who lifts the cudgel to strike them.

In the book of Esther, after the Jews' deliverance from the power of Haman, they kept a feast of gladness and joy. The Jews have continued this feast on through the years, called the "Feast of

Purim," after the word "pur" (which signifies the casting of the lot) in Esther.

Annually the Jews celebrate this victory over Haman with t h e reading of "Megillah Esther," or the scroll of the book of Esther. They also make it a time of festivities.

Now the thing that has impressed us, even though some may call it a mere coincidence, is that on the very day in which world Jewry celebrated the Feast of Purina (March 1), the "Russian Haman... in the Kremlin" was stricken, and lapsed into a coma, only to leave this life a few days later. However that may be, we can safely leave all in the hands of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator, whose works were all known unto Him from the beginning (Acts 15:18).

In response to our comments in this column regarding the degrading influence of television in general and the unsuitableness of its presence in the Christian's home, especially those comments in the issues of August, 1951, and October, 1952, we received the following information from a reader:

A survey conducted in the Chicago area counted in four days, "77 murders, 7 kidnappings, 53 shootings, and a total of 216 crimes of violence," in TV programs for children. What a dreadful influence to hasten the moral depravity of the last days! And the danger for Christians does not stop there; even the better things of the world displayed on television are just so much poison for the Christian, whose calling is heavenly. Let us beware of this great snare! The above information has now been incorporated into our second edition of the tract: "TELEVISION - Should it have a place in the Christian's home?" This new edition (enlarged 25 per cent) will soon be available from the publishers at the old price.

Suited Ministry: Milk or Meat

What is the suited ministry for believers generally at the present time?

A scripture often cited in answer to this question is in 1 Peter: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Chap. 2:2. It is contended by many that this means that "milk" is the suited aliment for the young believer. To say nothing of the character of the word used (albeit it is very difficult of translation), the point in the scripture is simply that just as newborn babes desire milk, the believer should long for the Word of God.

If we now turn to another passage, we shall obtain further light upon our subject. The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as [according to] men?" 1 Cor. 3:2, 3. It is clear in this case that the Apostle fed these believers with "milk" because of their bad condition-that he deplored the necessity for doing so-and that had they been responding more fully to God's grace and love in redemption he would have fed them with "meat," and not with "milk." To assume, therefore, that the saints need "milk" is to proceed upon the supposition that they are in a Corinthian state; and to make provision for it is even to foster the condition which all should deplore. We learn moreover that the ministry suited to one assembly may be entirely unsuited to another; and the question may well be pressed home at such a moment upon the hearts of teachers, whether there has been the sufficient exercise of spiritual discernment, as to the state of souls, as a guide to their ministry. Nothing is plainer than that it would be an utter mistake to deal out Ephesian truth to a Corinthian assembly, or Corinthian truth to an Ephesian assembly.

Another scripture may be adduced to aid us in our investigation. Commencing to speak of Melchizedek, the Apostle turns aside to add, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." Heb. 5:11-14; 6:1.

There are several points here which need very earnest attention. The Apostle mourns over the saints' inability to receive the truth he had to communicate. When for the time they had been Christians they might have been teachers, it was necessary to go back to the elements of truth; for they had become such as had need of milk-proof that they were unskillful in the use of the Word, and had become dwarfed in their growth. They were babes still, and hence the fervent exhortation with which chapter 6 opens. In a word, these dear saints were unwilling to go forward; and who that had the mind of Christ could be satisfied with such a condition? What teacher could calmly accept their state, and go on feeding them with milk, as if nothing more were necessary?

Surely we do well to attend to these solemn warning words, for might they not be addressed with equal reason to many believers in this day? Are there not hundreds - no, thousands - who never care for anything beyond the gospel? Sad were it indeed if any saint of God ceased to have fellowship with the glad tidings of the grace of God. That which occupies the heart of God Himself may well occupy the hearts of His people. But this does not involve our feeding on nothing but the gospel or the simplest elements of the truth. By no means; for we need Christ in every character, aspect, and office in which He is presented; and if we fail to recognize this, we shall speedily become as dwarfed as were these Hebrew believers.

It will certainly be replied, But remember how many newly converted souls there are. These are truly babes, and would you not feed them with "milk"? The Word of God is our only guide, and we have two instances at least of the way in which the Spirit of God ministers to such. The epistles to the Thessalonians were written soon after the Church there had been formed - both probably within a year after the saints had been turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). And what do we find? In the first epistle we have the return of our blessed Lord presented in every variety of aspect, and this too, distinguished from His coming to the world, besides a great deal of practical instruction for the building up of these saints on their most holy faith. In the second epistle the Apostle goes still further, and teaches the full character of the appearing of Christ, the truth of the man of sin, the blessed fact that the Church must be caught away from this scene before this son of perdition is revealed, etc. 'Now these can scarcely be termed elementary subjects, but they were intended for the instruction and comfort of these "babes," and were indeed necessary to them for the understanding of Christianity.

We have another example in John's first epistle. Dividing the whole family of God into fathers, young men, and babes, in what manner does he address this last class, the youngest of God's children? "Little children," he commences, "it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come," etc. Chap. 2:18. He then proceeds to point out the danger arising from antichrists having already appeared. He puts them on their guard by giving the marks of the antichrist, and leads them to the source of their safety in their having the unction of the Holy One and the Word of God. It is, in fact, a remarkable correspondence with the teaching of Paul in 2 Thessalonians.

Here then we have divine wisdom to guide us in teaching "babes." They must be nourished with the Word of God; they must be fortified against danger by the revelations and warnings which it provides; and they must have a whole Christ in all that He is in Himself, in all that He is to God, and in all

that He is to them, unfolded that they may grow thereby. This is a very different thing from occupying them with questions and controversies instead of Christ; and it may be added that the maintenance of simplicity in the manner of instruction is entirely consistent with leading souls on in the knowledge of their portion in Christ, as well as of the dangers of the path. But the divine treasures should not be forever withholden from the saints. Are we to surrender, even for the babes, the truth of death and resurrection with Christ? If so, the foundations of Christianity are gone, and we shall easily - and speedily fall back to Jewish ground and to a Jewish experience.

May the Lord make us all, whatever our stage of growth, increasingly desirous of following after, if that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus!

On the Way up to Jerusalem: Rich Man, Disciples, and Blind Bartimeus

Read Mark 10:17-52

In the above scripture we have three distinct types of character presented to us in the rich man, the disciples, and blind Bartimeus.

In the person of the rich man, we may see a very numerous class set forth. He was not by any means without real anxiety respecting his soul's interests. He was seeking "eternal life," and had evidently struggled to obtain it by works of law. Yet, with all his legal efforts, he was ill at ease. He felt there was something lacking, and therefore he came to Christ.

But in his very first question we detect the wrong ground on which this singularly interesting man was standing. He said, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" His mind, still darkened by the mists of legalism, had never admitted the wondrous truth that "eternal life" is "the gift of God," and not the reward of human doings. His question proved him to be very far behind in his apprehension, not only of God's dealings with man, but also of his own real state in God's sight. Hence, the Lord sent him back to Moses; He sent him back, as it were, to the foot of Mount Sinai to learn the solemn and impressive lessons taught there amid thunders and lightnings, blackness, darkness, and tempest. Such was the real bent and object of the Lord's reply, "Thou knowest the commandments." It is as though He had said to him, "You are hundreds of years too late in your inquiry. The doing principle has been tried long since, at Mount Sinai, where it ended in failure. I am here on the ground that man's doings are set aside. Eternal life is God's gift, not man's earning."

However, the rich man did not know where the law really put him. He was ignorant of the holiness of the law and of his own ruined condition. He said, "All these have I observed from my youth." No one who knew the height of God's law and the depth of man's ruin, could make such a statement. Persons who speak of keeping the law know "neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." If man could keep the law, then either he is perfect, or the law is imperfect. But the "law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7:12. Hence, it is not possible that a sinful being could so keep the law as to get life by it, and therefore this rich man was quite astray in saying he had kept all the commandments; for had he done so, he would not have lacked anything; whereas, Christ said to him, "One thing thou lackest." "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." Rom. 10:5. If therefore a man could say he had kept the commandments, he should have a right to life as a matter of positive earning. But who would dare to put forth such a claim? Who has so kept the law as to be able to claim life from God? Not one. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." Rom. 3:20. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Gal. 3:10. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal. 3:21.

Why, then, it may be asked, did the Lord refer this man to the commandments? Simply that he might see by them how far short he was of what he ought to be, and so learn his need of something outside of himself. He sent him back to the schoolmaster, and when he professed to have learned all that the schoolmaster had to teach him, the Lord applied another and a more searching test by calling on him to let go the world, and take up the cross. This was far more than he was prepared for. The world shone too brightly, and the cross seemed too gloomy, in his eyes, to admit of any response to such a call. The world was heavier, in the balance of his heart's affections, than Christ. It would be all well enough if he could get eternal life and hold the world as well. The heart likes right well to make the best of both worlds. But it will not do. If a man comes to Christ to bargain about eternal life, he will, assuredly, find the price far beyond his means; whereas, as we shall see presently, if a man comes as a beggar, he gets all he wants for nothing. If a man comes as a doer, he must be told what to do; if a man comes as a sinner, he is told what to believe.

However, it will always be found that the cross is too heavy for anyone to take up who has not first seen Christ nailed to that cross for him and for his salvation. Further, "the way going up to Jerusalem"-that is, the way which Christ trod, and which all must tread who follow Him- will be found too rough for all save those whose feet are "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." I must by faith lean on the cross ere I can carry it; and I must possess eternal life ere I can follow Jesus. To attempt to carry the cross until I enjoy a crucified Savior is more difficult than even to stand before the fiery mount. This rich man who thought he had kept all the commandments was repulsed by the dark shadow of the cross, and "went away grieved."

But did the Lord Jesus mean to teach this man that he could "inherit eternal life" by doing, selling, or giving? By no means. What then? He was answering him on his own ground. He had come as a doer, and he went away because he could not do. Like Israel in Exodus 19: they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do"; and when Jehovah did speak, "they could not endure that which was commanded" (Heb. 12:20). Man speaks about doing, and when he is told what to do, he is neither willing nor able to do it. God's word to all who "desire to be under the law" is "Do ye not hear the law?" (Gal. 4:21). "The man which doeth those things shall live by them." Rom. 10:5. "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Luke 10:26.

Hence then this amiable and interesting person was not disposed even to set his foot upon "the way up to Jerusalem." The thought of relinquishing the world, its riches and its pleasures, was far beyond him. He wanted "eternal life," but if it was to be purchased by giving up his riches, he would not pay the price, and so he "went away grieved."

The disciples furnish us with another type of character. They were able through grace to say, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee." They were a stage beyond the rich man. They had seen sufficient attraction in Christ to lead them to give up their earthly all, and attach themselves to His blessed Person. This was all well. They should be no losers, for Christ will be no man's debtor. Whatever is devoted to Him, He will pay back "a hundredfold now in this time, ... and in the world to come eternal life." But then "many that are first shall be last; and the last first." It is one thing to begin; it is another thing to continue. It is one thing to enter upon the path; it is another thing to pursue it. This is a most solemn truth.

"And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid." v. 32. Why was this? Why this fear and amazement? Had they not voluntarily given up all to follow Christ? Yes; but they had not just anticipated that the cross would be so heavy or the way so rough. They had given up this world's brilliant offers, but they did not reckon upon the dark clouds which hung over the path leading to Jerusalem; therefore, when called on to encounter these things, they were "amazed" and "afraid." They had not, like the rich man, to go away "grieved" because unable to shake off the influence of this world's wealth; but they followed Christ in amazement and fear because of the roughness and darkness of that path along which He was conducting them. Theirs was obviously a different case. They had life, and did not need to "inherit" it by works of law or works of self-denial. But then if they wanted to follow Christ, they had to count the cost, for He was on His way up to Jerusalem. He had "steadfastly set His face" to meet the terrific array of all the powers of darkness, together with the scorn, the reproach, the enmity, and derision of those whom He had come to save.

And mark the grace of those words, "Jesus went before them." He put Himself in the forefront of the battle. He exposed Himself to the marshaled hosts of earth and hell. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again." vv. 33, 34. With a steady gaze He contemplates the whole scene, but most graciously omits one ingredient in His approaching cup of unutterable sorrow; namely, His desertion and denial by those who had left all to follow Him.

How little they entered into all these things is evident from the fact that while on the way up to Jerusalem they were occupied about the question of their respective places in the kingdom. A heart that is filled with love to Christ will find full satisfaction in the assurance of being near to Him. It is not so much the place I am to get, as the Person who will be the center and spring of all my joy forever. Paul, in Philippians 3, is not occupied with the place which he is to have in the coming kingdom. No; to "win Christ" was the fondly cherished object of that devoted heart. From the moment he beheld the beauty and excellency of that blessed One near the city of Damascus, until he was "offered up" in the city of Rome, he was carried forward by the intensity of love to His Person and His cause. And, assuredly, no one ever drank more deeply of His "cup," or entered more thoroughly into His "baptism" than Paul.

It only remains for us to look for a moment at the case of "blind Bartimaeus." In this poor blind beggar we see one who virtually rebuked both the rich man and the disciples, for the moment he laid his open eyes on the Son of David, without casting back a lingering look at his garment which he had cast away in order to come to Jesus, and without a single thought about the roughness and darkness of the path, he "followed Jesus in the way." What "way"? The way going up to Jerusalem. It may be said that he had no possessions to give up, and he knew nothing of the direction or end of that way; very likely, but that does not alter the matter. The valuable point for us to get hold of is that when the eye is filled and the heart is occupied with Christ, we never stop to think of what we have to give up in order to get Him, or what we have to endure in order to follow Him. HE HIMSELF ENGROSSES THE WHOLE SOUL; and naught but this will enable us to bound along the path after Him. What was all the world to Bartimaeus? Or what the roughness of the way? His eyes had been opened, and not only opened but filled with the fairest vision that ever

fixed the gaze of men or angels, even the Person of the Son of God-God manifest in the flesh - and therefore leaving far behind his blindness and his beggary, he pressed forward after that wondrous Person who had met all his need.

Why did not Christ tell him about t h e commandments? Why did He not call upon him to take up his cross and follow Him? Why did He not hold up before his view the "cup" and the "baptism"? Because he was not a bargainer, but a beggar. Because he was not talking about his doings, but confessing his need. And, finally, because he was not thinking about what place he should get in the kingdom, or about the roughness of the way thither, but seeking to get to Jesus and to follow Him when found. This is simple enough. Christ never proposed conditions to a poor, blind, brokenhearted sinner. He came down from heaven, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28.

It is beginning at the wrong end to call upon a ruined and helpless sinner to give up the world in order to find Christ. He is "without strength"; what can he do? If I tell a miser that he must give up his gold, or a drunkard that he must give up his drink, before he can come to Christ, he will tell me I might as well ask him to cut off his right hand. But let such a one have his eyes opened to behold the bleeding Lamb of God - let him see God's salvation - let him hear the glad news of sins forgiven, and eternal life and righteousness bestowed through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ - and then mark the difference. Instead of going "away grieved" at the hardness of the conditions proposed, he goes "on his way rejoicing" in the fullness of the salvation revealed; and instead of moving along "amazed" a n d "afraid" because of the roughness and gloom of the path, he presses forward toward the mark with a cheerful alacrity which naught but companionship of Christ can impart.

Reader, can you see your own character in any of the foregoing types? What is the present condition of your soul? Are you anxious to get eternal life, but still shrinking from the immense sacrifice which you think is involved? Let me entreat you to "behold the Lamb of God" bleeding on the cursed tree to put away sin. Think not of any sacrifice which you must make, but of that sacrifice which He has made. This will give you peace. Look away from self straight to Jesus; let not the weight of a feather come between. He has done ALL, and the soul that believes in a dead and risen Christ, is quickened, pardoned, justified.

However, it may be you have found pardon and peace in Jesus; moreover, you have let go your hold of this world, and pushed out from the shore to go to Jesus. But you find the way very rough, and the cross very heavy. The contemptuous sneers of old associates-the bitter reproach and opposition of many around you -the narrowness of your sphere, and the loneliness of your path - all these things are against you; and you find amazement and terror creeping, at times, over your spirit. Well, be not afraid. Remember that the Master is before you; you can distinctly trace His blessed footprints all along that rough and cloudy, path. Persevere! You must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Keep your eye steadily fixed on Jesus. The time is very short. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37); and then your ears will hear the gladsome words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21).

Words of One Who Was Caught up to the Third Heaven

Every Christian is "a man in Christ." There is no such thing as a Christian not being a man in Christ; the moment I can say of one that he is a Christian, in the sense in which it is spoken of here, there is a man in Christ—a man who as to his standing has entirely parted company with man in the flesh. Of course if I am not watchful and self-judged always, the flesh will get power over me; but there is a great difference between being what is called overtaken by the flesh, and being a man in the flesh. As a man in Christ, I am in a new place altogether.

We must see the difference between standing in the old thing, and standing before God in a new condition in Christ. Paul refers to the time when they were in the flesh, but now he says, "Ye are... in the Spirit." So it should read, "I know a man in Christ"—not "I knew." Observe he does not speak of himself as Paul; this is very blessed. If he had anything humiliating to say of himself, he spoke of Paul; he said, "Through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall"; there was nothing very elevating to a man in that. It was a humiliating position, so he said, "I." But the moment he came to speak of that which was elevating, it was no more "I"; it was "a man in Christ"—that which is true of every Christian. "I know a man in Christ."

After this he speaks of that which is not true of every Christian. Every Christian is a man in Christ, but every Christian is not "caught up into Paradise" (J.N.D. Trans.). None of us have been caught up as Paul was; it was a distinct thing peculiar to himself. And then he heard words not possible for a man to utter. "Possible" is the word, rather than "lawful." He means to say that as soon as he returned to the consciousness of being in the body, he found he had no vehicle of communication with which to express the greatness of the things that he had witnessed. And so it is, the deeper a thing is in our souls, the greater difficulty we find in speaking of it; we cannot convey to another the sense, the impression, of that which we have got ourselves. How difficult it is when we have received anything from God Himself, to convey to another anything like what it is to our own heart!

This is one thing. And then comes another thing which brings out the watchful care of God for His servant, and is most solemn to see. The blessed God, knowing that the flesh in. Paul was just the same as before—his having been in the third heaven did not change it in the least—it was there ready to rise at the first opportunity—anticipates the working of it by "a thorn in the flesh."

I do not know anything in Scripture which gives a greater idea of the preventive watchfulness of God. We all know that He restores our souls when we fail; but do we enough think of all the little things that occur in our daily life that He has prepared and arranged to the end that we may not fail? It is "lest I should be exalted"—not bringing me back after failure but preventing its occurrence. It was a grievous thing for Paul—a messenger of the devil.

Who but the blessed God could use Satan against Satan? This very thorn, this messenger of Satan, took away from Satan the power to work upon Paul's flesh. Is it not a blessed thing to think that God can do it? We are very prone to the language of infidelity and apt to say, This or that happened to me. Would it not be more blessed to say, God sent me this or that? Is there not a

sweetness about anything, however grievous, when I can say, My Father's hand in watchful love brought me this thorn? "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh"; it was not a crushing trial that happened to Paul; it was a given mercy.

Now the first thought with the Apostle was, Could not I get out of this difficulty? Saints think if they could only get out of their circumstances! But do you know that if you did, you would take with you the nature that makes the circumstances in which you are, so trying to you? That which makes the present ones so trying would soon make just as much difficulty in the new ones. Here the Apostle goes to God to change his circumstances; we often change them for ourselves. He said, in substance, Take it away, Lord, three times. What a contrast between the thrice repeated prayer of the blessed One to His Father, ending with, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." It was the perfection of Christ to shrink from drinking that cup. Paul, imperfect, feeble, prayed, Lord, change my circumstances. The answer came in this-Do you want Me to put you in circumstances where you will not need My power? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

To any pressed one I would say, Would you take from God occasion for displaying His power in your weakness, and from yourself all opportunity for turning to and leaning upon that power? This is really the answer of God here. He says, I will not take away the thorn, but I will give you My power. It is not only relief; it is that I am positively put in the place of power at His own side. "My grace is sufficient." Weakness is the platform on which it displays itself; the thorn becomes the blessed occasion for Christ to show how His strength comes in. What a wonderful thing to move through the world leaning on the power of Christ!

Thy Way ... Thy Presence ... so Separated

In a day of confusion and sorrow, the mark of a true heart is the earnest desire to know His way through it all; and this is remarkably evidenced by the position of Moses at that time. Nothing could have been more solemn than the state of Israel; they had accepted the calf, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And their mournful condition is thus described: "And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." The calf and the dancing were the objects upon which the eyes of the man of God rested as he descended from the mount. What will Moses' action be in the midst of such a scene? What are his first thoughts? Let us mark it well. Having broken the tables beneath the mount, and burned the calf and ground it to powder, his first and main thought is the vindication of Jehovah's character and name, which had been basely and falsely associated with idolatry and sin. "Who is on the LORD'S side?" is neither Laodicean neutrality nor selfish indifference. Very solemn was the test then; and how blessed to find in Levi a people superior to the claims of nature where the honor of Jehovah was concerned, so that it was said of them in relation to this action in Exod. 32:26-29, "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant." Deut. 33:8, 9.

This then was Moses' first great act of vindication of Jehovah's claims. How blessed to think of it in this day of half-heartedness on the one side, and indifference on the other - in this day of man (1 Cor. 4:3), when the spirit of Laodicea prevails on the right hand, and the ways and mind of Gallio on the left. Very cheering and encouraging to faith are the ways of faith and devotedness in this crisis-moment when "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey," and when it may be said, as in the days of Jeremiah, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth."

Now observe what follows this. Having, as we have seen, vindicated Jehovah's name in judgment, and in doing so brought out the faithfulness of Levi, who by the act earned, as it were, the priesthood, Moses shows how his heart apprehended the holiness of Jehovah; and the act of pitching the tabernacle without the camp, thus separating Jehovah's name from the guilt and defilement of Israel, is a blessed instance of its kind and day as to how faith's intimacy with the Lord alone can discern what is suitable to Him. Thus it is Moses makes a place for God outside the camp, afar off from the camp, which had put a false god in His place, and changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass. May we not say that this is the kind of nearness to Christ, and devotedness to His blessed interests and name, which is lacking so much at this moment? And is not this the quality of faith which He is looking for especially now, and for which He Himself commended the church of Philadelphia in these words: "For thou hast a little strength, and has kept My word, and hast not denied My name"? May the Lord give His blessed people such loyalty of heart to His blessed Son in this day.

Another point in this history is full of deep instruction just now. Moses having made a place for God outside the camp, not only removed His name from association with idolatry and sin, and thus maintained His holiness and truth, but thereby was also set up that which some would call a new test; so that we read, "And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp" - mark the words well, "which sought the LORD." Where He was, then was everything. And is it not so now? "There am I" is the rallying point of the hour. In the days of Moses some might have been contented with the camp, resting in that which once marked it, and no longer did so, but every one which sought the Lord went out without the camp.

These principles have a sorrowful but a very appropriate application to present days, for surely the Lord has been teaching us many things, and yet none more strikingly than this: that if we are to have Him who is holy, Him who is true, in our midst, it must be on His own terms. Self-will and unholiness may judge otherwise, but faith will hold fast to His revelation of Him self as the "holy and true"; and look well that such a name as His in its preciousness and value as His people's alone resource, be not associated with what is foreign to His nature and glory. Now having judged the idolatry of the people, and pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, separating the name of God from it, Moses earnestly asks to know Jehovah's way "Show me now Thy way" (Exod. 33:13). How instructive and how blessed is this; there must be a moral condition of soul for such a desire. Any way out of a difficulty, be it ever so unworthy, will ever find the largest number of adherents; but the moral state indicated by Moses' previous acts in relation to Israel's sin and Jehovah's glory, will not, cannot, be satisfied with anything less than "Thy way" - and how blessed is the reply, and how perfect it is, "My presence shall go with thee." His presence marks His way, and His way is found where His presence is. And is it not so at this moment? If we be without the presence of Christ, we cannot be in His way; but there is more than this, for Moses says further on, "For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." The way that it is known that He goes with us, is that we are separated to Him; it works both ways, only those who are separated seek Him, then finding His presence and His way, and the proof that He is with them, is that they are separated. This exclusiveness, as it has been called, works from within to that which is without; the outward part of it may be seen without the inward power-it has ever been so-but it lasts only for a time and manifests constant inconsistencies; but that which springs from within-the power of the cross of Christ (and what so exclusive and separating!) applied unsparingly by the Holy Ghost-will extend to every circle in a consistency and evenness peculiar to itself.

May the Lord teach us at this moment this perfect way of peace and rest! May His beloved people be awakened from every slumber that would incapacitate them from judging what is suitable to Himself, so that with renewed desire to please Him, they may prove the reality and blessedness of His presence and His way amid the confusion and darkness of the hour.

The Time of Temptation

"Lead us not into temptation." It is not "Lead us not into sin"-nothing so impossible as that our Father which is in heaven should do that. But He can lead us into temptation; that is, to be sifted by the enemy, into the place where the flesh shall be exposed and crucified, when this is needful, because hardness, or lightness, or inattention to His patient warnings has supervened. He can lead us into temptation as the last and forced necessary means of self-knowledge and discipline, and it is great grace that the Lord will take this pains with us; but yet, seeing our weakness and the terribleness of the conflict with the enemy, and the holy fear of falling, which becomes us, it well becomes us to pray that we may not be cast into this furnace, that the Lord may have no need [to do it] with His thus humbled child. Satan is ever active, and he has, as it were, certain rights and vast power now that sin has entered, if the children of God are not watchful to prevent his having occasion, and do not walk in communion and dependence (for in the times of sifting, a bad conscience tends to drive to despair);:

The flesh in its carelessness and undiscerning blindness meets the trial in distress and uncertainty, or carnal opposition, and falls, and Satan so far has gained his point, though the Lord may restore. If, on the other hand, trial be there, we have this model [in Christ] of our position before God-not proud heroism which despised the sorrow, the pain, and the danger, but entreaty to be spared the evil, casting the soul on God for that, and spreading out its desire before Him in blessed and childlike confidence which does not fear to tell all its sorrow and its feeling, but in perfect submission desiring that the Father's will be done.

To Cover Sins: the Coverer and the Covering

Whether it be in saint or sinner, it is wickedness and folly to cover sins. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." Pro. 28:13. How is it possible to truly cover them, seeing that "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"? And "Who can forgive sins but God only"? God only can cover because against Him and Him only have we sinned, and done evil in His sight. Hence the preciousness of that word from

God, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Rom. 4:7. How forcibly it speaks as to WHO is the coverer! even He who can say of everyone that believeth in Jesus, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And again, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." What a Coverer -the blessed God! What a covering-the precious blood of Christ!

The Truth As It Is in Jesus

Let me illustrate the value of the truth as it is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21). Take any truth you like; for instance, man. Where shall I learn the truth about man? Shall I look for it in Adam - a man that listened to his wife after she had listened to the devil - a man who, when God came down, ran away from Him, and even dared to insult God by laying the blame on Him? Shall I look at his sons - at Cain his first-born, or at Abel whom Cain slew? The beautiful grace in Abel was what was of God, not what was of himself. If you pursue the history of man as such, you only find evil and pride and presumption increasing upon him till you give up the whole tale in shame and disgust. And so it would all end but for the last Adam. I find here in every step that He took, in every word that He said, in everything that flowed from His heart and was reflected in His ways, One that never did His own will. Now I learn the beauty and the wonder of a man subject to God upon the earth - the only One who ever walked in perfect, moral dignity, though He was despised of all, and most of all hated by the religious leaders of the world in that day. But how did not God delight in Him? Here then the humbling truth is told. Man has shown himself thoroughly; Jesus, the cross, tells the tale in full.

But suppose another instance: if I look up and think of God, where shall I, of a surety, find Him? In creation? It is all ruined. Besides, to read Him only in the book of nature, is but to have glimpses of power and beneficence. But in the midst of all these large and shining characters of divine majesty, and wisdom, and goodness, scattered up and down through everything that He has made upon the earth, I should also have to face other characteristics, as of weakness, decay, suffering, death, etc. The question arises, Whence do these come? They are as crooked as the others were straight - the latter as full of misery as the former wore the impress of wisdom and power. The result of all this is that, for the mere reasoner in the vanity of man's mind, the understanding gets darkened; and all that can

thus be learned, even from the consideration of that which comes from the hand of God, completely fails to give the knowledge of Himself. I see the effects of another hand there, as well as His own - the hand of a destroyer and liar. And instead of rising up from nature to nature's God, as poets vainly sing, you are apt to sink from nature to the devil who has ruined it all; you fall into the snares of the enemy by the effort to find out God in your own strength.

I want some other way wherein to learn what God is. To gather an evidence of His being is one thing; to know Him is another. I can delight in anything that He has made, but what are His thoughts, feelings, ways, especially to a sinner? If you talk about providence, is there not an Abel suffering and a Cain prosperous? Great deeds were done in the family of the proud murderer, while those who had whatever then shone of the light of God, were disliked and scorned by the world, often weak in their own eyes too, but suffering and cast out wherever faith made them odious to those who had it not. This is an impenetrable enigma to man.

How can he, in the face of such facts, discern the superintending power of a God as conscience tells there is? Constant difficulties arise, and the reason is very plain - it is not in circumstances

around, any more than in my own mind, that I can find the truth. Not that there are not traces and indications in providence as in creation, but I want the truth and cannot find it in either.

Then I may come down to the law. Does it give me the truth? In no way. It is not that the law was not good and holy, but it is never called, nor in itself could it be, the truth. Its design was more for making the discovery of man than of God. Its operation was that man might thereby learn what he is in himself. It runs like a plowshare, when directed by the Spirit, into the heart, and lays bare many furrows, and discovers what man never knew was there before. But none of these things shows what God is to man in grace. Not even the law can give the truth as to this. I cannot at all learn by it what a Saviour God is, nor even fully what man is. At the best it declares what a man ought to be as well as do, but this is not the

truth. What I ought to be is not God's truth but my duty. Law was the standard for man in the flesh, and hence it never was given till man was a sinful man. "The law was given by Moses," and not to or by Adam. The commandment laid upon Adam is never called the law, although it was, of course, a law.

Further, you will never find truth, even in the Bible, if you sever it from Jesus. But the moment the same blessed One, who has shown me in His own life and death what man is, has also shown me in the very same what God is, then all the clouds break and the difficulties vanish. Now I know God, beholding Him in Jesus. New thoughts of God dawn on the soul and, submitting to Him, I am made perfectly happy, perhaps not all at once, but as surely as my soul has received Jesus, and learned what the true God is in Jesus, I have eternal life, and shall find unbroken peace; but in Him I receive all that I want, all that God intends for my soul, because the truth is in Jesus. Thus then as a believer, I know God; I know that which the heathen never did nor could reach.

Watching

The characteristic of a person who has his ear open to the Lord, is watching. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat [that is a figure], and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12:37. I find Him serving, then, in divine love, still in the same character. He comes and takes us to heaven-to His Father's house-that where He is, there we may be also. "While you were in that wicked world," He says, as it were, "I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension, with diligent earnestness to keep the heart waiting; but I take you to a place where you are to sit down, and it will be My delight to minister to you."...

What characterized those servants w a s watching, and they got the blessing. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." Ah, beloved friends, are you watching, waiting for Christ practically? I cannot be watching and going on in my own way. Are our lights burning, or have we slipped down to the ease and comforts of this world like other people? This is not having our loins girded, and it is not as a doctrine we are to have it only.

What We Have Who Receive Christ

By faith we receive Christ (John 1:14); receiving Him we receive from Him the right to become the sons of God; we receive forgiveness of sins, abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness. We receive eternal life. Christian action follows on this reception of Christ. The teaching of the Holy Ghost unfolds to us what we have received in having received Christ. It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul: it is not that which we renounce, any more than that which we do, which makes us Christians, but that which we receive. And t his principle runs through the Christian life; it is a life which has its affections, sensibilities, energies, and activities. Our Christian life is not a system of negation any more than is our natural life. This marks it forcibly from the common notion of religion. It is said, "Cease to do evil"; it is added, "Learn to do well." "Abhor that which is evil"; "Cleave to that which is good." "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying."

What I Your Response? "the Man Who Saved Me"

Some years ago a poor woman, one of a number who earned a scanty living by washing at the riverside near Glasgow, and whose only possession was the tub in which her daily task was performed, had the misfortune to fall into the Clyde, and as the river was deep and the current strong, her case seemed hopeless, as no help was apparently at hand. Suddenly a man who was a renowned swimmer and had saved many lives, plunged into the stream; but only by extreme exertion, and well-nigh at the cost of his own life, did he succeed in rescuing the object of his solicitude. The old woman herself had been so long submerged that animation was suspended, and no little effort was required before consciousness returned.

And now, dear reader, what do you think were the first words which issuing from her lips manifested to those around that she had really come back, as it were, from death to life? Some expression of anxiety as to her home, her family, her friends? Some disclosure of her feelings while in the jaws of death, or on her discovery that she had been rescued? No, nothing, nothing of this! but words that should be a touching lesson for us who have been further gone than she toward a far more terrible fatality, and who have been rescued, not at the almost, but at the actual cost of another's life. Her words were, "Oh, how I want to see the man who saved me!" Beautiful exclamation from the mouth of one who had nearly perished, but whose unselfish gratitude led her to concern herself about him whose self-sacrificing work had brought her back from death. The man came at her word. Again she spoke. "O sir," she said, "you've saved me, and I've naught in the world save you tub; but, oh! if you'll take it, you're welcome, with all my heart!" The man no less astonished than gratified, made no reply, but taking his hat in his hand, went around collecting from the assembled crowd, and speedily coming back poured all he had received into her lap, enriching her as she had never in her life either experienced or expected.

Is it not thus, though in an infinitely higher and more blessed way, that God, having given us eternal life in Christ, with Him also freely gives us all things? Have we, like the poor woman, experienced deep longings of heart to see the One who has saved us, and when we have made His acquaintance laid all we possess with all our heart at His feet? If so, surely we shall have found that inasmuch as it is more blessed to give than to receive, He will be no man's debtor; but taking to Himself the higher blessedness which is His due, He will pour into our lap all that He has received, to share with us the spoils of His own victory, the guerdon of His own work! And thus to us shall belong the double and lasting indebtedness which our narrative illustrates. May we who have been so wondrously blessed, and who sometimes sing of Him, "And gave us all that love could give," be led of the Holy Ghost into personal acquaintance with the Man in glory whom grace has made our satisfying portion forever. And may the taste we thus acquire for what we more and more find only in Himself, intensify, as it surely will, the longing desire of our hearts to see Him face to face when the day dawns and the shadows flee away!

What Think Ye of Christ

This is a testing question for every heart-for every conscience. Religion, ordinances, and doctrines may well be laid aside for a little in order that the soul may be free to give an answer to the solemn query, What think ye of Christ?

Who Is the Son of Man? "the Higher Mysteries of Thy Fame"

"The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" John 12:34.

What a question for a poor sinner to essay to answer! Tread softly here, O my soul, and let it be with unshod feet, for thou art on very holy ground. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father"; therefore guard thy words with jealous care. And, when thou hast said thy last syllable, think not that in knowledge thou art more than a child standing ankle deep in the great sea, and whose eyes behold but a little of those mighty waters that roll away and wash the shores of many a far-off land.

For there are things revealed in the Scriptures which, in their fullness, no creature can comprehend. How should he, seeing they are infinite? And the receiving of them necessarily involves the subjection of the mind to God, against which the proud mind of man rebels; and in that rebellion lies the root of nine-tenths of the infidelity of the day. What an immense, nay, what an awful loss, were the truth of God to be trimmed and shaven down until the mind of man was able to measure to an inch, and weigh to an ounce, all that God has been pleased to reveal! It must shrink and shrivel up exceedingly before that could ever be.

To the dissenting Jews, the Son of man, there standing in their midst, was no more than the carpenter's son. Some might hold Him for a prophet, and others regard Him as "a man sent from God," whose credentials were sufficiently attested by the miracles which He wrought. And the thoughts of thousands of so-called Christians in this day rise no higher than that, if indeed as high. Christians they are not, save in name; for it is of the very essence of the Christian faith that this Son of man was God manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In Him dwelt, and dwells, all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). Whosoever he be who confesses not that, is no Christian at all.

How unspeakably precious is this! "God has been manifested in flesh" (J.N.D. Trans.). How? When? In the Person of the Son of man. God has come nigh to us. God has spoken to us, not through the prophets as in olden times, but He Himself has spoken; He has been here. We gaze upon the Son of man, we listen to His words, and we behold God manifest in flesh. He who would have been forever unknown and unknowable, save as creation revealed Him, and the prophets made Him known, has been manifested in flesh. For the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Finite we are, and how sensible of this we become when dealing with that which is infinite and eternal. Who can go back to "the beginning" of John 1:1? It is easy to think of the beginning of creation, easy to conceive a time when created things were not, when you might have searched the boundless fields of space for sun, moon, and stars, and searched for them in vain. Nor is it impossible to comprehend a time when God in the fullness of the Trinity dwelt alone in sublime solitude - the all-sufficient, self-existent One. But let your thoughts explore those remote recesses of eternity until, weary of wing, they falter and stop and can go no further, then this Son of man was - not indeed as Son of man, but as the eternal Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God." Eternal existence, distinctness of being, and Godhead are thus ascribed to Him who became flesh and tabernacled among us-Son of man, Son of God, the Christ, "who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5).

In a magnificent passage in Colossians 1 the Holy Spirit declares the creatorial glories of Him who for the glory of God and our blessing became Son of man. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (subsist). And if the same Spirit speaks in simpler strains through John the Apostle, yet they have a beauty all their own, and an emphasis to which nothing could add force. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Thus the material universe and all created intelligences in it are the creatures of His hand-He the Maker of all and the Sustainer of all, and all of them formed for His glory, and to sound forth His praise.

And we must guard with no less jealous care the true and sinless humanity of Him of whom we speak. A real Man was He who suffered hunger (Matt. 4:2) and thirst (John 4:7), who grew weary (John 4:6) and wept (John 11:35) and prayed (Luke 9:28), and who never used the attributes of deity, which were ever His, to shelter Himself from the consequences of the position which He in profound grace had taken up. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. If obedience to God, and dependence on Him, should ever mark men, He, having become man, was always under all circumstances obedient and dependent. When tested in the wilderness He repelled every attack of Satan by the Word of God (Luke 4), thus honoring those ancient scriptures which men nowadays in their presumptuous daring treat with such ignorant disdain. In all this He is our great Exemplar. Oh! how perfect were His ways here below! How full of moral beauty! What a sight for angels to behold (1 Tim. 3:16), and for the eye of God the Father to rest upon! Pause here, my soul, and wonder and worship.

It is a fathomless mystery, this union in one blessed Person of God and man! Can we explain it? Can we comprehend it? Never! It were easier far to pour the ocean into a tiny shell, or to bind leviathan with a straw. But the heart taught of God receives it, and cherishes it as one of the most sacred mysteries of our most holy faith.

"His glory-not only God's Son-

In manhood He had His full part-

And the union of both joined in one

Form the fountain of love in His heart."

And remember, O my soul, that this great mystery is no suited subject either for cold and curious speculation, or heated and acrimonious debate. If others embark thereon, refuse thou to follow them. Weary not thyself in seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, or to compass that which cannot be compassed by any creature; but cultivate a lowly, reverent spirit that receives with meekness what God has been pleased to make known in the Scriptures of truth; so shalt thou be built up and blessed.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creature's grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend. Worthy,
O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow."

Why Does Man Hate the Bible?

"That book," said a caviler one day, speaking of the Word of God, "is not fit to be read to my children." Would it not have been better if he had paused a moment, and asked, "If all the truth of my own history had been written down, would it be fit to read to my children?"

Why does man hate the Scriptures so much? "It is a collection of fables," he says. But this cannot be the real reason for if you accept this charge Aesop and others have before now made a collection of fables, and he does not hate them. "It is only a history," he says, "and there are mistakes in it." But even if this were true, why do not other histories get a share of his hatred? "It has so many contradictions in it." How glad he seems to be when he thinks he has found one. But it is easier to make the charge of a so-called contradiction than to honestly point it out. But if he actually found a thousand (in reality he cannot find one), it would be no reason for these strong feelings of undisguised bitterness. He says the story of

Jesus Christ is only a myth, that He never existed as He is spoken of in the Bible, that the Bible statements are not true. But people do not get angry about Greek mythology; they do not get madly excited over the stories of Jupiter or Hercules, because they are not true. Ah, no, all this caviling lacks the clear ring of genuine honesty. The true reason must be sought elsewhere. "Thy word is a... light unto my path," said David (Psalm 119:105), and "Men have loved darkness rather than light; for their works were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light that his works may not be shown as they are." John 3:19, 20; J.N.D. Trans. This is the true secret.

A farmer once said that he had not opened the Bible for nearly twenty years-that he dare not do it. Every page seemed to condemn him.

The Word of God is as the eye of God upon the soul of man, and because he cannot bear it, he tries his utmost to set it aside and get rid of it.

A Wile of Satan

One mode by which the enemy succeeds against a soul is popularity. Balaam devised this mode of entrapping and overcoming Israel after they had left the wilderness and were in the vigor of a new generation about to enter the land. It is important to note that whenever Satan uses a new stratagem, it is the one most likely to ensnare his intended victim in the advance he has made. The aim of the world is now to flatter the people of God. They are invited to join them in social life. Woe be to the Christian when he stands so well with the world that he can be received socially. The man of God could not be popular with the man of the world. The great proof of power in a heavenly man, as typified by Israel in Canaan, is that he is an exterminator of the old inhabitant. The man in the flesh is allowed no place.

Hence no one can be popular either in ministry or socially but he must in some way compromise the truth of God. Alas, they find "that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (Pro. 9:18). In this world where the Christian naturally expects opposition, it is not to be wondered at that any measure of acceptance is hailed with pleasure. Surely the enemy expected that he would have beguiled Paul and Silas when the woman with the spirit of divination so favorably proclaimed them.

The more popular a servant of God is, the less the measure of truth he enjoys and declares. The danger of popularity is that, like Israel, I become corrupted by the very element which commends me. The man who ministers to the human element in others, and thus calls forth commendation, is sure to increase that element in himself to his sore loss and sorrow.

The Woman of Canaan

The Lord Jesus had just exposed the heart of man, which, He says, was so bad that those things which come out of the heart defile the man; then He shows the heart of God in His grace to a poor Canaanite woman.

But the lesson to be learned from this case is one which each sinner needs to take deeply to heart. The lesson is-he must take his true place before God in order to get the blessing.

This woman was a Gentile and therefore outside the privileges of Israel; besides, she belonged to the accursed race of Canaan, and such ones were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation. But she was in deep sorrow and need, her daughter being grievously vexed with a devil. Her need was real, her sorrow was great; but when her cry for mercy fell on the ear of the Savior, He answered her not a word.

Was He indifferent to her appeal? Had He not a heart filled with love and compassion for every needy soul? Surely He had. But she came to Him on wrong ground. She said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David." What had the Son of David to do with a Canaanitish woman? As Son of David, he had come to fulfill the promises to Israel, and she was outside the pale of Israel. The disciples wanted the Lord to grant her request and send her away, but He answered that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then we have her second appeal, "Lord, help me." Was there even a trace of hardness in His reply, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs"? Oh no; it was all designed to bring her down to take her true place as having no claim upon Him whatever. And so it is in principle with every sinner. Sometimes it requires a long process to bring us to own our utterly lost and helpless condition before God.

And now the question was, Will she be turned aside because her request is not granted at once? will she go away sorry and disappointed? No indeed; her faith rises above everything that might seem adverse in His dealings with her, and she goes right down to the bottom as to her true place and standing before Him. She gives up all claim, every bit of right to anything, and casts herself on pure grace. Was there not even a crumb for a dog like her?

And thus it was her faith that opened the door so that all the grace and love which dwelt in the heart of Jesus might flow out, and He answered, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

So it ever is. Faith would lead the sinner to take his place as lost, and thus get the blessing on the ground of pure grace.

The World's Last Chance

The position of this world is an awful one. It has rejected the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in all their manifestations of righteousness and love.

The Son and the Spirit have both visited this scene in Person. One is here, and One is not here. The Son came to reveal the Father, to display divine love as it had never been displayed. In the life of that lowly, gracious Man was a perfect representation of the Father. His was no hidden life; it was lived before the gaze of men. In word and deed, such deep grace, accompanied by omnipotent power, shone forth as the world had never seen; and at the close of His ministry He says, "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." John 15:24. The world had rejected the Son, and with Him the Father also.

But the ways of divine love are very wonderful, for immediately after speaking thus He announces that the Holy Ghost shall come to earth that He may "testify of Me." But this was the world's last opportunity. The Spirit was to come because the Son was rejected. If the Spirit should be rejected too, what is left for the world? Nothing but the pure, righteous wrath of an insulted God. Jesus, in announcing the advent of the Spirit, foreshadowed the setting in of a day of grace; but a day, mark you, reader, that would assuredly be followed by a night of judgment.

Great and awful as was its sin in rejecting the Father and the Son, grace lingered over the world, loath to leave it to itself and to its doom; hence, when Jesus ascended to heaven the Spirit came to earth (Acts 1; 2).

But both blessing and woe are connected with His coming. His testimony received brings salvation; rejected, it carries with it eternal judgment. The world has been given its last chance, but it is a wonderful chance, for while He is here there is salvation for the vilest. Today the destiny of numberless souls is being decided by the rejection or reception of the Spirit's witness.

"He shall testify of Me," says the Son; and this witness of the Spirit is found in the Bible, which is His work. Prophecy, symbol, type and figure, interwoven throughout Old Testament history, is the Spirit's way of testifying of Jesus there; and in the New Testament the incarnation, life, and ministry of the Son are brought before us in a fourfold view; and the light of the Spirit then illumines Calvary's dark scene, and we see Jesus there as the true and only sacrifice for sin, the Savior of the world.

But while it is true that the Holy Ghost has, in the Word, given a powerful testimony to the work of Christ in its blessed efficacy for the salvation of the lost, it is also true that He has taken up an attitude toward this world which must never be forgotten. In John 16 Christ says, "When He is come, He will reprove" (bring demonstration to) "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

In whatever way it may please men to view and speak of Christ's death, there, un changed and awful, is the Spirit's witness that His crucifixion was the result of the world's unbelief in Him, and the sin of that crucifixion is fixed upon it (Acts 2:22-24). The world got rid of one divine Person by crucifying Him; but it is a solemn and significant fact that another divine Person came straightway to it to convict it of this dreadful crime. It may suit the world to forget or smooth over that shameful act at Calvary, when Incarnate Love was taken by guilty hands, and for no offense whatever put to death; but it will never be able to clear itself of the sin.

The world cannot get rid of the Holy Ghost as it got rid of Jesus. He is beyond its power and, whether men know it or not, the terrible fact remains that His presence here is a perpetual witness of the sin which is upon it in crucifying Him whose only crime was to make known the glories of divine love.

Where is Jesus now? The Spirit points us to the Father's throne, and tells us He is there. The world displayed its utter sinfulness in crucifying the Son; the Father's righteousness was displayed in seating Him at His own right hand. And this act of the Father's righteousness sheds an eternal light upon the world's guilt. That blessed Person whom men spat upon and put into the most ignominious place on earth, has been exalted to the highest place in heaven. Thus has the Father declared the worthiness of the Son; and the Spirit's testimony as to the Son's present position reveals the magnitude of the world's sin in rejecting Him.

And this is not all. Satan, who led man on to commit this crime-Satan, the world's prince, he who holds empire here over the hearts and minds of the unconverted, he who has them in his power, and leads them in his chains-has been judged. His wickedness rose to its greatest height at Calvary; and the witness of the Spirit as to him is that he is judged, and the moment fixed when he shall be cast into the everlasting fire prepared for him and his angels (Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41).

And if the prince is judged, what of the people? Why, the judgment of God is brooding over them. But though this is true, yet the position of Satan and that of the world differs; for while there is no hope for Satan, there is hope for sinners while the Holy Ghost is here. There is salvation for them on one condition; that is, that they receive His testimony.

He is here to declare to mankind the sin that was committed in murdering Jesus of Nazareth; and the testimony which He bears to this renders every human being on earth responsible to clear themselves of all participation in the crime by accepting without delay Jesus as their Savior, to avail themselves of the work which He accomplished on that cross, where man's sin placed Him, for the salvation of their souls; for apart from the Spirit's indictment of the world for the slaying of Christ, He points fallen humanity to this very same crucified Christ, and tells them that their only hope is in Him; that there at that awful hour the whole question of human guilt was gone into, and a full and complete satisfaction for sin made in the Son's death and blood-shedding; that out of evil good has come; that God's love has triumphed over man's sin; that the very act whereby humanity consummated their guilt has been used by God to provide a full and everlasting salvation for their souls. From the judgment of that Holy One, pardon flows forth to the guilty; from His smiting, healing comes to sin-sick humanity; from His death, eternal life springs for every child of Adam that believes in Him. (Acts 2:12-36; 13:38, 39.)

It is the complete and glorious triumph of divine wisdom and love over man's sin and folly, and Satan's craft and malignity. At the cross Satan was defeated and his condemnation sealed. On the one hand was manifested, in a light that will never grow dim, man's hatred of God and all good; and on the other Jesus' perfect obedience, and God's magnificent love and holy abhorrence of sin.

Yet, though the Spirit can and does announce to man a present and eternal salvation through that wondrous work, He never ceases to warn the world of another work that Jesus has to accomplish. The Son has been appointed to judge (Acts 17:31 Thess. 1:6-10).

Hidden from man's gaze for centuries, He will again be manifested; but this time not in grace, not in weakness, not to endure reproach, but to pour upon it, in the power of omnipotent might, the wrath of the offended Deity.

Salvation or judgment, bliss or woe, heaven or hell, Jesus as Savior or Jesus as judge, this is the Spirit's never changing story, His never varying witness to a lost world.

And how has mankind treated the witness of the Spirit? It is now more than nineteen centuries since He came to earth. And what is the world's condition? Has it accepted His witness? Just as in the days of Christ the world rejected the Father and the Son, it has now rejected the Spirit, for in rejecting His testimony they have rejected Him.

God's means for blessing this present world are thus exhausted. He can do nothing more. In rejecting the Spirit men close the door of salvation against themselves. Angels are not sent as revealers of God's mercy, but the Son and the Spirit came; and in these the whole Trinity has been refused by mankind in all their wondrous manifestations of compassion for and interest in the fallen creature.

The world has sealed its own doom, and that doom is fixed. It has thrown away its last opportunity. No power now can arrest the threatened judgment. And time is hurrying it toward the awful crisis. The last moments of the dispensation are here. Christ is at hand. The Spirit and the saints will soon be gone; and the world, now careless of its danger, will wake up to reap the awful consequences of rejecting the Father's love, the Son's work, and the Spirit's strivings.

"Depart from us" (Job 22:17), said the world of Noah's time to God, and He took them at their word. "Depart from us" was said in substance to the Son by men nineteen hundred years ago, and He left them (Luke 8:37). "Depart from us," this present world is saying to the Spirit, and soon He shall depart.

Reader, if you have not listened to the Spirit's solemn witness concerning Jesus, if you have not yielded to the authority of the Son, if you have not left the rebel ranks and placed yourself beneath the banner of Christ, if you have not received Him as the Savior of your lost soul, YOU are yet in fellowship with this unhappy world-part of it- and charged in the mind of God with the sin of rejecting the blessed Trinity in all their wondrous ways of grace.

Your Description

You will never find your own name in the Bible. Search it as you may, you cannot hope to find it written there; but on its sacred pages your character is described with amazing fidelity, so that you can answer to it without any hesitation, and the words God is pleased to employ so as to shield us from the agony of uncertainty are, "whosoever," "everyone," "all." Thousands have thus entered, and not one has ever had his title called in question.

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