

WRITINGS OF J S BERTRAM

by J.S. Bertram

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by J.S. Bertram, compiled for study and devotional reading.

28 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00.00. Bertram, J. S. - Library
2. S. A Thought or Two on the New Creation
3. S. Attraction and Attachment
4. S. Boldness in the Day of Judgment
5. S. But ye are come to Mount Zion.
6. S. Grace and Glory
7. S. Harps of God
8. S. Jacob
9. S. Jacob; Part 2
10. S. Life
11. S. Nicodemus
12. S. Some Thoughts on Joh_5:1-47; Joh_6:1-71; Joh_7:1-53.
13. S. The Conqueror
14. S. The Father's Ways of Grace.
15. S. The Lord's Pathway in Luk_22:1-71
16. S. The Lord's Resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew
17. S. The Nearness of the Glory
18. S. The Resurrection of Christ
19. S. The River of Eden.
20. S. The Salvation of God
21. S. The Silver Cord Loosed.
22. S. The Spirit, Initial and Resident.
23. S. The Throne of the Universe."
24. S. The Two Eagles and the Vine
25. S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 1
26. S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 2
27. S. The Wondrous Works of God.
28. S. Winter, Spring, Summer, Harvest.

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- S. A Thought or Two on the New Creation
- S. Attraction and Attachment
- S. Boldness in the Day of Judgment
- S. But ye are come to Mount Zion.
- S. Grace and Glory
- S. Harps of God
- S. Jacob
- S. Jacob; Part 2
- S. Life
- S. Nicodemus
- S. Some Thoughts on John 5:1-47; John 6:1-71; John 7:1-53.
- S. The Conqueror
- S. The Father's Ways of Grace.
- S. The Lord's Pathway in Luke 22:1-71
- S. The Lord's Resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew
- S. The Nearness of the Glory
- S. The Resurrection of Christ
- S. The River of Eden.
- S. The Salvation of God
- S. The Spirit, Initial and Resident.
- S. The Throne of the Universe.
- S. The Two Eagles and the Vine
- S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 1
- S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 2
- S. The Wondrous Works of God.

S. Winter, Spring, Summer, Harvest.

S. A Thought or Two on the New Creation

A Thought or Two on the New Creation THE death of the Lord Jesus was at the end of the old creation. In resurrection we see Him as the beginning or foundation of the new. (* From an unpublished MS.) The old was not allowed to pass till it had been fully vindicated, as it was in the Person, character, ways, and life of the Lord. He stood as the immaculate and perfect sample of it, in the midst of all the ruin in which it was involved. But having been this, and done this, He died, as under the doom of the old creation" the Just for the unjust "-and in Himself, as risen from the dead, He laid the foundation of the new creation.

Let me, however, as I pass, suggest this. His resurrection stands in four relationships: to God, to the world, to sinners, to believers. In relation to God, it is the display of His glory and of His purposes. It is His victory. In relation to the world, it is its judgment. It tells them there is a question between God and them about Jesus-that they cast out the crucified, the One whom He has raised and glorified; and that judgment awaits the world because of this, as Peter preaches in Acts 10:1-48, and Paul in Acts 17:1-34 In relation to sinners, it tells them of redemption, that the sacrifice which puts away sin has been accepted at that very throne which holds the balances that try the claims of God, and weighs the utmost of His demands in righteousness upon sinners. In relation to believers, it pledges, as firstfruits, their own harvest, or resurrection in glorified bodies.

It is the one thing; but it has these various aspects, and stands in these different relations. The angel that witnessed it in Matthew 28:1-20, accordingly changes his aspect, when turning from the keepers of the stone to the poor women. In their sight he had descended in terror,. an earthquake attending him, and the lightning expressing him, and his appearing put the sentence of death into them-for they represented the world who had crucified the Lord of glory. But on turning to the women, this same angel is all gentleness. His terror does not make them afraid. The light is one to guide and gladden, not to alarm. It is the resurrection in the sight of poor, anxious sinners, as the other was the resurrection in the sight of the world. This twofold aspect of the resurrection may be seen again in the appearing of Christ Himself to Saul of Tarsus. The risen, glorified Lord, I may say, descended, as in lightning and earthquake, on the road which lay. Between Jerusalem and Damascus. Saul was then representative of the world's enmity-as the keepers of the sealed stone had been-and the glory of the risen Jesus throws him to the earth, and lays the sentence of death in him as it had in them. But quickly it becomes a. guiding, gladdening light; for it tells him of his own hopes and services and securities under this same risen. Jesus. (Acts 9:1-43; Acts 22:1-30; Acts 26:1-32) But this, rather, as I pass on. The resurrection is the laying of the foundation of the-new creation, as we have already said, and such foundations are immovable, as is all that rests on them. It is the Son of God in victory. The old creation rested on the tested Adam; and falling in the temptation in his,encounter with Satan, the creation fell, and became a mighty ruin. But the Son of God has come, the Repairer 4)f the breach, and has stood where Adam fell, has conquered where Adam was defeated, has broken the gates of hell, and in Himself and in His victory has laid the foundation of an unassailable creation, which is a new, a redeemed creation, and which is to get its beauty as well as its strength from Him.J. G. B.

S. Attraction and Attachment

Attraction and Attachment

John 1:1-51.

J. S. Bertram.

God has given us marvellous illustrations of His way with His own, impelled by the mighty force of divine love. In relation to the two disciples which were with John (the man sent from God) in John 1:1-51, there are three distinct matters come before us, leading up to this, John give presentations of Christ which brought about decided results. In regard to the "Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world" (5: 29), that finds its complete solution in Him, whether ultimately in the clearance of every trace of evil from the universe, or as to the present relative to the conscience. In type we see it on the great day of atonement when sins were borne away on the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:1-34.). Now that the conscience is freed from every charge of guilt, we are free to be engaged with the adorable One who has effected such a wonderful work. As John and two of his disciples were together he looked upon Jesus as He walked. What an object to gaze upon with rapture! What delight was brought to the Father's heart in that walk of perfect obedience. "I do always those things which please the Father." With what ecstasy John exclaims "Behold the Lamb of God," the One who was the delight of all heaven was now presented to His own. Note that the two disciples who heard John speak "followed Jesus." They were drawn by that mighty constraining power which they then could not interpret. These matters have a present bearing on us. "Drawn by such love we onward move." It is a grand thing to be attracted to follow Jesus. In discipleship there is something positive, we cannot deny ourselves and follow save in the power of attraction. As they were attracted they followed, and as they followed their interest increased. They desired to know where He dwelt; they were encouraged with "Come and see." What a welcome! How the Lord encourages interest and brings His own unto His very presence. They abode with Him that day. They were brought to know something of the inner circle. Doubtless the Lord unfolded something of the Father's bosom wherein He dwelt. In that sphere His own glory shines out; as the result there was affection for Him. Our course is not merely to follow Jesus (blessed although this is); but He brings us into the circle where divine affections flow, in that atmosphere of holy love, where the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. We are the objects of that same love; "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (John 17:26). There is an answer to that love, "We love because He first loved." Love permeates that blest abode. What holy communion and intimacy are there where love divine rests. "Bright inlet to the light of heaven above." There we shall bask eternally in the sunshine of that love, the love of relationship. Such a hallowed experience does not lead to self-complacency. In the case of Andrew, it led to fruitful activity, He was able to give a definite statement as to the person of Christ. He found his own brother and brought him to Jesus. The Lord addressed to the latter the striking words, "Thou art Cephas, (a stone)," He knew the import of that later, in epistle when he wrote of the living stones which form the grand edifice instinct with divine life, being reared to the Glory of

God. All true evangelism works out from the divine centre and completes the circle in bringing in the trophies of grace.

S. Boldness in the Day of Judgment

Boldness in the Day of Judgment

John says, teaching us under the Holy Ghost, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). A most wondrous and very blessed Scripture.

John himself afterward experienced the boldness of which this Scripture speaks, in a very remarkable way; he had his own doctrine made good to his spirit by the same hand that brought him the doctrine. In the Isle of Patmos he was introduced to a day of judgment. The Revelation he got there of the Lord Jesus Christ was a revelation of Him in judicial glory. He saw the Son of Man standing among the golden candlesticks, with white garments, eyes of flame, a voice as of many waters, a countenance as of the sun in his strength, and with feet as though they burnt in a furnace. A solemn, terrible exhibition of Christ in the day of judgment all this was. John falls to the earth as one dead. But the Lord tells him not to fear, speaking to him as the One who had been dead and was alive again, having the keys of hell and death. That is, He imparts to the spirit of His saint, then in the presence of judicial glory, all the virtue of His own condition. Jesus was there, through death and resurrection, holding in His grasp all the power of the enemy, for He had the keys of hell and of death. Such an one speaks comfortably to John. He imparts, as I said, the virtue of His own condition to His saint, though in a day of judgment. "As" He himself was, "so" would He have John to be, even in the place of victory, the other side of judgment. (Revelation 1:1-20) This was surely wonderful and full of blessing, and John at once feels the power of it and acquires "boldness" in that "day of judgment." For, though the Son of Man is still before him in the same attire and character as he had already seen Him, in judicial glory, with eyes of flame, and feet as though they burnt in a furnace, and a countenance like as the sun shineth in his strength, John has boldness. And then he listened to the voice challenging the Church again and again, but he remains unmoved from beginning to end. This is very beautiful, and has a great character in it. But still more: another scene of judgment succeeds this, of the Son of Man walking among the candlesticks, and John is yet in the presence of it.

He is carried or summoned by the sound of a trumpet to heaven, preparing itself for the execution of judgment. The thrones were there, thrones of judgment-for the elders are seen clothed in white raiment, befitting those seated in judgment. Voices, lightnings, thunders, instruments of wrath, or witnesses that the Lord was rising up out of His holy place for judgment, proceeded out of the throne; and from thence, as we proceed through the book, all that succeeds is in character, trumpets, vials, fire, smoke, earthquakes, and other terrible sights and symbols, enough to make another Moses quake, as in the day of Sinai. But John maintains the "boldness" he has already acquired, and all through is as unmoved as the divine creatures or crowned elders themselves. They were on high, but he was still in "this world;" they were glorified, but he still in the body; yet he is as calm as they. As they were, so was he. And when the terrible sealed book is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and a loud voice, as of a mighty angel, challenges all to

loose it; instead of dreading the moment when such an awful volume should be opened, he weeps because no one was found equal to do so. He longs to have the secret of the throne disclosed. The day of judgment has no terror for him. He is "as" Christ, and has "boldness." But this security, God's own calmness and assurance in the day of judgment, has had its witness, or expression, in different forms, again and again, in the course of God's dealing with his elect. As in the time of the flood, in the day of the overthrow of Sodom; at the time of the Exodus; and also at the time of the passage of the Jordan.

These were days of judgment, but the security thrown round the elect on each of them was divine; it was God's own safety which He then imparted to His people. They were in the world when its judgment was executing, but we may say, "as He was so were they." His safety was theirs. The "Lord God" shut Noah into the ark with his own hand ere the waters began to rise. The waters were there the instruments of Divine wrath, but the Divine hand had shut the door upon Noah; and surely these waters of judgment could no more prevail against the hand of God, than they could against His throne. And therefore, as the Lord was, so was Noah. Their safety was a common one, wondrous to tell it: so even such an one as Lot in another day of judgment. He was saved so as by fire-out of the fire. A salvation in no wise glorious to himself. He suffered loss, for his works were all burnt up. But the angel said he could do nothing till Lot was fully and clean delivered from • all possible danger from the judgment. The angel could do nothing till then; and, I ask, was not this Divine security? In the night of Egypt, He who carried the sword had already appointed the blood. He, to whom the vengeance belonged, the judge who was conducting the judgment, had ordained and pledged the deliverance: "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Was not this imparting His own security to His people again? The Lord must deny Himself-and this He cannot do-or Israel must be safe. Israel may have the same "boldness" in that "day of judgment" as the Lord himself in the world through which the sword was going.

So, in the passage of the Jordan. The waters were there, as in the day of Noah, ready to overflow their banks, as in the time of barley harvest. But the priests were in the midst of them, and the Ark or Presence of God. And there they stood, the ministers of God in the presence of God, till all the people had crossed the river. Jesus was in the vessel, and He must sink if the disciples did. The safety of the Ark was the safety of the camp. As it was, so were they. Nothing less than Divine security was that of Israel amid the swellings of Jordan. The judgment of Canaan was about to begin, but Israel was in God's sanctuary.

All this sweetly witnesses how the Lord imparts Himself, or shares His condition with His elect-and that, too, in the day of their most solemn necessity, so to speak. He is beyond judgment, above it., the executor of it; but the value of His own place He communicated to those elect ones in days of judgment. But this boldness of ours has a new character in it. It flows from "perfect love." God has put the value of the Son of His bosom upon us; and it is not possible for love to take any higher counsels, or do any more wondrous works than that. The love that has set the value of the Son upon us is a perfect love; and our boldness, therefore, is conferred not merely by the hand or by the ordinance, of God, but by His heart. Noah, or Israel, or even Lot., in their several days of judgment, might have said, "as He is, so are we." God's safety was theirs. But we rest our security now with the love of God, as they did into the hand or ordinance of God. The security is equal, but ours is the witness of a nearer, more affecting title. Ours is personal-Noah was in the Ark; we are in God. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God," and in a new sense we say, "as he is, so are

we." We are loved as He is, not merely secured as He is. We bear an element of full personal affection, investing our spirits, as well as an element of boldness. J. G. B.

S. But ye are come to Mount Zion.

But ye are come to Mount Zion.

J. S. Bertram. The blessed God would have us to know where in infinite grace He has brought us; but infinite grace on the part of God avails us nothing unless faith is active on our part for the laying hold of these matters. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, so God by His word is the producer of faith. Grace on the part of God, and faith on their part linked the worthies of Hebrews 11:1-40 with an order outside the sphere of nature, where everything was stable! Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and architect was God. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt; he had learned not to trust in the shadow of Egypt (Isaiah 30:2), although brought up in all the learning of Egypt. The light of another day and order had dawned on their souls and enabled them to make calculations according to God. Now in faith we come to something positive, a new day; a new order; another world (the world to come). Alas, to many Christians the world to come remains such, in place of allowing the Spirit of God to make future things (which now obtain the Spirit's realm) present to our souls. The apostle says, "Ye are not come to Mount Sinai, which brings to light God's righteous claim relative to man, man's unsuitability to Him, and maintains the distance already brought in by sin, whence comes the ministration of condemnation and death. But "ye are come to Mount Zion" (Hebrews 12:22), introduces grace and gives righteousness, 1:e., something positive. Here is a moral journey; not only come to Jesus the Saviour, thank God for that step! Mount Zion is where God has chosen to put His name, it speaks of Christ risen, all the era of shadows gone, the dawn of a new day, having its inception in His resurrection. After His resurrection Mary would have embraced Him as previously, His word to her was, "touch Me not"; that order was past. He was now graciously and tenderly leading her and eventually the other disciples into the light of a new day which must essentially take its character from Himself risen, not only a new day, but a new order and system, the city of the living God, which reflects the glory of God, the new seat of authority. When the people, the priests, and the king had failed God introduced Mount Zion and Jerusalem, wrested from the hand of the Jebusite as the seat of authority and the centre of the kingdom. In the new day, the seat of authority is in the city of the living God on the heavenly Zion. As heavenly in constitution, it is independent of outside contribution, self-supporting, perfect in harmony, and administration. Our souls derive from such now, whose builder and architect is God, in which there is the consummation of that hope connected with faith referred to in Hebrews 11:1-40; they looked for a city; the day of display will bring all this out to a redeemed universe. Connected with the city is the innumerable company of angels, the servants of the Divine Will, swift to do His bidding, messengers of mercy, a "vast universal gathering" (J. N. D. Tr.). The apostle in the thought of the city seems to touch on the line of the other apostles relative to the kingdom, now hid, but known to faith, and soon to be seen in display. He then comes to what is peculiar to his own ministry, viz., the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven; this surely connects us with the eternal purpose of God, 1:e., His thought from the outset relative to Christ. No power in earth or hell can erase these names; the

gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Now we come to the supremacy of God, who is Judge of all, manifestly relating to the world to come, but at present evinced in connection with the spirits of just men made perfect. That perfection could only be imparted in virtue of redemption, God must be just to the work of Christ, How this enhances the perfect work of Christ, hence God is the great discriminator, His word is final. What follows touches the depths of our moral being. Jesus the mediator of the new Covenant (what He has done, and what He is in Himself) has endeared Himself to our hearts. He is the centre of all God's thoughts. In Him alone there could be a perfect display of all that God is. The terms of the new Covenant (the new conditions on which God can be with His people), are all of grace, forgiveness, and moral suitability to Himself. The writing of the Spirit of God on the fleshy (1:e., the impressionable) tables of the heart, implies that capacity in the Spirit for the reception of the revelation.

Finally we come to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. The blood of Abel cried for vengeance. "The blood of thy brother crieth out of the ground." The earth was not to yield its strength to Cain on account of his foul deed. The blood of Christ speaks of cleansing, and sanctification. The better things speak, too, of the bringing in of the world to come on the sure foundation of the precious blood of Christ. All now known to faith in Mount Zion shall be in manifestation in that morning without clouds, when the curse shall be removed, and the earth shall yield her increase, and be in accord with heaven. The desert shall blossom and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. What a place of privilege is ours to be in the light of these things. May we then in these days of constant upheaval live in the constant good of these superb matters!

S. Grace and Glory

Grace and Glory When we think of grace, we think of our interests in Christ; when we think of glory, we think of our interests with Christ. The first subject is really the deeper, the more personal and affectionate- it takes us to the heart of the Lord. The second takes us to His circumstances. J. G. B.

S. Harps of God

Harps of God

ONE wondrous thing which may present itself to us in the Apocalypse (or Book of Revelation) is the combination of joys and terrors. This book is full of this; and yet to nature, to the sense of flesh and blood, to the common sensibilities of the heart, this combination is strange. And yet so it is. Seals are broken, and judgments take their course; trumpets are blown, and again judgments follow; vials are emptied of their terrible contents, and the horrors of the scene are only aggravated. But joys, and songs, and shouts of congratulation, and the harps of harpers, are heard throughout from beginning to end, and all along the line of these awful visitations. From the Doxology that we listen to in Chapter 1 down to the abounding and repeated exultations in Chapter 19, we listen to these joys and praises.

Bit further, in the progress of this book we may see the furnishing of the heavens and the earth as they are to be in the Millennial age. Of old, heaven was the dwelling-place of angels-I mean, that is the condition in which we see the heavens in. Old Testament days. Jacob's vision of the ladder and many other scenes, as well as passages of Scripture without number, let us know this.. But when the Lord Jesus had ascended, heaven became the dwelling-place of glorified Man, as well as of angels. This was a further furnishing of it. Stephen saw it in that condition. As soon as we read the 4th chapter of this book of el elations, We find that the same heaven has become the habitation of translated saints, The Living Creatures and the Enthroned. Elders are there; and all through the action of the book, from that moment, they continue there. Then in the 14th chapter we find other companies of saints joining them, and harping round the Beast and the Elders, as. well as the Throne. This shows us heaven in new and wondrous conditions, peopled with more than hosts of angels, who excel in strength, and kept their first estate, even with redeemed sinners the witnesses of grace. Earth is to be furnished as well as heaven. The opening of this 14th chapter shows us the beginning of that work; for there we see the "first fruits "-the pledge and sample of that people who are to fill and furnish the earth in the days of the kingdom, or, as we call it, the millennium..... They are learners of the song that is sung in heaven; they know the joy of listening, if others know the higher joy of singing; and not only do they listen, but, as we said before, they learn. They know what is harped on the harps of God on high. With such a people as this, the earth begins to be furnished for its millennial condition. This company of 144,000 is the first fruits of those who are by and bye to occupy the footstool in the days of the kingdom. And here we may observe there will be a link between the millennial heavens and earth; and the Lamb forms it. It is because this company on Mount Zion are with the Lamb that therefore they understand and share the joys the heavens know. As there will be a place on earth for the eye to feast itself in the sight of the heavenly glory; so, as we see here, there will be a place for the ear to delight itself in the hearing of the heavenly music. The nations that are saved shall walk in the light of the Holy Jerusalem. The company with the Lamb on Mount Zion listen to the harps of the harpers round the throne on high. But of these harpers themselves we must speak a little further. As I have before observed they are not before " the throne " only, but before "the four beasts and elders." They form

a new company in heaven, being (as I judge) the saints who have been martyred before the fifth seal, and to whom "white robes" had been given (Chapter 6:9-11). They were raised and glorified-translated to heaven; and there were (as we find from this Scripture-Revelation 14:2) given to them harps, like the beasts and elders themselves, and like them, also, were singing the new song (see Chapter 5:8,9, and 14:3), with this difference, as I have just hinted, they sing it round the beasts and elders, as well as round the throne. The beasts and elders had sung it as they fell worshipping the Lamb. Perfect and beautiful in its variety, as well as in its order, is all this heavenly scenery. But as we look off the harpers to consider the 144,000, we still see something beautiful and perfect in its place also. This company is in the midst of troubles; the vials are about to be discharged, as the trumpets have now all been blown. They are in the thick and midst of fearful sights, troubles, visitations, and judgments, such as might well occupy the heart and fill it with terror and forebodings-but they are at leisure from it all, free in their spirits to listen to the voice of joy and worship in heaven. They have deeply retired into the presence of Christ, and their hearts are at leisure to be in company with the calm and the sunshine of heaven, though earth and its terrible circumstances are around them. This is blessed. How little we know of such leisure by reason of retirement into the presence of Christ! How quickly does the presence of circumstances get the mastery and give all its occupations to our timid hearts. Jehoshaphat's army knew this! The Psalmist now and again seems to anticipate the way and experience of the remnant (the saved remnant of Israel) in these closing days of their history, ere the kingdom comes. Isaiah says:- "And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps " (Isaiah 30:32.) But this as we pass on. At 5: 6 of this chapter we are in the world again, neither in heaven with the harpers, nor on Zion with the 144,000. Upon this a voice from heaven addresses John, and says to him, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;" the spirit affirming this, and giving this blessedness its character, saying, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." That is, those who are martyred in that day, who "die in the Lord," are to enjoy an order of blessedness beyond those who outlive that day, inasmuch as they have reward as well as rest. John is then given another vision. He sees the reaping of the earth, and the casting of them into the great wine press of the wrath of God, by an angel. These actions, I believe, symbolize the setting of the earth in holy order, and in righteousness as for the kingdom. This is as the severance of the tares from the wheat, or the gathering of the good into baskets, and the casting of the bad away, as we read in Matthew 13:1-58 It is the full furnishing of the earth-it is the harvest after the "first fruits," which had, as we saw, been gathered in the time of 5: 1.- (This harvest appears to be the fruit or result of the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, as we read in 5: 6 of this same chapter.)-And these actions of reaping the harvest, and gathering the vintage close chapter 14.

After this we are called for another moment up to heaven again, such is the varied action and scenery of the book. A sea of glass was seen before the throne, in Chapter 4, but it was then unoccupied; now it is filled, as this passage (Chapter 15:1-4) shows us-filled, I judge, by a company who have been sufferers unto death, under the Beast; and therefore it is that this sea of glass is seen by John as "mingled with fire," for those who stand upon it are not merely conquerors, but conquerors through death-martyr conquerors, through martyrdom, or fire: they had refused to take the mark of the Beast in the crisis of the world's history. They owned Him from whom the world had revolted, and which world was then in its hour of fullest pride and daring. They had fallen victims to it, having loved not their lives unto the death. Like their Lord, they had

resisted unto blood; Like Him they were martyred, and, accordingly, they stand in triumph now before the throne on high. This is like Moses and the Congregation of Israel on the Banks of the Red Sea; they, therefore, sing his song as we read here,-" the Song of Moses "-that is, the song of victory. But Moses and the congregation were not martyrs; they had not fallen under the sword of Pharaoh, as this company had under the sword of the Beast. They were at the Red Sea a living people, which had left Egypt in defiance of all the strongest enmity of that land, and it was their foes, not themselves who had perished. But this company on the sea of glass had been slain-martyred for their faithfulness to Christ-which Moses and his company had not been. They have therefore a song beyond the "Song of Moses," even "the Song of the Lamb." This song is a song of victory through death. Debtors to the blood of Jesus through redemption, and for all things, still, as saints, like their Lord, they had overcome the world by dying under its hatred and persecution; accordingly, they sing the " Song of the Lamb," as well as the " Song of Moses." Theirs is a richer song than that of Israel, just as they are standing on higher and more wondrous ground-not only on a "sea of glass," but a "sea of glass mingled with fire."... But now, when we reach this point, heaven is, I may say, fully furnished, as we saw at the close of Chapter 14 that earth was. The best companies have now reached it. The sea of glass, vacant before, is now occupied and, like their brethren who were on high before them, whether the living creatures or crowned elders of Chapter 5, or the martyred saints under the 5th seal, this conquering band now receives harps to harp withal! But here fresh wonders break upon the apprehension of the soul. These harps are called "Harps of God." Wondrous surely! Harps made for their joy, now that they are enthroned in glory in heaven. As of old, at the beginning, coats had been made for their nakedness, when they were in their sins on earth (Genesis 3:21), God Himself, as with His own hands, makes robes of righteousness to adorn us, to clothe us worthy of His own presence, sinners in ourselves as we be. And God Himself again, as with His own hands, makes instruments of joy to gladden, as to fill His own courts of Glory with suited pleasures.... God Himself serves us at the beginning of our history as self-ruined sinners, and at the end of our history as glorified saints! He serves us in our ruins and in our glories! As the Lord, in the day of His ministry, had healed us, and fed us, and washed our feet, so did He anticipate His ministry in the coming kingdom when he said of Himself, and of all His people, " Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them." (Luke 12:37.) And if the Lord thus anticipates the day when He will serve us in our joy, we ought to anticipate that joy itself, and even in spirit take our harps and sing,- Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared, Unworthy though I be, For me a blood-bought, free reward, A Harp of God for me!

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years, And formed by power divine, To sound in God the Father's ears, No other name but Thine.

-J. G. B.

S. Jacob

Jacob

Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, listening to the counsels of unbelief, and thus departing from his path and his call as a saint of God. He is therefore put under discipline-for he has to learn the bitterness of his own way. His place, on that very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed therefore the hand of the Lord, who still loved him. It was, no doubt, the fruit and wages of his own transgression, but it told also that God was his God, for He was visiting him in fatherly chastening. It is, accordingly, such a place as God may own. It was not sin, but discipline, which marked it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast God could not have owned it, for deceit and fraud were practiced there. But at Luz, where Jacob is under chastening, the Lord can be, and He does come and manifest Himself there.

He comes to make glory a great reality to this poor, solitary, disciplined saint. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, or to send him back to the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves the present fruit of Jacob's naughtiness just as bitter as He found it. But He does come to make glory and heaven a great reality to him.

Onwards, therefore, Jacob goes, and, as the story tells us, he served 'twenty years under a certain hard taskmaster in Padan-aram. But the Lord blesses -him there, and he conducts himself in the fear of the Lord there, and all is well. In due time he is on his way back to Canaan. But, indeed, it is a different Jacob, as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel, he is now a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, and servants, and wives and children tell of his prosperity. He had been on that road twenty years before, unprovided and alone, with a staff in his hand but now we see him thus accompanied and surrounded. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, and may be a prey to others, as he surely must be an object with them. We hear of Esau coming and four hundred men with him. He trembles; he fears for his cattle, his people, and his life. He manages as well as he can, and religiously commits all to the Lord; but unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear. of Esau. The Lord comes to him therefore this second time, now on his journey homewards, as He had been with him on his journey out. But it is in a new character. He was only under discipline then; he is in the power of unbelief now: and the Lord comes not to comfort, but to rebuke and restore him. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob. his unbelieving fears touching Esau and his four hundred men had provoked the Lord to jealousy, and He withstands him. But what is the issue of all this? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob here, as glory had been at Bethel. The wrestling Stranger, in abounding grace, allows Himself to be prevailed on by the weak and timid Jacob, and the Spirit works revival of faith in his soul. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," says he. He comes "boldly to the Throne of Grace." Faith is decided, and a blessing -must be imparted, and Jacob becomes Israel. Grace is now made a great reality to him, as before glory had been. It is now the

unbelieving Jacob restored, as then it had been the chastised Jacob comforted. The Gospel is pressed on his soul here; Heaven had been opened to his eye there. There he walked as at the gate of heaven, and in the house of God; here he walks under the shinings of the presence of God. There Christ was making him promises; here Christ is giving him fresh embraces of love.

Such was "Bethel" on his way out. Such is "Peniel" on his way home. Such is God to him according to his need and condition. Heaven in its bright enriching glory was shown to him in the day of his sorrow. Christ, in His precious restoring grace, is given to him in the day of his failure. And these things are what we want-To have both grace and glory realized to our souls; to walk by Bethel and by Peniel. They sweetly vary the journey; but it is the one unchanging God that opens His house to us, and sheds the light of His face upon us.-J. G. B.

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S. Life

Life

Life is a sacred thing. It belongs to God. Man lost it at the beginning, and it then turned to God: so that, when now enjoyed, it is received from God. Adam, as soon as he lost it, was taught to know that he could never of himself regain it. Cherubim, with flaming sword, were set at the gate of the garden, to keep every way the way of the tree of life. He might, and he did receive it, through the Word of Truth, the promise of God, the gospel of a bruised and yet victorious Jesus, a dead and risen Savior. But in himself he had it not, and of himself he never could regain it; and as surely, never transmit it to us. God took it back entirely to Himself-it belongs to Him-and we who have it, have it by gift from Him. This is afterward told to Noah, though by another symbol than that of the cherubim guarding the way of the tree of life. Flesh was given to Noah to eat; but the blood was not given with it, for the blood was the life, and man had lost that, and could not recover it, (Genesis 9:1-29) and this same ordinance, that blood was not to be eaten, was continued under the Law, to the same end. (Leviticus 17:1-16)

We, therefore, as of Adam, ought to be full of thoughts of death in ourselves; but Christ may be full of thoughts of life in Himself. Nay, He must be so. We may see the proof of this presently; but here we may just say, it becomes Him to be as full of thoughts of life in Himself, as it becomes us to be full of thoughts of death in ourselves.

Accordingly He gives blood to us to drink, saying, "drink ye all of it"- "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And so when He had risen from the dead, this life which He had pledged from the beginning, He actually, really, solemnly, and formally imparted, breathing on His elect, and saying, "receive ye the Holy Ghost." This is life which cannot be touched. The murderous stones may disfigure Stephen's present tabernacle, take it down roughly, or tear it to pieces; but his life in Christ is unharmed, his spirit takes its journey homeward-"absent from the body, present with the Lord"-there awaiting a clothing worthy of itself-eternal life itself-"that immortality may be swallowed up of life." This life is hid. God has put it where of old He put His own law, in Christ, the ark. The life was forfeited by Adam, and God has secured it in Christ. The law was broken by man, so that Moses cast down the tables at the foot of the hill, and God put them into the ark. His honor and our life are thus secured alike.

God coming into this world, where death is reigning, must come as the living God, as the one who purposes to overthrow death and to give life again. Life, in victorious strength, to those who had been the captives of the power of death. Surely, we may say, it is in such glory as this that He must act and show Himself in such a world where sin is reigning unto death. And so we are taught to know it to be. And the faith that apprehends Him, the faith that is of the operation of God, knows Christ, and sees Him in that glory.

Peter represents or utters this faith in Matthew 16:16; and Jesus at once seals him as taught of the Father. And this is "the Rock." It is God in victorious life, and the church is built upon Christ as

such Rock, as the Lord of Life in victory over the power of death. And, therefore, it is unassailable. The gates of Hell shall not prevail. Life in Adam was to be tested, it was tested, and yielded to the power of death. The life we have from our Rock has been already tested and proved, and stood in victorious strength, so that we get eternal, infallible life. " The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." And, as we said, it becomes Him to be full of thought of life in Himself; and John's gospel shows our Lord to us as taking this knowledge of Himself. This gives that gospel its precious, characteristic glory. The Spirit, in the evangelist, recognizes this at the beginning, for, speaking of Jesus, he says, (Chapter 1:4), "in Him was life." In Chapter 2:19, the Lord Himself recognizes this, saying, " destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," and He spake of the temple of His body. In Chapter 3, after teaching the need of being born again, He anticipates his being lifted up on the cross for the purpose of imparting "eternal life;" and, immediately afterward, speaks of the Father's purpose in the mission of the Son being for the same end. In Chapter 4 He speaks of Himself as working in the track of the Father, as the source and communicator of life. In Chapter 6 His thoughts are all about life, I may say it is His subject throughout His discourse to the people. In Chapter 7 He stands as at the head of the river of life, ready to turn its abundant streams through the bellies of all thirsty ones who will come to Him. In Chapter 8 He declares Himself to be the " Light of life," and announces the blessed, victorious character of that life which He carries, and which He imparts, saying, "if a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death."

Chaps. 9, 10 close His public ministry: and, as commenting upon what it was, He says, " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." But after this, in a retired scene of service, at the grave of Lazarus of Bethany, we find the same mind in Him very fully expressed. All around Him are full of thoughts of death. Disciples, Martha, Mary, their friends, all alike are talking of death. But Jesus has no thought but of life. This is most blessedly characteristic. And in order to display the life that he carried in himself for sinners in its full glory and triumph, He remains where He was till the sickness of His friend had ended in death; and then He goes (as God Almighty to Sarah) as the quickener of the dead-" the resurrection and the life." This is abundant to show us, as I said, that life is what the son of man sees in Himself, and through Him imparted to others, all through this gospel of John. He surely was entitled to be full of thoughts of this precious mystery, and He was full of them. But I would add, that when at the end of this gospel, the evangelist himself speaks again, as he had done at the beginning, it is of life connected with Jesus he speaks. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." J. G. B.

S. Nicodemus

Nicodemus

WE do not find any miracle in John 1:1-51 Andrew and his companions, Peter, and Philip, and Nathaniel, were all brought to Jesus without miracles. The work was in their souls. The word "behold the Lamb of God" had awakened their going to the Lord-and to seek Him as "the Lamb of God" is to seek Him as sinners, as those who have discovered their moral condition. This is far different from having been drawn to Him by a wonder (see Acts 8:13), and the difference that followed was great. The Lord gives Himself to them who seek Him, and reach Him-, in ch. 1:; but He will not commit Himself to those who believe on Him in ch. 2, believed on Him because they saw His miracles. So again we may observe, in ch. 4, there is no miracle under the eye of either the Samaritan woman, or the villagers of Sychar. Conscience was stirred. They _receive Him as "the Savior," and He is at home with them at once. He commits Himself to them, as He does not to those in eh. 2:; but as He received Andrew and his companion to His dwelling-place in ch. 1, so now He goes to the dwelling-places of the Samaritans in ch. 4.

Such, however, is the beautiful variety of moral illustration in the Book of God, that in ch. 3, in the midst of all this, we get Nicodemus occupying his own peculiar place. He was attracted by the miracles, as those of ch. 2 had been, but then his soul was reached, as theirs had not been. It did not end with him as it had begun. He did not merely wonder and believe, but he wonders, ponders, is exercised in his soul, and seeks-timidly, indeed-but still he seeks, rind seeks Jesus. The miracle had put him on a journey to Him who had wrought it as something more than a mere worker of wonders, and the result is peculiar as is the thing itself. The Lord does not take him to Himself at once, as he had done those in chs. 1 and 4, nor does He refuse to commit Himself to him, as He had refused to do with them in ch. 2: He is patient, and yet decided. He exposes him, forcing him to learn himself; but still He goes on with him, in a measure committing Himself to him. But here let me ask, as in ch. 2:24, what is committing Himself to others? It is this-Forming real, living alliance with them; consenting to know them as with personal knowledge, and in the bonds of fellowship. Jesus cannot do this with one who believes in Him merely historically, as it were, or by force of evidence, as the multitude in Jerusalem then did, and, as Christendom 71070 does. It is with a sinner He has come - to form alliance, and friendship, and fellowship for eternity! The fragments of convicted hearts must be the links between man and Him, and the outgoings of divine saving grace. Our need and His fullness-we as sinners and He as Savior -must form these links. And such links are, at the end, I judge, formed between Jesus the Savior and Nicodemus the sinner.

He is seen a second time, in ch. 7., standing for righteousness in the person of Jesus, in the midst of the Jewish Elders. But this seems to me to carry him but a little beyond where he is in ch. 3. He is still the companion of the Jewish rulers, acting with them, though, doubtless, under some misgivings of soul; and timidly still, as the one that had before come to Jesus- by night; and in small measure owning the Righteous One. But in ch. 19. he has surely advanced. Here He puts Himself on the side of the world's victim. He stands as with God Himself, in relation to Jesus there.

God will provide that blessed Sufferer with a glorious resurrection by-and-by; Nicodemus and his companion, Joseph, will, in their way, provide Him with a tomb and grave-clothes now. Their spices shall perfume that sepulcher, which ere long divine power shall rend asunder.

Surely Nicodemus was now occupying the place to which the early word of Jesus in ch. 3 had told him of. Is he not now, in spirit, looking at the uplifted serpent, the crucified, healing Son of Man? And may we not judge that from thenceforth he was one to whom Jesus committed Himself? Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

J. G. B.

S. Some Thoughts on Joh_5:1-47; Joh_6:1-71; Joh_7:1-53.

Some Thoughts on John 5:1-47; John 6:1-71; John 7:1-53.

J. S. Bertram. In John 5:1-47 there is a marvellous setting-forth of the Glory of Christ as Son; in John 6:1-71, of the Father in rich grace; and in John 7:1-53 of the Spirit as the power for testimony. In John 5:1-47 the personal glory of Christ and His work shine out in contrast to the Law and man's condition. The blessing which the Law promised was like fruit on lofty branches which fallen man could never reach, hence the Son had come in rich grace as the communicator of power and life. What the Law could not do has been effected by God sending His own Son (Romans 8:3). The poor man in his despondency in Bethesda (the house of mercy) at the five porches (weakness) said, "I have no man." He was completely unable to avail himself, or find help to do so, of the limited remedial measures provided in the mercy of God, who never left Himself without witness even although there was such failure in Israel. This case depicts man's moral condition, but as in Israel's thirty-eighth year in the wilderness, and consequent upon the brazen serpent incident (which in type sets man aside) they journeyed forward, so in this man's case which is also typical, law and his condition are set aside completely and the Son comes into prominence as the communicator of power, "take up thy bed and walk"; he is now transferred from law to Christ. Such a mighty work only brings a storm of abuse from the Pharisees, which in turn brings into relief Christ's personal glory as Son, here in manhood working in conjunction with the Father for the blessing of the creature, the object of the Father's love, the Father loveth the Son, and as the Father had life in Himself so had He given to the Son to have life in Himself, He stands alone in His holy dignity, the Giver of life. The hour is come and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will, it is the Son's divine prerogative in that he has taken up manhood. He has also been delegated of the Father to execute judgment. The chapter concludes with a fourfold testimony as to Christ, that of John, Christ's own works, the Father's testimony from the opened heavens and the scriptures; "they are they which testify of Me." The two incidents in John 6:1-71 are again typical, the first setting forth Christ's perfect administrative power for the present, and sufficient left over for the world to come. The second sets forth the moment when He will join the remnant in their hour of affliction and bringing them safely to the haven of rest. These become the occasion for the enforcing of the grand fact of His incarnation and precious death and ascension as man. Thus He becomes available to men for life and the object of faith, these great matters but serve to bring to light the Father in His rich grace, the source of all blessing. The Father sent the Son 5: 28 points out that God the Father sealed Him, and that, as Son of man in regard to the giving of everlasting life. V. 32, the Father is the giver of the true bread from heaven. It is the Father that draws to Christ; and the Father that gives to Christ. This leads us to the grand fact of the Father's will, His pleasure which Christ came to do. V. 45 points out that they who have heard and learned of the Father come to Christ. V. 57 is most remarkable. He is spoken of as the living Father, and Christ lives by or on account of the Father and as a consequence of our eating we live by Christ; a divine order where divine life permeates

all, when we are brought to live with or in divine persons.

John 7:1-53 gives us the great fact of the Spirit being here resident in the believer, the intimation of this was made on the last day of the feast, the eighth day, thus connecting matters with resurrection glory. The Lord although making Himself available to the thirsty soul on the last day of the feast was speaking and acting in view of an accomplished redemption, and His having gone on high a glorified man, 5: 39 bears this out, "The Holy Ghost was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified." Thank God for the Spirit here, the grand witness to a glorified Christ there. There is nothing vague about it. Out of the inwards of those who believe shall flow rivers of living water, this spake He of the Spirit, rivers of blessing, the celebration of the glorification of Christ, carrying the knowledge of God, and refreshment for the soul in its mighty onward flow. Such is known now to faith in a specialised way. "There is a river the streams of which make glad the city of God" (Psalms 46:4). In the celebration of the feast of tabernacles in the world to come the river shall flow from the throne of God and the Lamb. There shall be universal blessing. At present these matters are known only in the Spirit sphere.

S. The Conqueror

The Conqueror THE Lord God, of old, entered on His rest, or Sabbath, as Creator. He had ended His work, and on the seventh day He rested. We know that this Sabbath has been lost by man, and the rest of God disturbed. We know also that another rest, or the keeping of a Sabbath, is in prospect. In what character, we may ask, will it be entered '?

Scripture tells us, by a Conqueror. (See Psalms 47:1-9; Psalms 48:1-14; Psalms 92:1-15; Psalms 93:1-5; Psalms 94:1-23; Psalms 95:1-11; Psalms 96:1-13; Psalms 97:1-12; Psalms 98:1-9; Psalms 99:1-9; Psalms 100:1-5 Revelation 19:1-21) These Psalms, &c., intimate that the Lord had just displayed Himself as a Man of war, stilling the noise of waves or the madness of the people, and was now keeping the Sabbath of a Conqueror, or enjoying a triumphant rest.

David making way for Solomon is the type of this.

Solomon was the Peaceful-a name which implies not abstract rest, but rest after conflict. In such a dignity the Lord enters His second rest, or Sabbath. The first had not been the rest of the Peaceful. It was the rest simply of the Creator-of One who had ended a work. It was not a triumphant rest. It was not a rest that bespoke previous glorious warfare. It could not have had the presence of a Conqueror to adorn and gladden it. But still more. Heaven has anticipated this joy and this ornament; for it has already received a Conqueror. Jesus is there in this character, though never till He ascended had heaven known such a character. The Lord God had filled the heavens, and the angels that excel in strength had attended. Some may have been cast down who kept not their first estate, and others have sung together, as when the earth's foundations were laid. But never, we may say, had a Conqueror been there till Jesus ascended. But He, through death, had destroyed him that had the power of death. (Hebrews 2:14.) He had led, captivity captive. (Ephesians 4:8.) He had made a show of principalities. (Colossians 2:15.) After the type of Samson, He had borne the hostile gates to the top of the hill. He had overcome ere He sat down on the Father's throne. (Revelation 3:21). The grave-clothes had been left in the empty sepulcher. (John 20:6-7). As Conqueror, therefore, Jesus ascended. Heaven had already known the Living God, but now it had to know the Living God in victory. The Lord returned us in triumph, and filled heaven with a new song, " The Conqueror's Song." And in spirit this song is sung every day by all the saints now gathering. And we enter heaven and the Kingdom as conquerors also. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit on my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne! (Revelation 3:21). We rise as shouting, " O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?-thanks be to God who giveth us the victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). This is the language of conquerors, as the rising ascending saints will be, in their day and way and measure-as their ascending Lord has already been in His day and way and measureless glory.

It is the kingdom of Conquerors that is to be thus displayed and established; and it will be therefore an irreversible Kingdom. Unlike the Garden of Eden; for Adam entered it in order to be assayed-that the Serpent might try a question with him, and put creature integrity to the proof. The Kingdom is to be entered and taken by conquerors-by those who have been proved, and not who

are to be proved. And the earthly places will be of the same character; for Israel will already have been proved, and refined, and brought forth, and established in the faith of the victory of Christ; they will have been already made His " goodly horse " and " weapons of war." This is, indeed " a new song," the Conqueror's song: and heaven and earth will witness and celebrate it; their history must have taught it to them. The old song, like the old work, was not a Conqueror's. The Morning Stars sang over the work of Creation; but that work was not, as I have said, a Conqueror's work. It was not victory, but creation. It was not glorious peace after warfare, like Solomon's, but simply rest and refreshing after labor. And therefore the song of the Morning Stars-the old song-was according that, simple joy over the grand foundations of the earth being laid. But the song which ushers in the Kingdom will be that of Conquerors, and thus new in its strain and burthen. The first "corner-stone" was simply "laid" down by a Creator (Job 28:6-7), and angels sang. the second " corner-stone " shall be brought in as Victor, and Israel shall shout I (Psalms 118:1-29)--J. G. B.

S. The Father's Ways of Grace.

The Father's Ways of Grace.

(Notes of address by J. S. Bertram at Galashiels).

All movement in relation to the accomplishment of the Father's will must essentially emanate from the Father Himself, hence the Father sent the Son, and it is the Father that draws to the Son. It is not in man or of man to come to the Son, it is the Father in absolute grace that draws to the Son. What a constraining power! That power draws from the distance and darkness into the light which exposes and into the love that dismisses all dread. "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Thus drawn to Christ, the Son, the new centre, He must displace all that has gone before, whether place or system. Having been drawn to Him, we are also given to Him of the Father, i.e., the Father's love gift to the Son. Seven times over in John 17:1-26, we have the Lord addressing the Father about "those whom Thou hast given me," as such we are the objects of His interest and care, so much so that He prays for them. "I pray for them," what a place we have in His heart of infinite love; all that He has here are those who have been given to Him of the Father, and in this connection He says "all mine are thine and thine are mine." What oneness obtains between the Father, and the Son! This speaks of a divine capacity to be in accord with the Father's appreciation of the Son consequent upon His accomplished work. He has received from the Father a specific glory, this He shares with His own. "The glory which Thou hast given me I have given them" (John 17:22). That shall be seen by a redeemed universe, as presented in the precious stones in the foundation of the heavenly city, for they reflect that acquired and shared glory. The saints become the vessel of expression thereof. The Lord Jesus desired of the Father that His own might be with Him. Love cannot rest apart from its object. What a delight for the blessed Lord it is to have His own with Him, whom He has conducted and befriended through the long night of His absence, not only to be with Him but to behold His glory. That unique incommunicable glory shines forth in all its majestic splendour; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. We shall be free then from all the frailties which at present mark us, to be absorbed with that divine glory. In that circle of the Father's love is the Son's portion and the portion of His own. Then love and glory find their eternal home. All the seeming mishaps of time but serve the Father's ways. Since everything has been given to the Son there is going to be a complete recovery in the last day. And we shall dwell with God's beloved Through God's eternal day.

S. The Lord's Pathway in Luk_22:1-71

The Lord's Pathway in Luke 22:1-71 In this -particularly fine and solemn chapter, we may see the Lord in four connections, so to speak,-with the sorrow itself that was awaiting Him,-with His disciples,-with the Father,-with the Enemy. Verses 1-23.-As far as He is seen here, He is seen as looking directly, fully, and advisedly at the sorrow that was awaiting Him. He sits at the Paschal Table, the witness of His coming. " sufferings, and He tells of His body given, and of His blood shed; at the same time refusing for the present the paschal cup, the expression (as I judge) of Israel's joy on the accomplishing of their redemption. Thus we see Him in full, advised anticipation of His sorrow, looking at it directly and without the least shrinking; refusing a single thought that could qualify or reduce it. Verses 24-38.-In this part of this great chapter, we see Him with His disciples, but we must remember, carrying in His bosom the full sense of the sorrow He had just been foreseeing and counting on. But it is, beloved, a great sight which these verses give us of Him. I mean in this character. When any trouble is upon us we judge right easily and without rebuke, that we may think of ourselves. But here, Jesus thinks of others. The condition of His disciples is the anxious, diligent object of His various affections and sympathy. He warns them where their souls are getting wrong. He lets them know that He was praying for them, and providing strength for a coming hour of need and weakness. He teaches what changes they must now reckon upon, and how they must get themselves ready-thus, carrying as His heart did, a grief which might well have commanded or absorbed, He could, as though all were quiet within, spend His various cares, His sympathies and attentions, on those who were around Him. If there be a moment in human history when selfishness is even vindicated by our moral sense, it is the moment of personal grief. We instinctively allow man to think of himself in such a moment. But at no other moment was the Lord Jesus even more thoughtful of others than in the hour of Luke 22:1-71 It was not the hour of Sychar's well,-It was not the two days spent amongst the Samaritans,-It was not the season when Mary was sitting at His feet; or when the family of Bethany was at the table with Him. It was not such a moment as when the Centurion accosted Him in the language of -a faith greater than what He had found in Israel; or as when the poor woman touched Him in the crowd; or as when the Syrophenician clung to Him in spite of apparent slight and indignity. Such occasions were moments of deep joy to the heart of Christ, and no wonder; to speak as a man, He was free to wait on the occasion, and serve them, and think of others in them and through them. But it is the Paschal Jesus we get here. It is the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was natural for this Jesus of the house of Bethany to sit and teach,-but this was the Jesus of the last Passover; and knowing, as one does, the absorbing selfishness of times of sorrow, this path of the mind of Christ through this part of this solemn chapter reflects something perfect and beautiful. Verse 39.46.-Here we have the same Jesus in company with the Father,-the same Jesus. He had just been serving. His disciples in all the various conditions and need in which He found them; warning them, praying for them, teaching them, providing for their blessing in every way. And so now He is surrendered to the Father's will, with the same self-sacrifice as He had been serving thorn. The moment is full in its terribleness, but the surrender of Himself to it is perfect. The mission of the angel to strengthen, tells that the cup was not to be taken out of His

hand. He knew this, and felt it in the agony of that solemn hour. But nothing touched the spirit of self-sacrifice. The will of the Father was supreme with Him now, as the need and conditions of His poor disciples had just been, and He surrenders Himself to it all. Verses 46-71.-In these closing verses, we find our Lord in His last condition in this chapter, as the prisoner of His enemies. We have already seen Him in the gaze and near sight of the sorrow itself,-Then in company with His disciples, making their need and blessing all His thought, as though h o. He had no sorrow of His own,-Thou in communion with the Father,-and now in the midst of His persecutors. There was nothing here for Him A mid and rude rabble, set on wickedness, was making Him their sport and their captive; and then a wily and murderous, though in its way, refined Court of Elders (in its character more contrary to His spirit even than the others), purposing His death under guise of law and religion. But in Him it is a blessed path we trace. He had been in communion with the Father. He had met this hour there. He had surrendered Himself, as we saw, and in that surrender there is victory, in that communion there is strength. And now that He is in the battle-field itself, He is more than conqueror. He may be borne through files of the enemy. He may meet the occasion in different characters of it; but all is strength and. calmness of spirit. He challenges Judas the leader. He restores the wounded ear of one of the servants. He addresses the heads of the multitude. He has His eye upon Peter for good, when Peter was giving Him to feel at that moment that His disciples would take their place amongst His enemies. He answers the Elders and Priests. And in the full triumph of His soul He anticipates His kingdom and glory. This was treading the field of battle like a Conqueror. All was perfect calmness of heart. There was no agony or sweat of blood here. No falling on the ground. O how deeply the soul judges that that could not have been His way among the people, though it was equally perfectly His way before the Father! He had indeed already met the occasion in communion, and now He is only above it.

Such was His journey through this chapter; we see the path of His soul through these distinct stages. Was ever anything like it? We have need to be set to right in the time trouble-at least if one may speak for another. The Psalmist had such need in Psalms 73:1-28, and again also in Psalms 77:1-20 Poor Job was conquered. It touched him and he fainted, though he had often before' strengthened others. The stoutest, as an old writer says, are "knocked off their legs." Peter sleeps and Peter lies,-and our own poor hearts again and again have told us secrets of ourselves in such moments. But in sorrow, the like of which never was tasted, Jesus is borne through every change of circumstance and connection, and all is sure to be perfection. Gold it was indeed; and when cast into the furnace, it comes out the same mass as when cast in, for there was no dross.

What a sight! what faith! It is found unto admiration in our eyes, beloved; and unto what acceptance was it found with God!

I feel as though. I could not look at it, or speak of it longer. Having just traced this brilliant path of faith, tried in the furnace, to the end, I must leave it. My own heart is so unacquainted with it. May the good Lord strengthen with might by His Spirit! "If thou faintest in the day of adversity thy strength is small."-J. G. B.

S. The Lord's Resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew

The Lord's Resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew THE resurrection of the Lord is, we know, a grand central mystery. It bespeaks the end of the old creation, and begins the sure, immovable foundations of the new. It has, however, its various results. Some of its power will display itself in heavenly places-some in earthly-some of it will be known in the power that sets the enemy aside-some in-the grace that saves the lost, and brings them to God forever.

It is differently presented at the close of each of the gospels. In Matthew (ch. 28) we have the resurrection in its power over the adversary. The sealed stone, and the set watch, represent the power and enmity of the world-but the angel that witnessed the risen Jesus, as it were, laughs them to scorn, puts the sentence of death upon them, letting them know that it was hard for them to kick against the pricks; self-destruction for them to resist the Son of God in power. And this is one great result of the resurrection. It is judgment against the world. It shows that there is direct collision between God and the world, and that God is the stronger-for that the world had put Jesus to death, and God had raised Him from the dead-two simple facts which indicate the entire collision between God and man, and that the strength and victory were with God, the result of which facts must be the judgment or doom of the world, and such judgment is here expressed by the angel rolling away the sealed stone, and putting the sentence of death on the keepers of it. But this same chapter shows the resurrection in its results on earth. It puts Jesus in possession of all power, and gives him a claim upon the discipleship and obedience of all the nations. This claim I know is not now made good, nor is this power now exercised. But they are His, and in the coming millennial days of the kingdom they will be realized. Power which is His by right as the Risen One, will be exercised by His hand then, and the nations of the earth, from the rising to the setting sun, will own Him. This is very distinct and vary characteristic of Matthew's gospel so perfect are the oracles of God in their variousness as in their unity. But here you have nothing of the effects of the resurrection upon heaven, no peopling of heavenly places with the redemption and grace which the resurrection has sealed and accomplished.-J. G. B.

S. The Nearness of the Glory

The Nearness of the Glory THE thought of the nearness of the glory should be deeply cherished by the heart. And we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us richly in the Word. The place of the glory is near us, and the path by which it can either come to us, or we go to it is short and simple, and the moment for the taking of the journey may be present in the twinkling of an eye.

"Whom He justified, them He also glorified," is a sentence which tells us of the path, or title to the glory. We need nothing but the justifying faith of Jesus. When by faith we stand washed and sanctified through the blood, we are at once made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Our persons need no further adorning. We are clean every whit. Presentable without fault before the presence of the glory, whether that glory be still hid within its veil, or to be manifested to-morrow. Nor can we say, when it may please the Lord of the glory to appear. But this we know that He is ever near, and can show Himself in all that His high and bright estate in a moment. The Congregation were set at the door of the tabernacle to acquaint themselves with their High Priest. They did so. They took knowledge of the consecration and services of Aaron, and on the accomplishing of these services, the glory appeared. It was waiting at the door within its proper veil, to do this, and show itself. All it needed was title to take its little journey, finding an object worthy of its visitation. And as soon as the Congregation stood in the value of the blood, or appeared in that character which the priestly services and sacrifices impart to it; then the glory reading its title to appear in finding an object worthy of its visitation, makes its short journey, and shines around the Camp. And it shines around to gladden them-not to alarm, but to gladden. They were entitled and prepared to be gladdened by it, for they stood in the value and cleansing of the blood. Its place was theirs, and the atmosphere it brought with it, their native air. But there is another witness to the nearness of the glory. A light surprised the persecutor as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-43) It was above the brightness of the sun at noon-day. And well it might have been, for it was a beam from the land of the glory, and it bore the Lord of the glory upon it. (See Isaiah 24:23.)

Happy to know from such a witness how near that place of glory is to us. For as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, that glory was here! Jesus purposed, and it came-He commanded, and it was here. But it did not come to display itself. It came for other business, on another errand altogether. It came to make the persecutor of the suffering members of Christ, a native of that very land where_ this glory dwelt.

It begins therefore by laying the persecutor himself in ruins. It shines around him, and he falls to the earth. It is like the light of Gideon's pitchers confounding the armies of the `Uncircumcised. Saul takes the sentence of death to himself. With a vengeance he learns that he had been kicking against the pricks, madly destroying himself, in all his enmity against Jesus, for that Jesus was the Lord of the glory. But the One that wounds can heal-the One that kills can make alive. "Rise and stand upon thy feet," says the Lord of this glory. Life comes from Him who could wield the power of

death-life infallible, and indestructible, life too with inheritance of this very glory. And he is made (as fittest to tell of it,) the witness of the same life and inheritance to all kinds of sinners-Kings, Gentiles, and people of Israel.

What a business is this! the glory and the Lord of the glory comes to do it. Never had such points in the furthest distance met before. The persecutor of the flock, and the Savior of the flock are beside each other. The Lord of the glory, and the sinner whom the glory was consuming are here. Can we trust all this, and be glad in it Is it pleasant to us to think that the glory is thus near us, that at the bidding of its Lord, or to carry as a chariot its Lord, it could. be here in a moment? Stephen saw it thus, as by an upward glance of his closing eye. And when the voice of the Archangel heralds it, and the trump of God summons it, it will be here again to enfold us, and bear us up to its native land! (1 Thessalonians 4:1-18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58)

It visited Saul, but left him as its heir and expectant, to travel and toil down here for his appointed day. But when it visits us, it will not leave us here any longer as its expectant, for a while strangers and foreigners in the earth, but to take us home with itself, ever to be with the Lord-"The Lord of the glory." (1 Corinthians 2:8., James 2:1.)

Till then, like Paul, we may "obtain help of the Lord," and testify of what we are, and of what we shall be. But it is all service in a foreign land, with the cherishing, gladdening thought, that the native land is near us, and our translation asks but for a moment, for the "twinkling- of an eye." The title is simple-the path is short-and the journey soon taken. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified."

Note.-It is sweetly characteristic of the present age, that the hand of a fellow-disciple, Ananias, is used in the strengthening of Paul to bear the glory. The Seraphim alone do that for Isaiah. (chapter 6.) The Spirit does it for Ezekiel. (chapter 2.) The hand of the Son of man does it for Daniel. (chapter 10.) But Ananias is made to do it for Paul.-J. G. B.

S. The Resurrection of Christ

The Resurrection of Christ THE resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus is a great fact. Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear, there it is, and cannot be gainsayed And further, we have to do with it, and cannot escape from the application of it to ourselves. It is set above us, and before us; as at creation, the sun was set in the heavens, and the creation of God had to do with it.

It is thus treated in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. It is there dealt with as a fact, from the application of which to themselves none could escape. It has its different virtue, its two-fold force and meaning; and men are to know how it addresses itself to each of them. But there it is and no one can elude it. Who could pluck the sun out of the heavens? The glory seated itself in the cloud, and Israel must know it there, and have to do with it there. It may conduct them cheerfully, or rebuke them and judge them; but there it is in their company, in their midst, and the camp in its different conditions must have to do with it.

Prophets from God came among the people. There they are, whether the people will hear, or whether they will forbear they have to know-they must know-that a prophet has been among them. They cannot gainsay the fact, or escape its application to themselves in judgment or blessing. The budding rod I might have noticed in this connection. It is brought out from the sanctuary to the camp, and the camp must accept its presence. That it is there is a fact, and none can deny it, whether they will use that fact obediently, and taste the fruit of the service of God's Anointed One, or whether they will still rebel to their own destruction is another thing. But the budding rod that speaks both of judgment and of mercy is in the midst of them. The Lord in the garden of Eden was the same at the beginning. It was a fact. Adam could not displace Him. He was there-as the sun at that moment was in the heavens.

Adam must have to do with Him If he be in innocency, as in Chapter 2, that fact will be his joy. If he be in guilt, as in Chapter 3, that fact will be his doom. But he cannot elude the force of it; nor withdraw himself from the application of it.

I might say that Christ in the world that Satan had usurped through subtlety, was also a kindred fact. None could, in that day, deny it, or rid themselves of the force of it. Satan himself shall know it, and men shall have their blessing brought to them by it; or their guilt and judgment enhanced through it. The kingdom of God had come, and they must accept it as a fact.

Just thus, just after this manner, is the present great fact of the resurrection. Jesus is risen and exalted-He is ascended and glorified. We might as well pluck the sun from the heavens as try to escape the application of this fact to our condition, whether of repentance or of unbelief. The great characteristic teaching of the apostles, in the book of Acts, is interpretation of this fact to the conscience of sinners. This makes apostolic ministry among men very simple; and blessed it is from its simplicity.

Peter, who opens that ministry, at once takes the resurrection of the Lord as his text. He exhibits that great fact in its judicial, and its saving power. He preaches from it the glories of the Lord

Himself; and he derives from it the blessings of all believing sinners. It is the object constantly before him He gives it different characters, or invests it with different virtues; but it is the object constantly before him, and the fact which he declares again and again-his fullest interpretation of it being found at the very close of his ministry, in the house of Cornelius, when he preaches that the risen Jesus is set of God both for judgment and for salvation. (See Chapter 10:42,43.) The risen Jesus may be boldly resisted, as in Saul's case. (Acts 9:1-43) But it is equally death for the soul to despise it. (Chapter 13:41.) It is not so shocking to the moral sense of man, but it is equally death in the judgment of God.

Paul in his ministry, as constantly uses the same great fact of the resurrection of Christ, interpreting it, like Peter, to the heart and conscience. In his first preaching at Antioch we see this. In the synagogue there, he conducts the story of God's ways with Israel from the day of the call of Abraham to the resurrection of Christ; and then upon the resurrection, preaches the forgiveness of sins. But he adds that the despising of that great fact, the being careless about it, with a carnal mind indifferent to it, will as surely be followed by judgment, as the generation which the prophet addressed was visited by the judgment of God through the Chaldees. At Athens, where his next great preaching was, he has still the same great fact as his theme. But he gives it its solemn meaning. He invests it with its terrors: for he found this Gentile people full of idolatry, though in the pride of their sects of learning, and in the carnal busy desire of anything new in the earth or among men. He tells them of this great mystery, which was a fact in heaven, registered there, and he gives it its meaning for them. Referring to their besotted worship, he says to them, "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.." (Acts 17:30-31.) And after his ministry had formally terminated, and he becomes the prisoner rather than the servant of Jesus, still before his judges it is of the resurrection he speaks. (See Acts 26:1-32) The moral that we draw is, the sweet positive application of this great fact to each one of us. We have, each one of us, individually to do with it-or rather it has to do with us. The resurrection speaks of judgment to man as man-for it is the witness of a solemn collision between God and man. God is on the side of man's victim. God has glorified the One, whom man denied and crucified. Here is collision-and the result of that is judgment: for God is stronger than man. Man must be overthrown in such conflict. Judgment must fall on him that is opposed to God. The "pricks" cannot be "kicked against." Saul of Tarsus persecuting Jesus, shall be found in a work of self-destruction. The resurrection speaks of salvation to the broken, confessing sinner. Because the resurrection witnesses God's satisfaction in that atonement for sin which Jesus offered; and if God is satisfied, who can condemn? If God witnesses that such has been put away for all that will trust and plead the death of Christ-who shall lay anything to the charge of such? what tongue can prevail against them? The resurrection thus speaks of "judgment" and of "mercy," as we either look to the cross of Christ, with the interest of convicted believing hearts, or as we despise and slight it. It has a voice in the ear of all. It speaks to us, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear. To enjoy it as the salvation of God, we must personally, and livingly by faith, be brought into connection with it-but if we slight it all our days, it will at the end bring itself in connection with us, as it were whether we will or not. In this way it brings to mind the Lord Jesus in. Mark 5:1-43 -In spite of Satan, Jesus puts Himself in connection with him in the person of the Gadarene, in order to judge him and destroy his work. But He does not put Himself in connection

with the poor diseased woman in the crowd, till she by faith had put herself and the necessity she carried in connection with Him. Surely her faith was given to her of God. It was no notion of her own, but the fruit of the drawing of the Father in the power of the Spirit. But still so it was; that the virtue in Jesus did not visit her, till her faith had visited Him. And this distinction has a deeply serious fact in it. If we by faith use not a risen Jesus now, and get the virtue that is in Him, He will visit us by and by, and that, too, with the judgment that will then be in Him. No depreciation will then avail-no seeking now can but avail! By the preaching of the resurrection in the Acts, we learn that God has taken out of man's hand the very weapon of his fullest enmity against Himself, and used it for man's everlasting blessing-but if man will despise such goodness then he must answer for having taken that weapon into his hand. The sword that man was using in hostility to God, God has turned as into a plow-share, whereby to get for man the bread of everlasting life. Joseph of old was sold by his brethren-but Joseph sold became an instrument and channel of life to them who had sold him. Their very wickedness was turned of God to their blessing. J. G. B.

S. The River of Eden.

The River of Eden.

Genesis 2:2-15.

(Notes of an address by J.S. Bertram at Galashiels). As creator of the universe in bringing into being such a marvellous system, God had in His mind not only what was material but what was moral. In the material order that which was for the benefit of the creature essentially is a symbolism of that which must emanate from God Himself in relation to the moral or spiritual order. In this connection attention is drawn to the river in Genesis 2:11-15. It is striking that the river had its source in Eden, the garden of God, the earthly paradise. In issuing forth from Eden it became four heads, and went on its course for the benefit of the creature. The number "four" in Scripture signifies "completeness in relation to earth"; this forms a wonderful study throughout the Scripture. The river was one in Eden. The great teaching of the Old Testament is to put emphasis on the fact that "the Lord our God is one God" (Deuteronomy 6:4), but as the river flowed forth it became four heads, surely a beautiful type of God coming forth in Grace in Christ. In that connection it is helpful to learn from the meaning of the names of the rivers, the coincidence with the presentation of the Blessed Lord Jesus in the four Gospels. The first of these heads or rivers mentioned is Pison which means a "broad river," coinciding with the presentation of Christ in the Gospel by Luke, who gives us so beautifully His coming into manhood and standing in relation to man and creation as Son of Man, the broadest of all His titles, for all things will yet be put under Him as such (Hebrews 2:1-18). The river flowed through Havilah. The gold of that land was good. There was also the onyxstone (precious and durable). Surely we can trace in the steps of the perfect man that which answers to the gold, onyxstone, precious indeed. "Unto you therefore who believe is the preciousness" and its abiding nature.

Gihon is the second river which means "swift". From the books of Esther and Daniel we find that the king's message required post haste (swift action). We find the Lord Jesus spoken much of as the King in Matthew's gospel. There He was born King, although denied His Kingly rights. There is presented in this Gospel how He will act in Kingly dignity. His teaching in Matthew 13:1-58 in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven, indicates the heavens as the seat of authority of the King. In Matthew 22:1-46 is the supper where the king views the guests, He sees one who has despised His provision. His authority at once is exercised. Action is swift, He is also hailed as King. As the king in Matthew 25:1-46 He differentiates His word as final, "Then shall the king say, come ye blessed of my Father," also to the other company, "Depart from Me." No opposing power can stay His swift action. The third river is Hiddekel which means "sharp words." "The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword." Connecting this with the servant character of the Lord Jesus as presented by Mark, we find His word fraught with power and authority, the sharp keen edge was felt by the opposing element all the way through. Demon, disease and death all fled at His word. The proud Pharisees and reasoning Sadducees felt the keen edge and had to retire. If it be the case of the paralytic, He dealt with the question of his sins prior to the needs of his body. There

is a laying bare of cause and effect : an essential ministry, that the Word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The fourth river, Euphrates, meaning "sweet waters." This speaks to us of the outflowing of the Father's love and grace in the Son of His love, who ever dwelt in His bosom and came to earth to make it known, as He is presented in the Gospel by John. He drew the thirsty of earth to Himself; whether the outcast in John 4:1-54 or the unsatisfied Jew in John 7:1-53. What sweet waters flowed for the thirsty. They would never, never thirst again. There would likewise be an outflow too (for out of His inwards would flow living water), reminding us of the words in Psalms 46:4, "There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God." As we pursue the course through the Gospel, we see the continuance of that rich, refreshing, sweet ministry as we come to John 13:1-38; John 14:1-31; John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33; John 17:1-26; just on the eve of the cross, the sweetness seems to increase! May the Lord enable us to drink more deeply into the river of His grace "which is flowing o'er this barren place where Jesus died."

S. The Salvation of God

The Salvation of God THE salvation of God may surely be traced all through Scripture, from the earliest, simplest revelation of it, in the opening of Genesis, to the celebration of it in realms of glory at the close of the Apocalypse.

It came with the first utterance of God in the hearing of this sin-stricken world. The promise of the seed of the woman conveyed it. It was illustrated in patriarchal stories all through Genesis. It was presented a thousand shadows or symbols in the ordinances of the law. It was echoed in a thousand voices of the prophets. And thus the current of it may be traced all through the ages of the Old Testament, and the line of light that was revealing it then may be seen as spanning, or stretching across the whole old volume. In due time, in the fullness of time, the New Testament age begins; and then at the very outset, the salvation of God appears again. It becomes embodied. The child that was to be born, the Son that was to be given, was named of God " Jesus." If the first divine utterance in the Old Testament bore it upon it, so does the like first divine utterance in the New, " Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. The salvation of God was, as I may again say, now embodied. It entered its human temple, to dwell there forever; from thence to be unveiled: and thereby and therein to accomplish all eternal purposes of grace. (Matthew 1:1-25) Not only, however, was salvation thus embodied, but its arrival here was celebrated by the ecstatic joy of heaven, and the full earnest-hearted welcome of the earth. Angelic hosts in the light and presence of the glory, and angels in their individuality, tell us of this joy; and vessels anointed by the Holy Ghost proclaim this welcome. Mary rehearses it, and so does Zacharias, and so Simeon and Anna; and the shepherds in the fields, and the babe in the womb, wait in their several way to greet it and rejoice. (Luke 1:1-80; Luke 2:1-52) When thus arrived, it is active. What had been ushered forth in the midst of such congratulations, could not but stir itself, and be at its work under its high commission; and this is the life, the ministerial activity of the Lord Jesus. He was dispensing health and salvation all around Him. Every sickness and every disease among the people, had to tell that "Jehovah-rophi" was here, Christ the healer; the salvation of God was abroad, dispensing itself to the need of a ruined, death-stricken world, in every form of its misery. Being thus announced and arrived, and having thus dispensed itself in the ministry of Jesus, as we read in the Evangelists; it is now the subject of preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. The Jews hear of it first, and then the Gentiles. Peter calls on the Jew to come to it, and goes to the house of the Gentile with "words" that convey it. (Chaps. 2, 9.) Paul preaches it to the nation of his kindred in the flesh, and then to the ends of the earth, on the authority of God by His prophet. (Chapter 13) And when at the very end he leaves Israel in unbelief, under sentence of blindness of eye, and hardness of heart, he lets them know, that it, "the salvation of God," is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they would hear it. (Chapter 28) It is as fresh in that day of Acts 28:1-31, as it was when first announced in Genesis 3:1-24 The Spirit of God was as full of it then, as the mouth of the Lord was when He uttered his earliest word in a world where sin had entered.

There is no moment, in the story of the world, to be compared with that which witnessed the arrival of it from heaven to earth, as we have seen, heaven in its hosts, and its glory was rejoicing then;

and earth in its anointed vessels, great and small, was answering it. And throughout this lengthened story, we may see, that the sinner may possess himself with this salvation, taking it immediately from God, without debtorship to any other. Adam took it from the lips of God, and made it his own at once. It entered the house of Zaccheus, and came there simply and solely in company with Jesus. It is faith that gets it; and faith is the individual act of the soul, the sinner's exercise of heart and conscience entirely with God alone. Old Simeon illustrates this. He took the child in his arms, as God's salvation, without asking leave of its mother, for faith knows it to be God's gift to the sinner, as the sinner; and knows that it is our necessities as sinners that constitutes our fitness and our title for it and to it. From that day surely, to say no more, from the day of Acts 28:1-31, "The salvation of God" has come forth to this wide, wide world under divine commission. It has been sealed with the broadest seal-the clear and deep stamp of heaven, or of God, has been put upon it; and no one speaks from God, under commission and authority from him, who does not publish it. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." The Epistles, in their season, teach it to those who have received it as preached to them. They teach it in its glories. They distinguish it in its present and future relation to us. We have now "the salvation of the soul;" we wait for that "salvation which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:1-25) We have now "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." We wait for that form of it which the second coming of the Lord shall bring with it. (Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:28.) And then when we pass the Epistles, and reach the end, the very end of the divine book, and read the Apocalypse, there we find that this salvation is celebrated-not preached nor taught; not as addressing itself to a wide world of sinners, or unfolding itself to the sacred enclosures, and assemblies of the saints, but celebrated, whether in heaven or on earth, in courts of glory, or regions of renewed creation. (Revelation 7:1-17; Revelation 12:1-17; Revelation 19:1-21) And surely then, as I said, I may still say, the salvation of God is tracked all through the word; promised, illustrated, typified, prophesied, embodied, dispensed, preached, taught and celebrated. But salvation is too great a thought for the heart of man to suggest-or indeed to receive. God must provide us with it-the Spirit must enable us to accept it. The religious mind of man resents it as inconsistent with the obligation he owes to God, and with the responsibility under which he lies to Him. The moral sense resents it as being no security of practical life and righteousness. How deeply at fault both are! How unequal is the best human thing to reach the divine! While neither man's religion nor man's morality give toleration to the idea of salvation; God, as we see, is occupied with it from first to last. The promise of it, the history of it, the display of it, the illustration of it in one sinner after another, stretch across the whole volume. God dispenses it now, and would have us enjoy it. He will perfect it in all its glory by and bye, and will call us to celebrate it.

"Jesus" is the imperishable name-"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. This is the name which abides in bloom and freshness still, the unfading name which eternity has no power to efface. Time may wear away rocks, eternity will do nothing with that name but celebrate it. "Jesus," or Savior, was the first word written by the finger of God in the record-book of this world of sin, as we have seen-and it has ever since been kept, like the bow in the cloud, in the vividness of its earliest power. It is the unchanging, unchangeable name. It is not the unutterable name, it is true; but it is the imperishable one. We have heard that the Jew, under the law, found the divine name to be too high, too distant, too sacred, for human lips to use. But the sinner, under grace, talks now of the divine name all the day long, and will forever. When God spake in law, He satisfied Himself to speak in a sequestered nook of the earth, and in the hearing of the smallest of

all the nations of the earth; but when He came to speak of salvation, He summoned the wide, wide world to listen!

Great and glorious as it is, it rests on the simplest foundation which God has found in the sacrifice of the cross. This I have assumed throughout. God is satisfied in Christ, the believing sinner is saved! God has found his satisfaction in Jesus. I have found my salvation in God? Call our good thing by what name we may, justification, acceptance in the beloved, son ship, peace, glory, redemption, reconciliation, or whatever other name that good thing may carry, all rests on this, that Christ has satisfied God in that which He has done for sinners The rent veil, the empty sepulcher, the resurrection and the ascension, the glory of the Purger of our sins in heaven, and the mission of the Spirit upon that to earth, testify, in the mouth of the most august witnesses, this satisfaction of which we speak. None can gainsay such witnesses on the side of the accuser! none can exceed them in dignity and triumph on the side of God! Himself our Justifier, we are to accept salvation from God, just because He has accepted satisfaction from Christ-to accept it with all thankful, worshipping assurance.

If God have rent the veil, it is obedience in the sinner to enter. When I lay my burthen on God's foundations, I am glorifying as well as using them.

Salvation is to be enjoyed by faith. As we read, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." " Faith comes by hearing." We cannot get it by working. We dare not count upon deserving. It is God's salvation, "prepared," as we read, by Him. (Luke 2:28-32). Counseled, brought out, revealed by Himself, and sent out into the world by Him. We have had to gaze and to listen -to be debtors to the provisions of grace for the most ruined, miserable, degraded condition in which the creature could find itself! J. G. B.

S. The Silver Cord Loosed.

The Silver Cord Loosed. By J. S. Bertram.

Some words spoken at the grave of Helen Hermiston (31/7/42).

Death, the blighter of hopes, the breaker of ties and the bringer of sorrow seems to reign undisturbed, but in the presence of such how blessed it is to possess the Word of God which enlightens us as to man's construction, as to the past, the present, and the future. The Lord God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, so man is more than material, but sin has separated him from God bringing in death. The blessed God has now made Himself available to man as Saviour. The one whose remains we now lay in the grave, in her early days was brought to know and love the Lord Jesus, and through her long life knew His loving heart, and guiding hand. Now that hand which was pierced on the cross has loosed the silver chord that bound body and soul together, the golden bowl is broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6-7), (the casket that held the jewel), the pitcher is broken at the fountain which indicates a continued need; dependence is now no longer required. The wheel is broken at the cistern; all activity for maintenance has now ceased; all is still! "Our earthen vessels break." So we commit the dust to the earth from whence it came, but the spirit returns to God who gave it. In 2. Cor. 5:8, we see with what confidence the apostle speaks relative to the departed; a divine light resident in the heart imparts such confidence, and God gives it to us through the Scripture, so that we are assured that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord; what security, comfort and bliss there is in the disembodied state, since "present with the Lord!" That is not an inanimate condition, but freed from the suffering and sorrow connected with the body and at home with the Lord. From Php 3:20-21, we learn that our citizenship is in heaven, God's thought for us then is heaven, "the sky, not the grave, is our goal." The One who has vanquished death and saw no corruption is going to wield His mighty power in connection with the bodies of His own, "He shall change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working of His mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." What a prospect is this for our hearts!

Christ our precious dust will take, and freshly mould:

He'll give these bodies vile a fashion like His own;

He'll bid the whole creation smile, and hush its groan.

S. The Spirit, Initial and Resident.

The Spirit, Initial and Resident.

J. S. Bertram. In the night scene in John 3:1-36 we learn from the Lord Jesus that the door of entry into the Kingdom of God is completely barred to man even at his best, and that to come under the moral sway of God necessitates a new moral being, which as He shows is the prerogative of the Spirit to bring into being in and for man. Here the sovereignty and grace of the Spirit comes into view, "the wind bloweth where it listeth." In his fallen state, man could never at any time have a point of contact with God, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, the natural man is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, so if he was to be suitable to God here he must be born anew; having another origin. The prophets spoke of it (Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27). The Lord confirmed the matter, "we speak that we do know." If man was incapable of apprehending the earthly side of things (1:e., new birth), he was much more so relative to heavenly things. From the outset, the Lord knew and accepted His rejection, and that of the Kingdom. In John 6:1-71 they would have made Him king to secure their own ease. Although the kingdom in manifestation is held over meantime, and it now has a moral bearing in which sphere the Authority and goodness of God are recognised. The thought of what is heavenly is now introduced, and such could only be brought to light by One who came down from heaven, and it was incumbent upon Him in view of such to take up the sin question, so He becomes the antitype of the brazen serpent. Sin must be judged and put away before eternal life could be offered, and in so doing a loving and giving God comes to light. For God so loved that He gave! The acceptance of such a testimony brings the individual into the possession of eternal life (this matter is developed in the succeeding chapters), the rejection of the testimony brings condemnation now, to say nothing of the future, which involves what is eternal. Verse 16 refers to God's love to the world in its widest sense but in verse 36 we read "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand." It was true of Him here in manhood, but He could only function in the fulness of His commission consequent upon the cross, although what follows in John 4:1-54 gives a perfect sample of the present. As the Lord weary, with His journey, sat by Sychar's well (the possessor of all things) asks a drink from a woman of the city, and eager to dispense to her the bounty of heaven He said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." Marvellous! the Son in humiliation, the giver of living water; that would be in her a fountain of water springing up into eternal life, the water typifies the Spirit, the new power or spring of life resident in the believer; the power and capacity by which eternal life is now enjoyed: which is in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. This involves a new relationship maintained in righteousness (1:e., opposite to the woman's previous course), formative in its result bringing into correspondence to Christ. Thirst and dissatisfaction are unknown in the order, but we are apt to allow the things of earth to choke up the springing well as in Genesis 26:1-35. Her conscience is reached. The matter of worship is next introduced, and the Lord has something specific to say to her on that matter, that it neither appertains to Jerusalem nor Samaria. The hour was then present when the true worshipper must worship the Father in Spirit

and according to the truth, so that the person in whom the Spirit dwells stands in relation to the Faith; the Spirit conducts such to the Father and worship is according to the truth, 1:e., the revelation of the Father whom the Son makes known. "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren." Under Christ's leadership and in the Spirit's power we join in the singing which He leadeth, in the atmosphere of holy love, where the Father loves the Son; such is the measure of His love to us, the many sons, His brethren.

"Rise our heart and bless the Father, Ceaseless song e'en here begun;

Endless praise and adoration To the Father and the Son."

S. The Throne of the Universe."

The Throne of the Universe."

Revised Notes of an address by J. S. Bertram. In days of uncertainty and distress when kingdoms rise and fall in a decade, when men's hearts fail because of "the terror that flieth by night," how comforting it is to have a divine link with the throne established in the heavens, and relationship with its Occupant! In Psalms 11:4, we read of the throne of omnipotence established in the heavens, now that fact could only be communicated by God, for no man has ascended to heaven; man's speculation and research could never have discovered this, it is beyond his reach and his lust for power. Moreover, he is totally incapable of administrative position. We learn the eternal nature of that throne from Psalms 93:2, "the throne is from everlasting," it is not something raised up in an emergency; it is the eternal throne of the Eternal God, as Psalms 47:8 states that "God sitteth on the throne of His holiness," here we have the Occupant of that throne in all His majesty, the sole governor of the universe. He holds the reins of government, and the hearts of all men in His hand. The throne is supreme; he ruleth in the kingdom of men. He raises one and overthrows another. In Ezekiel 21:27, He says, "I will overturn." We seem to be in one of the overturning periods now. But all must be well, for God is on the throne of His holiness! Psalms 89:14, says, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne," that tells us its character. Where there is perfect discrimination, and eternal right-acting, the throne is upheld in absolute righteousness (in contrast to man's expediency), else the whole moral and physical creation would fall to pieces.

Whatever happens beyond our powers of comprehension we can confidently say, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right." Ezekiel got a vision of the throne in its heavenly enduring character as the sapphire stone suggests (Ezekiel 1:26), but he also saw the appearance of a man above upon the throne; a wonderful vision, premature in point of time, but there is nothing future with God who inhabits eternity. For the interpretation of the vision we are entirely dependent on N.T. revelation. In Matthew 1:1-25., we read of the birth of Jesus Emmanuel (God with us), oh, wonder of wonders, such a mighty stoop was taken by the Great God of eternity from the throne of the heavens to the manger of weakness. God over all, blessed for ever, came into manhood. Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in flesh! In manhood, yet essentially God in all the glory of His being, sea, waves, wind, disease, demons and death were subject to Him. As man He was asleep in the boat, a weary, thirsty stranger. Foxes had their holes, birds their nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head. He came here to meet the claims of the throne in regard to sin. These claims were met at the cross of Calvary, bearing that name Jesus given to Him at His birth. Although we fain would linger we hasten from the cross to the tomb where we see the power of His might, relative to the seal of Rome and the stronghold of death; He who descended is the same also who ascended. He was carried up; He went up in triumph. In Acts 1:1-26 the two men in white said, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner." He has gone to the throne a glorified man. Ezekiel's vision is true to faith in the saints today (Hebrews 2:9). We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and so get the present benefit to our souls of His place there. There is much in our lives about which we often ask the reason; but everything is in the hand of the One who loves us

and He is on the throne. We await the day when we shall be with Him. Everything will be visibly put under Him. All heaven adores Him! Ere long the groaning creation will own her Lord and come under the beneficent administration of the throne of His glory. What refreshment shall flow forth to the redeemed creation from the throne, for the pure river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne (Revelation 22:1). All creation shall take up the note of triumph and everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord; then earth shall be in accord with heaven!

S. The Two Eagles and the Vine

The Two Eagles and the Vine

Jehoiachim went to Babylon, thus yielding to the judgment of God, and in the end he was exalted. 2 Kings 24:1-20; 2 Kings 25:1-30

Zedekiah remained at home; and instead of accepting the punishment of his sin, by -submission to the king of Babylon-the Lord's rod-he rebelled against him, and at last perished. This is the two baskets of figs, good and bad, of Jeremiah 24:1-10 The parable of the Two Eagles and the Vine, in Ezekiel 17:1-24, is to be read in connection with Zedekiah's history. But the close of that chapter is very fine: it tells us that another witness shall deliver his testimony in Millennial days. That God takes up the lowly, and puts down the haughty and mighty. His constant, yea, necessary action in this fallen world.

Israel's real blessing began in the lowly place-when they stripped off their ornaments, and sought the Lord outside the camp. Exodus 33:1-23

So, Israel's blessing must end in the lowly place. After they had failed in the wilderness, their blessing lay in Babylon, as before it lay outside the camp. They must accept the punishment of their sin, and go there. And it is thus with us individually. °We are in the way or place of blessing, when convicted. We must be broken, in order to be blest.

Now, the Lord Himself took this same place-not by beino. broken in conscience, as we are to be, for He was spotless, without either corruption within or blemish without. But He was broken in circumstances. The heir of the throne was a carpenter-the Lord of the fullness of the earth had not where to lay His head. He was a root out of a dry ground-or, as Ezekiel here speaks, " a tender twig," a "low tree," a " dry tree," but planted in the last days, in Millennial days, "upon a high mountain and eminent," becoming "a goodly cedar, under which" shall dwell "all fowl of every wing." This is Millennial Jesus, who once had been the Nazarene Jesus. But this was not Nebuchadnezzar's history. His branch spread in its day, as the branch of this Millennial Jesus will do. (see Daniel 4:1-37) But Nebuchadnezzar had never been a "tender twig," a "low tree," a "dry tree." Accordingly, this great tree of Babylon, which had never been a " tender twig" in early days, in the last days exalts itself, and meets the judgment of the Lord. Its leaves are shaken off, its fruit is gathered, its branches are cut down. It is preserved, but preserved as "a stump in the earth," that thus being humbled and broken, God may bless and exalt it, in His own way, at the end.-J. G. B.

S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 1

The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 1 THE history of the Two Tribes and a Half has its own instruction for us, and illustrates a peculiar character of mind and will among the saints of God. They do not stand with the 'Lot of the days of Abraham, though in some respects they remind us of him.

It is wonderful what a variety of moral character and of Christian experience finds itself before the soul in the histories of Scripture. The soul reads itself there fully the workings of nature not only in man, but in the renewed man, its conflicts and its strength giving us to see so much that we know in ourselves; and, at times, the lights and shades as well as the distinctive features are to be traced. The Two Tribes and a Half are not Lot, but there is that in them which tells us of him Like him, their own distinct, independent history begins with their eyeing the well watered plains which were good for their cattle in, the wilderness side of Jordan. They think of their cattle rather than the call of God, and the pilgrimage of their brethren. Had their hearts been full of Christ, they would not have seen anything till they had crossed the river. Abraham, their father, had never been on that side of the river; nor did their expectation 'when called out of Egypt stop short of the other side. Neither had Moses said anything about those plains, in the land of Gilead. But they had cattle, and those plains were suitable to their cattle, and they sue for an inheritance ere they, reach the land which had been their expectation when they set out. This was all. They had no thought whatever of revolting; of sacrificing the portion of true Israelites, but their cattle drew their eyes to the goodly plains of Gilead, and they were for possessing them, though, they would do so as Israelites.

How natural! How common! In moral power they come short of the call of God, though they hold to the hope of that calling, and claimed fellowship only with those who were the objects of it. They were not in power a risen people though in faith one with such. They were careful to declare and hold to their alliance with the Tribes who were to pass the Jordan; though. they were led to remain on the wilderness side of it themselves. I do not regard them, like Lot, a people of mixed principles, who had deliberately formed their lives by something inconsistent with the call of God, but rather as a generation who owning all that obey it, and refusing all thought of having any other, are not found in the moral power of it.

Again I say how common! This is a large generation. We know ourselves too well to ask, is there such a people

Moses at once is made uneasy by this movement on the part of Reuben and Gad and the Half Tribe of Manasseh He expressed this uneasiness with much force. He tells them that they bring to his remembrance the conduct of the spies whom he had sent out years before from Kadesh-Barnea, and whose way had discouraged their brethren, and occasioned the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness. There was something so unlike the call of Israel from Egypt in the hope of Canaan, in all these suggestions on the part of these Tribes, that Moses at once thus resents it: and it is bad that this is produced in the soul of a Moses; when the first instinctive feelings and thoughts of a saint, who is walking in the power of the resurrection of Christ, are alarmed and wounded by what is seen in a brother. And yet how common! many a Moses

now-a-days is called in spirit to challenge what offends, as being out of company with the calling of the saints. For many a thing gets its sanction or its excuse from the heart of a saint that cannot stand before the judgment of faith.

Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh have to explain themselves, and to give fresh pledges to Moses that they by no means separate themselves from the fellowship and interests of their brethren, and they do this with zeal, and with integrity too. In this they are not with Lot. Lot's conduct separated him for the rest of the journey from Abraham. But not so these Tribes. With zeal they assert their purpose to be still with their brethren. Nay, they would by no means have taken the Eastern Gilead, had this produced a forfeiture of their identity with those who were to be in the Western Canaan. They are to give pledges too, that they will be foremost in the action, which still remains on the behalf of their brethren's inheritance. By no means do they contemplate anything like the loss of fellowship with them; in this they are above Lot. But still they have stopped short of Canaan. They are not in the full power of the Canaan-calling-not in the thoughts of the man of God, a dead and risen people; for they are pausing (ere the promised inheritance be reached) for the sake of their cattle in the wilderness.

Moses, however, does not let them go, as Abraham let Lot go. They are not to be treated in that way, neither does the judgment of God light on them, as on the unbelieving spies who bring up an evil report of the land. They do not belong to such generations, though their way may savor of such. Moses cannot lose sight of them because they propose to feed their cattle in the plains of Gilead, while they thus with zeal assert their purposed fellowship with their brethren. They are his, and lie is theirs still, I may say; and they hold on together, unlike Lot and Abraham, who never met after Lot became a citizen of the world; practically forgetful so far, of the calling of God. This is so; but still Moses has to eye them and remember them, and keep his thoughts somewhat anxiously and uneasily occupied about them. And this is not the best witness for a saint. Happy when the Holy Ghost can have us and our state also, to lead us still onward, and feed us still in the knowledge and with the things of Jesus.

Lot and Abraham never met after the way of the world had drawn Lot into it. Jonathan and David, now and again, and in their affections there is communion between them true and warm. Obadiah and Elijah met only once, and it is but a poor meeting: "Reserve" marking the way of Elijah; and "Effort" that of Obadiah; for they were not kindred spirits. The leathern girdle of the prophet but ill-assorting with the livery of Ahab; but the two Tribes and a Half are above these. They are still the companions of their brethren, and will not think of anything else; and Moses admits their title without reserve. Their desire to have their portion in Gilead makes no difference as to this. But still they do not go through and through; they do not measure the whole of the wilderness, but they linger; and the thought of their-cattle being suited in the fields of Gilead attracts them, and there they find an object, though they still accompany the camp

What shades of difference there are in those' different illustrations; what different classes of the people of God; yea, and what difference in the same class do we meet here. Lot and Jonathan and Obadiah are of one class; men of mixed principles, as the expression is; men whose lives are formed by such every day habits as cannot combine with the pilgrim character; or the suffering-witnessing-character to which the call of God leads. Sodom, as Lot's place, Saul's court as Jonathan's, and the palace of Ahab, King of Israel at Jezreel, as Obadiah's; when Abraham

dwelt in a tent, David in a den or cave of the earth, and Elijah with the provisions of God at Cherith or Sarepta. And yet Jonathan was not Lot or Obadiah personally, though we have to set them all in one class. Neither was Obadiah, Lot exactly; and as between them as a class, and such dead and risen men as Moses and Joshua, we have to bring in the Rubenites Gadites, and Half Tribe of Manasseh, a generation who will by no means admit the thought of their separating themselves from full companionship with the call of God; but who, nevertheless, exhibit in moral action that which is not according to the full measure of that call. And this is indeed a common case-nay, this is the common case among the saints. We know it ourselves; we own the call, we witness it, we speak of Canaan, of death and resurrection, of hopes and inheritance beyond the river; but nature, and present ease, and present desires, the bleating of the flock, the lowing of the oxen, as they feed in the plains. of Gilead, lead to much which makes the more single eye of a Moses, and the more fixed and single purpose of a Caleb or of a Joshua to wonder and inquire. (See Numbers 32:1-42)

Joshua, who has the spirit of Moses has them in some anxious and uneasy remembrance, like Moses; and he addresses a word of special admonition to them when he tells the conduct of affairs under the Lord, and for Israel. For they are still, being the Tribes, on the wilderness side of Jordan, the occasion of this fear and uneasiness to the more simple and devoted mind of a full-hearted, single-eyed servant of Christ. (Joshua 1:1-18)

There remains, however, another sight of them still in the progress of the history, and one which has its own striking moral features, I mean in Joshua 22:1-34 The ark had gone over. The feet of the priests bearing it had divided the waters of Jordan, and the ark had gone over conducting and shielding the Israel of God. And it is true that our Tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and Half-Manasseh had gone over with them; but the ark and Israel had remained there-that's the difference. The two Tribes and a Half return, but the ark remains. The place that becomes a ransomed people., a dead and risen people, is left, and they return to settle where Israel had but wandered.

Joshua, like Moses, instinctively feels all this, and warns them, and exhorts them on their departure. And as soon as they reach the place they had chosen they begin to feel it also. They are not fully at ease; and there is something specially significant in that. They raise an altar-(the heart of an Israelite in the land of Gilead would do just the same at this day). They are uneasy-Jehoshaphat was uneasy, when he found himself in the court of Ahab, and asked for a prophet of the Lord. The renewed mind speaks that language in a foreign land. They raise the altar, and called it "ED," or a witness-a witness that Israel's God was their God. But why all this Had they remained in Canaan, where the ark and the tabernacle of God were, they would not have needed this. But they were not there, Shiloh was not in view, nor could their souls carry the sense of it, that Shiloh was the common center with all their brethren. They have to give themselves some artificial help, to give their souls a crutch, If I may so speak, to aid the confidence and the joy of their hearts; that as Israelites, they had fellowship and common interests and calling with their brethren. All this is very full of meaning, and is constantly experienced to this day. Some witness of our belonging to the Israel of God is needed and craved by the soul, when we get into a position in the earth which the call of Israel does not fully justify. The countenance of others-the restless examinations of our own state-reasonings with ourselves-remembrance it maybe, of better days with the soul-something that is as artificial and of our own device as the altar of ED, and which would have been as unneeded too as that, had the soul been more simple and faithful.

All this is still known, and is all figured here-it is the writing on this pillar on the eastern side of Jordan. And a wonderful pillar it thus is. Lot's wife, the pillar of salt, had a writing upon it which the Divine Master Himself has read for us; and I doubt not, so has this pillar of ED, which the Holy Ghost would fain teach us to read, that we may be warned to know what uneasiness and doubt accompanies the soul that has retreated to find a settlement there, where the saints are and have been strangers. This altar witnessed both for and against these Israelites. It was just what Jehoshaphat's uneasiness was when he found himself with Ahab and the prophets of Baal. It is just what a saint's uneasiness here is when he finds himself involved in a world that he ought to have left. For all this bespeaks the saintly or renewed mind, but in such exercises and experiences as the grace of God has caused it.

Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, are challenged. the second: time-by Joshua here, as by Moses before; because of their pillar here, because of their seeking the plains of Gilead before. This is all natural, as common as Christian fellowship is, but all more or less painful and troublesome now-a-days as it was then. A great stir is made among the Tribes; and a great assemblage is formed to inquire into this further.

Something appeared in the eye of them who were on the other side of the river, which alarmed them as Israelites, as worshippers of Jehovah. It looked to be something which the common call of God could not allow for a moment-it must at least be explained. What a living picture this is! Are we not at home here? Do we not scan this spot well? The calling and the election of those eastern borderers was not made sure to their brethren who were living in the place of the Ark of God. They have to inquire and inspect their condition; and whatever the result of such inspection may be, the need of such a process is but a poor thing at best.

I believe the first Epistle to the Corinthians is very much an Eleazar crossing the river to look after a pillar. There were things at Corinth which alarmed Paul. They seemed to be reigning as kings in the earth; his ministry in the meekness and gentleness of Christ was getting despised. The world was fashioning the hearts of saints there; and people were valued because of their place in the world. "The princes of this world," the men of the schools, or the ways of the schools, were regaining their place, and saints were returning to settle where they ought to be unknown and strangers. Paul, in the zeal of Joshua 22:1-34, had to cross the river; and whatever the disco very may be, the action is a painful one, and the need of it a sad one in the history of the Church. The Tribes may satisfy Eleazar more than the Corinthians did Paul; all these varieties are known at this hour: but there is this common sorrow and humbling, that the call and election is not made sure: and we have either to take journeys, or to occasion journeys, to have our own ways and ED.'s, and altars, as brethren, read; instead of reading to all the secrets of God's altar and tabernacle at Shiloh!-J. G. B.

S. The Two Tribes and a Half; Part 2

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God ever treats us according to what He has already given us-treating us as though we realized it all. An Assembly which has not the Truth of God for the condition of its existence is not an Assembly of God.

(Concluded front Page 16.)

S. The Wondrous Works of God.

The Wondrous Works of God.

Job 37:14-16; Job 38:47; 1 John 3:8; John 17:4; John 6:27-29.

Notes of an address by J. S. Bertram at Galashiels, 23/11/40. The outstanding feature in all these Scriptures is that of works! In the first a halt is called and Job is instructed to hearken, stand still and consider the wonderful works of God. Whenever God has something important to communicate He calls man to stand still and listen. The wonderful works in creation (revealing God) are described in Job 37:1-24; Job 38:1-41; Job 39:1-30. Everything in creation is an evidence of God! In Romans 1:1-32 we read that the things that are made evince His eternal power and Godhead, so that men everywhere are left without excuse. No one can plead ignorance. Every whit in creation declares the Glory of God. Nothing has appeared by chance, but by design and that of God. Genesis 1:2, shows that chaos and darkness were everywhere and the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters and everything was brought into order by the word of God, and finally life appeared. God's power is shown in every line of creation and as a copestone to creation, God formed man. His work being accomplished He rested on the seventh day. "The sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). From Ezekiel we learn that there were other created intelligences. Satan was presented in the guise of the King of Tyre. In such a dignified person pride was resident and as a consequence he fell and with him vast hosts of angelic beings. In an early moment in the world's history that mighty being had introduced himself into God's fair creation and inserted a lie in the minds of our first parents and they succumbed to his temptation. The beautiful harmony which had been established was spoiled by Satan. The devil's ingenuity has always been directed to securing his own glory! The seed which he sowed in men's minds was soon manifested by the fruit thereof. Creation came to be marked by the works of the devil. Murder and general wickedness were rampant, so that God had to sweep His creation with a flood; but that did not eradicate the works of the devil. The earth which emerged from the cleansing power of the Flood soon manifested a continuance of the features which had permeated the antediluvian world. The Son of God was manifested to annul the works of the devil, and not only so but ultimately Satan himself. Satan tried his wiles on Christ. He suggested "if Thou be the Son of God, etc.," but the latter's power was not to be in evidence to please Satan. He was here dependent on God and was an overcomer! Immediately the Lord commenced to relieve those under the power of Satan. Relative to His power there is love shown, e.g., in the relief of the demoniac and the woman with the issue of blood. He relieved the captives of Satan; but while on earth his work had relation to time. Yet when He came forth from the Father He had an eternal work in view. "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). This work outshone creation's glory. That will redound to the Glory of God for all eternity! His own glory was in harmony with that glory. He set his face steadfastly to go to the Cross and the work was completely accomplished at Calvary as distinct from the works which bore witness to the Father. On His last journey from Jericho to Jerusalem He was dispensing blessing to His creatures although the Cross was before him and He knew all that would befall Him at Jerusalem. The whole

prophetic word of the Old Testament pointed forward unmistakably to that moment. To what indignities He was subjected! The callous indifference, the gambling and jibing manifested the bitter hatred residing in man's heart. What meekness and love were manifested as He went forth bearing His cross! Satan thought that he had secured a permanent triumph. But when man had done his worst, that last word "finished" was the triumphal shout of a victor and He dismissed His spirit. That finished work was that by which propitiation has been made and sin removed from the eye of God, while a universe of bliss can be formed on the sure basis of that redemption. The work completed and God glorified, in virtue of the value of His work He has taken His rightful place at the right hand of God. What a rich revenue of glory has accrued to God in consequence! A mercy seat has been established as the only meeting place of the sinner with God and the Holy Ghost has come down to make good the truth in souls and so effect the wondrous work of God. The work of God is to believe on Him whom God has sent (John 6:29). That belief produced by the Holy Spirit brings life and salvation. (There is also a belief which is purely mental!) Faith cometh by hearing and that by the word of God! The Holy Ghost is brooding over the darkness and chaos in the souls of men, working in a moral way, awakening them to their true condition before God. The result is a new condition which answers to God. If we have been freed by His power, there is also that created which will withstand all the wiles of Satan's ingenuity and abide as an everlasting witness to the wondrous work of God.

S. Winter, Spring, Summer, Harvest.

Winter, Spring, Summer, Harvest.

Notes of an address by J S. Bertram. In our everyday language we speak of spring, summer, autumn and winter, which is perfectly in accord with man's order, but in God's economy there is a very different order of things. Relative to man he was set up in Eden in the bloom of youth, the freshness of spring and knew something of the summer of God's beneficent goodness, but on account of sin he reaped a bad harvest, and his day ended in death; a winter scene indeed! What was true in connection with man was also true of Israel. Freshness, the expression of life, was in the early days of Solomon, but alas, he too reaped a sad harvest, and bitter winter moral conditions ensued. In John 10:22-23, our blessed Lord was in the temple in Solomon's porch. Despite its magnificent structure with all its show of religious service and the feast of dedication in progress "it was winter." True as to the season of the year, but it was also a perfect description of the nation's condition, where there was no life spiritually there was not a movement toward God with all its fair show; but there is something else to notice, "Jesus walked." What a delight to the Father to look down upon His beloved Son in that winter scene and find in Him alone something for Himself. There was One who walked for His glory, where every step emitted a sweet fragrance in contrast to the corruption. In 2 Samuel 23:20, we have another winter scene; again there is a conspicuous man. Benaiah (the name means "whom God has made strong for Himself"). He went down into a pit to slay a lion; surely a lovely type of the One who descended into the lower parts of the earth, having gone down into death. How blessed that in death's domain (man's unhappy lot, the result of his sin), the blessed God commences to work with the Man of His choice. In the scene where man is helpless God's man comes into view. When Benaiah went down into the pit it was "the time of snow," everything was in the grip of winter, there was not a vestige of life to be seen. So with the blessed Lord Jesus when He went down unto death to slay him who had the power of death, there was not a breath for God in the whole universe, everything lay in death, in the grip of winter. The hopes of the disciples were buried with Him. Marvellous are God's ways. The way of life lay through death. That condition of things which sin had brought in must be brought to an end in death. In the domain of death (man's dread enemy), the infinite love of God has been declared, and the power of God's man seen. So as Benaiah emerged from the pit victorious, having slain the lion; so the blessed Lord arose out of death having burst its iron portals and destroyed forever its power. In His resurrection there is the dawn of a new day, life from the dead. The winter is past and gone, the time of the singing of birds is come (Song of Solomon 2:11-12). In life out of death, spring time had come indeed! He communicated His risen life to His own; the time of singing had come. What joy and gladness filled their hearts as they were brought into the new association with Him risen as He manifested Himself to them during those forty days! But these conditions were preparatory for the introduction of the summer of God's rich grace. The One who went down into death, and rose again has been carried up on high and acclaimed by all heaven as the worthy victorious One God's glory now shines in His blessed face, and as the sun in summer rises in noonday splendour, shedding its beneficent rays over creation, so the Son of Man has gone to the

highest glory. From His place of supremacy and acceptance God's rich grace shines for all. We are now living in the summer of God's grace; what a favourable accepted time is the present. There never was a day like the present, when God's rich grace and love in superabundance are free for all. From Jeremiah 8:20, we learn that the summer of God's grace will end; 1:e., a very solemn thought for those who have not availed themselves of His grace, and they are not saved, let these solemn searching words sink into every heart. Oh, that men would avail themselves of God's grace in the day of salvation, the summer of His grace. There is going to be a rich harvest for God, whatever man may derive from His goodness, and it seems as if that rich harvest will soon be reaped. God's patient goodness and the sunshine of His love will terminate suddenly in the Lord's coming for His own, the first fruits of the harvest have already been reaped, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming! What a harvest that will be for God; fruit of His love! That will also be a harvest for Christ; fruit of His grief and travail, when myriads are caught up in His likeness. He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing (Zephaniah 3:12). When the harvest is gathered home God will be satisfied, Christ glorified in are redeemed and glorified company; His body and bride resplendent with His glory!

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