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General Index.

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE	TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE	S. Lavery ...	137	PORTRAITS OF CALVARY	J. H. McCormick	119
A MOMENT IN THE MORNING ... ..	...	66	POUNDS AND TALENTS	G.F.V. ...	49
ARRANGEMENT OF JEWISH MONTHS	W. Scott ...	48	PRAYER	H. P. Barker ...	138
AT AND AFTER THE COMING	G. Hamilton ...	78	PROPHECIES THAT ARE BEING FULFILLED IN OUR DAY	F. C. Jennings	87
BACKSLIDING	H. P. Barker ...	111	REMEMBER ... ..	...	100
BENJAMIN ... ..	...	60	REPENTANCE	H. P. Barker ...	42
BIBLE DIALOGUES	H. P. Barker	3, 18, 27	RESTORING THE OVERTAKEN	...	99
		42, 57, 69, 75, 93, 105, 111, 129, 133	RIDDLE FOR CHRISTMAS	W. Luff	142
BOOK ABOUT JESUS ...	W. W. Fereday	101	SANCTIFICATION ...	H. P. Barker ...	93
BOOK OF THE WILDERNESS	H. Dennett	6, 21, 33	SAVED TO SERVE ...	A. Gardner ...	64
		39, 51, 67, 81, 91, 103, 114, 123, 135	SERMON OUTLINES ...	G.F.V. ...	112
CHIEF APOSTLE ...	E. Barker ...	84	SOME INTERESTING FACTS.	W. Scott ...	143
CONVERSION	H. P. Barker ...	27	SURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM	W. Luff ...	9, 23, 31, 47, 55, 62, 80, 103, 120
CONVERSION OF CHILDREN ... ..	...	65	STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID	H. W. Soltau ...	35
DIFFERENCES OF OPINION	G.F.V. ...	1	SUGGESTIVE OUTLINES ... ..	...	23
DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER	R. E. Jones ...	90	SUGGESTIVE OUTLINES FOR PREACHERS	F. Salveson ...	128
EDITORIAL	G.F.V. 1, 13, 25, 37		SUMMARY OF THE REVELATION ... ..	...	24
		49, 61, 73, 85, 97, 109, 121, 133	TEN MINUTES TALK ON JOHN I. ... ..	...	50
EVENTS IN EUROPE AFTER THE RAPTURE	J. H. McCormick ...	11, 19, 30, 45	TEN POINTS FOR PREACHERS	...	98
FAITH	H. P. Barker	3, 18	THINGS THAT DIFFER	G.F.V. 1, 13, 25, 37,	49, 61, 73, 85, 97, 109, 121, 133
FOLLOW ME ... ..	...	20	THREEFOLD CORD	G.F.V. ...	85, 97
FORGIVENESS OF SINS	H. P. Barker ...	75	TOILING IN ROWING	S. Dickins ...	116
GRACE OF THE LORD ... ..	...	80	TWELVE VIEWS OF THE CROSS	...	102
GREATEST PERSON IN THE UNIVERSE ... ..	...	68	WAS IT WORTH WHILE? ... ..	...	26
HOW TO DISTRIBUTE GOSPEL TRACTS ... ..	...	41	WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT? ... ..	...	63
ISAIAH : A MINIATURE BIBLE	E.C....	48	WHAT DOES "THE LORD" MEAN? ... ..	...	143
INSPIRATION	H. P. Barker ...	129	WHEN GOD SETTLES ... ..	...	143
JOHN THE BAPTIST AS PRESENTED BY—	MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN		WISE CHOICE ... ..	...	8
	A.W.B.	56, 72, 83, 96	WORDS OF WISDOM ... ..	...	12
JUSTIFICATION	H. P. Barker ...	57	WORTH ATTENTION ... ..	...	100
JUSTIFICATION	S. Lavery ...	118	WORTH NOTING ... ..	...	102, 118
LORD'S PRISONERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES	E. Barker ...	125			
MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN	H. P. Barker ...	105	POETRY		
NOTES ON ISAIAH	F. C. Jennings ...	53	TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
NUMBERS, BOOK OF	H. Dennett	6, 21, 33	DAY UNTO DAY. NIGHT		
		39, 51, 67, 81, 91, 103, 114, 123, 135	UNTO NIGHT ... ..	...	14
OCCUPY TILL I COME	G.F.V. ...	25	HE CARES	A.W.B. ...	110
OLD PARABLES RE-STUDIED	R. Lee ...	141	HE CARETH FOR YOU	E. R. Miles	86
OUR GOD IS ABLE	G.F.V. ...	5	HIS PRAISE OR MEN'S	W. Luff...	108
OUTLINED ADDRESSES	G.F.V. ...	74	LORD THOU ART MAKING ME	W. Luff	8
PARABLE OF THE OPPOSITE	R. Lee ...	141	NOT KNOWING WHITHER ... ..	...	98
PEACE WITH GOD	H. P. Barker ...	69	ON GROWING OLD ... ..	...	100
PERFECT PEACE AND EVER-LASTING STRENGTH	W. Scott ...	15	TEN MEN OR TWO MEN ... ..	...	92
			THE NAME OF JESUS ... ..	...	104
			TILL HE COME ... ..	...	13

Scripture Reference Index.

GENESIS	PAGE	DEUTERONOMY	PAGE	PSALMS	PAGE	HOSEA	PAGE
1. 16	122	1. 22	92	4. 8... ..	16	5. 15	113
3.15	137	2. 6... ..	124	12. 1-8	117	6. 1-2	113
6. 4... ..	103	11. 10-11... ..	6	15. 2-5	117	11. 8	99
14. 12	99	28. 13	88	18. 45	39	AMOS	
22	50	31. 6-23	54	19	36	1. 14	124
39. 20	125	32. 49-50... ..	107	19. 2	14	9. 9... ..	80
49. 27	60	33. 12	60	24. 4	124	MICAH	
EXODUS		JOSHUA		27. 14	54	6. 8... ..	83
6. 3... ..	17	1. 6-9	54	33. 3-21	99	ZEPHANIAH	
6. 21	114	2. 9-10	92	38. 12	62	3. 3... ..	60
12	50	11. 22	103	51. 1	117	MALACHI	
12. 1	22	14. 4	68	55. 17	117, 139	1. 6... ..	72
12. 13	6	18. 7	68	104. 15	51	2. 7... ..	72
13. 17	7	JUDGES		105. 18	125	3. 1... ..	72
14. 1	7	9. 13	51	105. 39	110	4. 2... ..	88
16. 1	22	1 SAMUEL		119. 165	71	MATTHEW	
17. 7	124	12. 3	52	144. 9	99	1. 6... ..	56
19. 1	22	22. 1-2	120	PROVERBS			
19. 3	21	30. 1-20	74	14. 14	112	1. 21-25	101
19. 8	21	31	35	26. 20	14	3. 12	56
25. 23	39	2 SAMUEL		28. 13	43	7. 22	73
27. 20	68	1	36	ECCLES.			
28. 1	33	21. 22	103	3. 14	28, 111	7. 26	15
31. 18	129	1 KINGS		ISAIAH			
35. 3	104	8. 32-	57	1	53, 54	8. 23-27	16
40. 17	22, 67	17. 24	115	5. 1-7	104	9. 18-39	23, 104
40. 34	97	18. 21-29... ..	45	7. 14	101	11. 18	51, 108
LEVITICUS		2 KINGS		8. 7... ..	88	11. 28	121
4. 1-12	123	5. 1-27	92	9. 6... ..	16	13. 44	110
9. 22	51	1 CHRONICLES		22. 20-25... ..	16	18. 3	27
10. 4	52	15. 2	68	26. 3-4	15	18. 20	117
21	40	2 CHRONICLES		40. 3	83	20. 26	122
22	40	26. 19	92	42. 20	72	21. 19	104
NUMBERS		29. 34	68	53. 2	56	22. 15	56
1. 1... ..	6, 22	31. 4	68	57. 20	15	23. 5	104
1. 18	22	EZRA		JEREMIAH			
3. 6... ..	33	9. 15	68	5. 6... ..	60	24. 43	90
6	51	NEHEMIAH		30. 4-7	46	24. 45	122
6. 11-12	52	13. 10	68	49. 17	124	25. 8	73
6. 20	52	JOB		MARK			
7. 10	67	11. 2	58	1. 14	72	25. 14-15... ..	13, 25
8. 24	68	11. 6	109, 121, 133	4. 38	16, 121	25. 16-23... ..	37, 49
9. 1... ..	22	25. 4	118	5. 25-29	23	25. 24	62
9. 6... ..	52	29. 14-16... ..	42	6. 48	116	26. 29	52
10. 11	82	40. 4	42	6. 56	104	27. 37	101
11. 3	91	42. 5-6	42	16. 16	64	LUKE	
13. 26	124	DANIEL		1. 15	51	1. 77	76
13. 33	92, 103	7. 6... ..	19	7. 24	11		
14. 8	103	11. 37	12				
16	114						
18. 21	x33						
19	123						
20. 13	124						
21	135						

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
LUKE		ROMANS		EPHESIANS		HEBREWS	
3. 23	34	3. 9... ..	118	1. 4... ..	94	6. 19-21	78
6. 17	130	3. 19	110	1. 7... ..	75, 119	7	53
6. 22	95	3. 24	58, 118	2. 1-3	128	9. 4... ..	115
7. 48-50	77	3. 26-28	58, 59, 85	2. 8-10	19	10. 20	35
8. 13	29	4. 5... ..	57, 118	2. 13	27	11. 21	111
8. 18	55	4. 25	71	2. 14	15	12. 21	21
9. 30-31	107	5. 1... ..	15, 71	2. 22	121	13	47, 121
12. 1-12	120	5. 9... ..	58	4. 11-13	49	13. 15	67
12. 42	122	6. 3... ..	7	4. 32	75		
12. 47	133	7. 24	52	5. 2... ..	101	JAMES	
18. 1-8	141	8. 6... ..	71	5. 26	77	2. 24	58, 118
18. 14	57	8. 11	78			1 PETER	
19. 8	43	8. 26	85, 97	PHILIPPIANS		1. 5... ..	19
19. 12-13... ..	13, 25	8. 29-30	94	1. 21	64	1. 18	22
19. 20	62, 73	8. 31	85, 97	1. 23	107	2. 4... ..	89, 117
19. 22	61	8. 32	86	2. 12	110	2. 14	73
22. 32	28	8. 33	57, 118	3. 10-12	84	2. 19	117
23. 48	102	8. 34	85, 97	4	71	2. 24	77
24. 2-51	117	10. 9	73	4. 6-7	16, 110	2. 25	27
		10. 12-13... ..	101	4. 21	128	5. 7... ..	16
		10. 17	9			2 PETER	
JOHN		11. 22	115	COLOSSIANS		1. 19	54
1. 3-51	50, 83	14. 22-23... ..	1, 2	1. 12-14	106	2. 20-22	74, 111
3. 3... ..	65	15. 1-3	2	1. 16-17	50, 96		
5. 24	27, 110	15. 8-9	101	1. 20	15, 70	1 JOHN	
5. 35	96	1 CORINTHIANS		1. 28	121	1. 9... ..	76
11. 25-26... ..	78	1. 30	110	1 THESSALONIANS		2. 1... ..	77
14. 21-23... ..	78	3. 9... ..	64	1. 9-10	28	2. 12	75
14. 27	15, 71	6. 11	59, 93	4. 15	78	2. 22	20
14. 31	110	6. 19	97, 121	4. 17	87	3. 3... ..	95
17. 3	62	8. 12	2	5. 22	1	3. 23	3
17. 19	93	9. 21	52	5. 23	94, 110	4. 15	97
17. 24	78	9. 27	112	2 THESSALONIANS		5. 20	117
19. 18-20... ..	117	10. 1-2	7	2	30	REVELATION	
20. 19	15	11. 15	52	2. 13	94	1	24
20. 20	15	11. 23-30... ..	117	1 TIMOTHY		1. 8... ..	17
		12. 4-11	49	3. 6... ..	34	2. 2-4	112
ACTS		12. 12-27... ..	50	2 TIMOTHY		3. 5... ..	112
1. 16	130	12. 28-31... ..	49	1. 9... ..	28	5. 6... ..	15
3. 17	104	14. 8	82	1. 12	4	13. 2	11, 20
3. 19	29	15. 14-16... ..	18	2. 21	95, 107	13. 12-13... ..	45
11. 23	122	15. 51	78	3. 16	129	14. 6, 20	24
12. 7	16	2 CORINTHIANS		4. 3... ..	87	16. 2	88
13. 32-33... ..	101	5. 15	77	TITUS		17	30
13. 38	76	7. 11	44	2. 12	64	17. 3	11
13. 39	59, 118	9. 7-30	31	3. 5... ..	105	17. 12	11, 12
16. 25	16	13. 9	121	HEBREWS		17. 15	89
16. 31	29	GALATIANS		5. 14	121	17. 16-18... ..	31
20. 18	93	5. 20	109	6. 4-6	74	19	30
21. 38	74	6. 1... ..	99, 112			21. 9-27	24, 105
28. 29	127					22. 7-20	24
27. 23	64						

1935

“ THE COINERS DEN. ”

1935

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Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XXII.

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Rom. 14. 22-23.

"DIFFERENCES OF OPINION" (Cont.)

IT seems that as soon as Paul mentions the Judgment Seat of Christ, a flood of light from another angle seems to strike his very being, and the pivot of his whole argument swings, the arrow pointing in entirely the opposite direction. For he says, "So then *everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.*" (v. 12).

Up to this point we have been occupied with our attitude toward our brother, now the Holy Spirit would remind us that in that day, we shall not be in the least concerned with the judgment of our fellow worker, but rather with ourselves.

God will then rightly apportion honour, and appraise our work according to the Balances of the Divine Sanctuary. We must therefore, now review all that we have had to say regarding this matter, with the right person at the bar, for undoubtedly we have had the wrong person up for judgment. Let us now consider *not* "Our Brother" but "ourselves." Instead of seeking to remove the mote from *his* eye, shall we endeavour to remove the beam out of our *own* eye, and adjust the many little matters which cannot strictly be called sinful, but which are undoubtedly a hindrance to him. The natural man judges his neighbour and excuses himself. The Spiritual man makes allowance for his brother but judges himself.

As one more established in the faith, and with a greater knowledge of the Word of God, I have perhaps more liberty in many things; but this liberty must not be turned into license. From Verse 15 of our chapter onward, it is not a question of my receiving the weaker brother, but rather as to how my actions and ways affect him in his Christian pathway.

The weaker brother in the illustration used, can only eat herbs, and is surprised that one who is an older and more established Christian can conscientiously partake of meat. In this way the *liberty* of the older Christian, becomes a *stumbling block* to the weaker. There was undoubtedly nothing *wrong* in the eating of meat, but as the stronger became aware that the other Christian was stumbled or hindered in his spiritual life, then it became wrong for him to participate further in it.

"Let not then your *good* be evil spoken of," verse 16.

In another passage Paul puts it this way. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," 1 Cor. 10. 23. and again

"All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence," v. 20.

Thus, what may be perfectly innocent and sinless in itself, may become sinful by my attitude toward it. So that it is often not merely a question of

asking what is wrong in a certain thing or course, but of asking how it will effect my testimony as a Christian.

"Abstain from all *APPEARANCE* of evil" 1 Thess. 5. 22, is another wise injunction. Even faith can become a means of condemnation in these matters.

However, now that I am the subject of judgment, and not my brother, am I to take the same line of argument that I took when I was considering him? Am I for instance, to remind him that he *should* receive me because God hath received me? That we are both servants of the same Master, and therefore it is out of place for him to judge me? Am I to tell him that after all, it may be proved at the judgment seat of Christ, that I was in the right and he was in the wrong,

~~~~~  
If my liberty judges me  
Then it's time I judged my liberty.  
~~~~~

and that God is able to make *me* stand and to hold *me* up? Or that Christ is Lord of all, and therefore he should postpone his judgment until that later day? That after all we are brethren, and that this relationship should have its proper place in matters of this kind?

All this would be perfectly TRUE, and perfectly *scriptural*, but it would not be the proper argument. When I would judge *my brother* I must give all these points consideration, for I must deal gently, leniently and lovingly *with him*, but when I judge *myself* there must be no relaxation of judgment in the slightest degree. I must now deal as *severely* as I can with the prisoner. There must be no recommendation to mercy, no advocate to plead for the guilty party. All that is contrary to divine truth must now be condemned. All that is of the natural man must be judged. All that is displeasing to Christ must be done away with, and all that is likely to prove a hindrance or a stumbling block to my brother must not be endured for another moment of time.

"But," says my reader, "really you know, I think that my brother is most unfair. For there is really nothing wrong at all in that which I do, and of which he disapproves, and am I through his fastidiousness to give up that in which I can honestly say I find nothing sinful." That is just what your brother thinks of your difficulty regarding his scruples. The writer of our chapter anticipated your question, and in verses 14-15 you will find the answer.

"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ that there is nothing unclean of itself. But to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." And then he adds,

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not according to love. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." See 1 Cor. 8. 8-9.

Thus we see Paul confirms, that even though my action or course may be perfectly *right in itself*, it may be wrong for me to persist in the doing of it, if by so doing, another is hindered in spiritual progress.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in *these things serveth Christ* is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

The spirit in which our service is undertaken, and the attitude toward one another in it, is often of far greater importance than the service itself.

What a wealth of Spiritual teaching there is in this last verse quoted.

"For he that in *these things serveth Christ* is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

Our Lord is pleased with our sacrifice, and *men* around us take knowledge that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him, and they *approve* our actions as, at least, Christlike.

"For even Christ pleased not Himself." (Rom. 15. 3)
 "We then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to *please ourselves*. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." (Rom. 15. 1-2).

Our problem then resolves itself into this, that we are not to approach these matters as to whether they are right or wrong in themselves, but rather, am I likely to stumble or hinder some other younger or weaker believer in the doing of them? If so, even though I may be perfectly in order as far as my *rights* are concerned, I shall be very much out of order in persisting to please self rather than others, and in sinning against *them* I sin against Christ. (1 Cor. 8. 12). 1 Cor. 8, may well be read now as adding a very fitting climax to the whole subject and when we have prayerfully read it over alone with God, not once nor twice but many times, may we on bended knee say with the Great Apostle,

"Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

The "Flesh" meaning to us whatever it is that causeth our brother difficulty and doubt.

One final word. May it not often be that right deep down in our own hearts there is often a little doubt as to really, if after all, we *may* not be wrong in claiming the liberty we profess to have?

That after all, we are not *quite* so happy about that thing which is a stumbling block to our brother, as we profess to be? In those quiet moments of reflection when we think about our Christian life as pleasing our Lord, have we not often thought that we should be the better Christian if we were to forego that *very thing*? So that frankly and honestly we *do* stand a little condemned ourselves in this very matter, and may not the mere fact of our brother's difficulty be but God's voice to us to abandon it for our own good, as well as his. "Happy is he," says Rom. 14. 22, "that condemneth not himself in that thing *which he alloweth*." "He that doubteth—(Hesitates, or is not quite sure)—is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Are you that "Happy man" of verse 22, or that "Doubting" ("Not quite sure about it.") man of verse 23?

"Everyone of us shall give account of HIMSELF TO GOD." (Rom. 14. 12).

G. F. V.



"THRESHED WHEAT TO MISSIONARIES" FUND.

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“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and O. Lambert.

No. 1. FAITH.

THE subject we have chosen for our first dialogue is one of prime importance, for *faith* is the great principle upon which God bestows His blessing.

When the question, “ What must I do to be saved ? ” rang from the agonised lips of the prison warder at Philippi, the inspired answer did not bid him pray, or strive, or make vows, or anything of that sort. He was told to *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Nothing that he could do could secure God’s salvation. The *doing* had all been done by Christ. All that is left for the sinner is the appropriation of the results of His mighty work by simple faith.

What is Faith ?

Faith is a thing which people exercise in a hundred ways every day of their lives. When that lady entered the Tent just now, and sat down on that chair, it was an act of faith. She *trusted* the chair and committed herself to it. When I removed my hat and hung it upon yonder hook, that again was an act of faith. I *trusted* the hook, and depended upon it to hold my hat. The faith of which the Bible speaks is just as simple as that. Christ is its object, and to have faith in Him is to *rely* on Him, or *count* upon Him for that which our souls need. The same thing is expressed in other ways in Scripture: “ Look,” “ Come,” “ Take,” “ Receive ”—all these mean very much the same as “ Trust ” or “ Believe.”

If, from your heart, you can say—

“ Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,”

you are one that has faith in Him.

Can a man believe of his own accord ?

When the Lord Jesus told the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth, the man did not ask, “ How can I ? ” He might have said “ Lord, I have not been able to move this arm for years. It is paralysed and helpless. I cannot be expected to raise it.” But he simply did as he was bidden. From this we learn that when God commands He gives power to obey.

Now it is His *commandment* that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ (see 1 John 3. 23). Left to ourselves, it is not likely that we should desire to trust in Him. Our hearts are naturally so depraved and hard that there is no room for Christ there. But God has His ways of producing what He seeks, and it is not for us to reason as to our ability or inability to believe, but to remember that we are *commanded* to do it. The best thing is to be simple about it. We can trust one another without question. It ought not to be more difficult to trust the Saviour.

Why is it said that faith is the “ Gift of God ” ?

It means, I think, that not only does blessing come to us freely from God, but that the means of appropriating that blessing is provided by Him.

Suppose that a friend comes to you and says: “ I have placed a large sum of money to your account at a bank in this city. Here is a cheque-book for you. When you wish to draw any money, fill in a cheque and present it, and you will get what you want.”

Your friend thus makes a twofold provision for you. First he provides a sum of money for you to draw upon. Secondly, he furnishes you with the means to draw upon that amount. But it would be useless for you to say, “ Very well, then, all I have to do is to fold my arms and wait till the money comes to me.” You would for ever remain without the money if you were to act in that way.

You would have to use diligence in availing yourself of the means provided. You would have to fill in and sign cheques, and present them at the bank for payment.

Now faith is like the cheque-book. It is the gift of God, and is the means by which you may freely avail yourself of all the blessings which Christ has won for sinners by His work upon the cross. The effect of it should be to exercise you, and make you diligent in applying for the offered blessing.

Will believing that I am saved, save me ?

No more than a pauper would become a millionaire by believing that he is one ! We sometimes hear it said, " All you have to do is to believe that you are saved, and you *are* saved." One might as well go to the bedside of a man down with typhoid fever and say, " All that you have to do is to believe that you are quite well, and you *are* quite well." It is worse than useless for a man to believe that he is saved, until he really is saved through faith in Christ.

What must a man believe in order to be saved ?

I would rather say, "*Whom* must a man believe ?" for it is not a fact, but a Person, that is set forth as the object of faith. In 2 Timothy 1. 12 the apostle says, " I know *whom* I have believed."

In order to be saved, we are not told to believe *about* the Lord Jesus Christ, but to believe *on* Him ; that is, to trust in Him.

A lady once came to a friend of mine after a meeting where the way of salvation had been clearly explained and said, " Will you please point me to some text in the Bible which I am to believe in order to be saved ?" The preacher replied, " Madam, you may believe any text, or *all* texts in the Bible, and yet not be saved. *Believing the Bible never yet saved a soul.*"

" Well," said the lady, " if I believe that Christ died for sinners, will that save me ?"

" No, madam," was the reply, " for that would only be the belief of a *fact*. A very blessed fact, I grant you, but still only a fact, and *believing a fact, however true, never yet saved a soul.*"

" I suppose," said the lady, " that you mean that I must make it a more personal matter, and believe that Jesus died for *me*."

" Madam," replied my friend, " it is an unspeakably precious fact that Jesus died for you. He died for the ungodly, and therefore for you. But that is only a *fact*, and let me repeat that *believing a fact never yet saved a soul.*"

" Christ is a living Saviour, mighty, through the work that He has accomplished, to save. Trust Him to save you. He is willing ; He is able ; rely on Him."

I could not put the matter more simply than my friend did in his conversation with the lady. It is a living, loving Saviour in glory that we are bidden to trust.

Is faith the only condition of salvation ?

I hardly like to speak even of faith as a " condition of salvation." When Queen Elizabeth was about to pardon one of her nobles who had offended against the laws of the realm, she wished to make certain conditions.

" Your Majesty," said the offending courtier, " grace that hath conditions is no grace at all."

The Queen saw the truth of this, withdrew the conditions, and freely set the nobleman at liberty.

To speak to the Queen as he did, he must have *trusted* her. He had faith in her clemency and grace, but this was not the condition of his pardon.

Now God's grace is as free and unconditional as was Queen Elizabeth's. It has no conditions. If faith is the principle on which God blesses, it is in order "*that it might be by grace*" (Rom. 4. 16).

This is important, I am sure, for many people regard faith as something that they have to take to God as the price of their salvation, just as they would take a fee to their doctor. Faith is the simple appropriation of what God freely offers.

But probably Mr. Lambert, in asking this question, has in his mind something that always goes hand-in-hand with true faith, and that is *repentance*. These two are twin sisters. When one really turns to the Lord in faith, one always turns away from *self* with loathing, and that is what I understand by repentance. I am rather sceptical as to the so-called " faith " of people who have never been before God in self-judgment about their sins.

How may I know whether my faith is of the right kind or not ?

The great point is, does it rest upon the right object ? If so, though it may be weak and small, yet it is faith of the right kind. For instance, suppose that I am sick with influenza. I may have great faith in a certain medicine to cure me. Repeated doses, however produce no result, and I come to the conclusion that my confidence, great though it was, was misplaced, *because the medicine in which I trusted had no efficacy*. On the other hand, a remedy of proved value is recommended to me. I have little faith in it, however, and can hardly be persuaded to try it. But when at length I begin to take it, I find myself much benefited. My faith in it was small, but it was the right kind of faith, *because the medicine I took was efficacious*.

In like manner, one may have strong faith in prayer, or in happy experiences, or in dreams, or in a moral life, or in religious observances, but such faith is faith of the *wrong kind*. One's faith in Christ may be very small, but if it is indeed faith in Him alone, it is faith of the *right kind*.

How may one get to have strong faith ?

If a person is untrustworthy, the better one knows him the less one confides in him ; but if a person is trustworthy, one's confidence increases as one gets to know him better. The more we learn of the Lord Jesus, the deeper our personal acquaintance with Him goes, the more we explore the heights and depths of the grace of God, the stronger our faith in Him becomes. Every fresh lesson learned of Him strengthens our faith,

THE PROPOSED NEW "FAIRLOP GOSPEL HALL."



ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE.

"Our God is Able—AND HE WILL." or THE STORY OF PAT (cont.).

Can you imagine yourself not 10 miles from London in an ever-growing district of now at least a thousand homes and not a single place of Worship of any kind?

Almost incredible you say. Exactly, but such is true of Fairlop and Hainault, adjoining Barking-side.

Three miles and more without a place of worship of any kind!

Through the goodness of our God we were enabled to erect a Gospel Tent seating 200, from May to September, 1933, which was packed to overflowing with Young people twice on Sundays and one evening a week.

In answer to prayer, and by Divine over-ruling in a remarkable manner, (as told in the "Story of Pat" Part I), a Temporary Council School was made available for us, the first Sunday after the Tent was taken down, so that now we have three rooms in this School with 100 chairs in each, packed twice on Sundays and once during the week.

Sunday evenings from 7.45 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. we have a Drawing-room Bible Class of 25 elder scholars, (and more begging to be allowed to come) who, when converted, will form the nucleus of the work in a coming day if our Lord tarry.

There is no difficulty here of holding the elder scholars, they love to come.

Situated on the main Road, right opposite this Temporary School, was a plot of ground—practically the last plot in the road. That it would be the ideal spot for a Hall, none could deny, but it was already leased by the Crown to the Builders.

We commenced our Sunday School in the Temporary School building on the 1st October, 1933. By the 15th of that month the Builders had dug their foundations, and houses were in course

of erection, on all but the last two plots, and on these the concrete was already in.

Seeing that this site had gone, the next best thing seemed to be to make preliminary enquiries for the leasing of a site in a side turning, just behind this Main Road, but the Crown, to whom the land belonged, flatly refused.—

But they offered to sell us

THE FREEHOLD,

of the last two plots *on the main-road*, right opposite the School, if this site (40ft. by 150ft.) would suit us, and the Builders were willing to arrange concerning the work they had already put in.

THIS WAS THE VERY PLOT WE HAD SELECTED,

but which it seemed, absolutely impossible to obtain!—

but Our God is able—and He will. (Dan. 3. 17).

Under the circumstances what more could we do than secure the site? This we have done, and God in His wonderful goodness has already provided the amount required.

Next came the question "Should we go right ahead and build, or should we wait?" Our ever-growing School numbered 325 children, and still nothing whatever was being done for the Parents of those children.

What an opportunity for service indeed?

After much prayer and careful consideration, and with more than one indication that it was God's will for us, we finally decided one day in November, 1933, that the time had come that we should go right ahead. We felt confident that our God was able, even though the task seemed colossal, and we further believed that He would enable us to yet again complete the text and say not only that "Our God is ABLE" but also that "He will."

The above Architect's perspective will convey

(continued on page 8)

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART I.

EVERY book of Scripture has its distinctive character, for God has willed that His Word should contain instruction and guidance for His people to-day in every possible circumstance and situation. Hence before turning to any detail of a book of the Bible it is very important that the key to it as a whole should be discovered. Fortunately it is usually found in the book itself—frequently right at the commencement.

This is certainly so with the book of Numbers, for the distinctive mark of the whole is in the very first verse :

“ And Jehovah spake unto Moses *in the wilderness of Sinai . . .* ”

Numbers then is the “ Book of the Wilderness.” It covers almost 39 out of the forty years that Israel spent between Egypt and Canaan.

In order to get a complete view of that wonderful journey, and to obtain, moreover, a clearer idea of the purpose that the wilderness fulfilled in the ways of God with His people, we will look briefly at the events that led up to the arrival of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai—where they are found in the opening chapters of the book of Numbers.

A question that is clearly pertinent, but curiously seldom asked is this : “ Why should God wish His people to be moved from the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan ? ”

“ For the land, whither ye go to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.” Deut. 11. 10-11.

To understand the force of this we must turn a moment to the geography of the two countries. Apart from the land bordering the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt is a country almost without rain. But from end to end, flows the marvellous river Nile. We say “ marvellous ” with intent, for in the hottest month of the year, when all other rivers are shrinking or even drying up altogether, the Nile actually RISES and overflows its banks, and in doing so deposits a layer of rich mud on either side. On this mud the towns and villages are built. A “ population ” map of Egypt shows that the river valley supports a crowded popula-

tion, whereas on either side right away across the desert there is scarcely one person per square mile. From this it is clear that the Nile is the very life of the land, which it renders *independent* of God’s showers of blessing. No wonder the ancient Egyptians worshipped this mystic river as the greatest of their gods. (See Ezek. 29. 3). The land of Canaan, on the other hand, although it lacks rain for one half of the year, has it in abundance the other. This is in accord with the statement : “ drinketh in water of the rain of heaven.” If this rainy season should fail, then Canaan must become desert, for it has no Nile to sustain it, and depends entirely for natural life on the showers from above.

Here then is the purpose of God in the Wilderness journey. He would not have them stay in a land that was independent of His blessing but would take them to one that ever waited for His gift from the clouds of heaven.

The New Testament application is not hard to find. Egypt is a picture of the world, not in its religious corruption (that is set forth by Babylon) but rather in its independence of God. Fed by the mighty stream of its civilization and inventive skill, the world seems to get on very well indeed without God. Indeed the less there is of Him to be seen the better the worldling likes it. Clearly God would not have His people part and parcel of such a system, but would bring them into complete dependence upon Himself for blessing and sustenance.

But before the people could go one step forward on their way, they must be brought from under the judgment of God, for they equally with the Egyptians were sinners before Him. This is accomplished by the blood of the Passover Lamb, as recorded in Ex. 12. God’s hand had already been heavy on the land of their captivity, but the climax was to be the death of the first-born—the life and joy of each house.

“ And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 12. 13.)

By this terrible stroke Pharaoh is at last persuaded to let the people go forth out of Egypt, but the route they take is not of their own but of Jehovah's choice.

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." (Ex. 13. 17.)

The reason for this is fairly clear. For long years Israel had been down-trodden slaves to cruel task-masters. How then were they to fare in less than a fortnight's time, for it was but eleven days journey from Sinai to the borders of the land, and less than that from Egypt, when they should be confronted by such powerful foes as the warrior Philistines? They would turn tail and run back to Egypt.

So it is with us to-day. Before a newly converted believer is fit to contend for the things of God, he needs to be taught of Him along the way. It is obvious that if such an one were confronted in the early days with the full responsibilities of maintaining a testimony to the heavenly place and calling of the church then he would certainly break down.

Here then is the place of the wilderness in the ways of God. The people need first to learn their own limitations, and then the illimitable power of their God.

Their first lesson is particularly sharp. It is found in Ex. 14. 1. Here something strange happens; the people are commanded to turn *back*. If the effect of this command is traced out on a map, it will appear as if God had of intent led them into a *trap*. In front of them now were the broad waters of the Red Sea, on either side the wilderness, and behind the yet unbroken might of Pharaoh, who had quickly repented of letting the Israelites go, and now marched upon them intent upon enslaving them again. No wonder they cried out in dismay, and wished that they had never started upon the journey.

If at this point it were asked "Of what were they afraid? — Of the judgment of God?" this would certainly be denied, for were they not already sheltered from that by the blood of the Passover Lamb? No, it was not *God*, but *Pharaoh* that they feared. This fact but too well illustrates the position in which many of God's people to-day are found. They have trusted Christ, and hence will never go to hell. But they have no joy, and are rather filled with gloomy fears.

Do they wonder if God will at last disown them? By no means, it is the fact that they seem to be the sport of Satan, still apparently within his reach and power, cannot get clear of the barriers round about—it is this that casts them down.

How is deliverance wrought? For Israel it is by a miraculous act of God in cleaving the sea before them, so that they pass through dry-shod. Here is a further type of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is made plain by reference to 1 Cor. 10. 1-2.

"All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

From this we see that the Red Sea crossing is connected with baptism, and in Rom. 6. 3. baptism is definitely linked with DEATH, the death of Christ.

Israel walked through the waters of the sea dry-shod, but when the Egyptians essayed to do so they were drowned, for *they* had never been sheltered beneath the blood of the Lamb—so demonstrating the essential unity of these types in their reference to a single antitype.

Now consider Israel on the far side of the Red Sea; their fears gone, and those waters that so lately were a barrier *before* them, now a barrier *behind* them—between them and the land that had held them in thrall.

Led by Moses they sing unto Jehovah and give Him all the praise. Here is the secret of true Christian joy. To see the Cross which once shut us out from God now shuts us in *with* Him, and shuts the world out.

At this point one thing should be made clear, for the principle involved will occur again and again in the book of Numbers. The Red Sea crossing which gave Israel deliverances from the power of Pharaoh took place some days after the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover Lamb, and other types follow even years later in the history of Israel. Now we know that in the antitype the death of Christ is *once for all*—never to be repeated. But who among God's people enter immediately into the full meaning of that wondrous work? Does not the meaning grow as the years go by, even though the full value of the work becomes available at once at conversion? It is because of this that in the picture the types are "spread out," so illustrating the gradual appreciation on our part of the finished work of Christ.

Their next lesson comes quickly. At the start of the journey across the desert they lacked the water that is essential to natural life, and when they came to it, the waterhole had been fouled and they could not drink of it.

Here is something that is often found in Christian experience. The first flush of joy is apt to wear off, and a walk apart from the world is found to be a bitter business. The old-time pleasures are gone, and for the moment there seems nothing to take their place. What is to be done? A miracle again solves the problem for Israel. A "tree" (significant word) is cut down and cast into these bitter waters which thereupon become sweet and palatable.

That which is impossible to the natural man becomes gloriously possible when the Cross of Christ is brought in. The tree of Marah is another type of His death.

It is important to note that all through these early chapters in Exodus their constant murmurings do but bring forth the superabounding grace of God. They thirst, and bitter water is made sweet, they hunger, and the manna comes down for them to eat.

The next stage of their journey brings the people of Israel to the foot of Mount Sinai, where they are found in the opening chapters of the book of Numbers that we are to study.

The important events during their stay there we will consider, God willing, in the next article.



Lord Thou art Making Me.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Lord, Thou art making me !

I who am vanity, nothing, and dust ;
Helpless and worthless, yet made by Thee, must
Bear Thy new image, made like Thee, to prove
What can be done by Thy infinite love.

Lord, Thou art making me !

Just as the sun and the rain make the flower,
Sunshine and shadow, with sweet gentle power,
Make me to grow, till the seed that seemed cast
Into its tomb, blooms in glory at last.

Lord, Thou art making me !

Sculptor Divine, though Thy chisel cuts deep,
What Thou approvest not, let me not keep.
Strike, for the mallet is love, though the steel
Shiver my hopes as its keen edge I feel.

Long Thou art making me !

Once in my folly I thought all were done,
Ere in the heavens had set the first sun ;
Now I am learning that each coming day
Finds Thee still making me—what, Master, say ?

Well Thou art making me !

This I am sure, for Divine is Thy skill,
What, I would leave to Thine own blessed will.
Why ? Ah ! I marvel, and yet I well know,
Glory to Thee is in every blow.

Why art Thou making me ?

I am Thine own : Thou hast blessing in store.
Love makes its vessel that it may inpour
All its rich perfume. Love maketh its flower,
Then sheddeth over it sunshine and shower.

Lord, quit not making me !

Patience—good Master, I need it, I say,
But, oh what long patience Thou needest to stay,
Making of nothing a trophy, to raise,
When Thou hast made me, my weak feeble praise !



A godly brother was let go into one of our leading theatres in London and gave a tract to an actress he saw there. She asked him to accompany her into another room, which he did. In the room there were three ladies and three gentlemen. He gave them each a tract and departed. About a week later he received a letter from the actress, asking him to remember her in prayer, as she was that day going to do a most difficult thing.

A few weeks later another letter came asking, for permission to call on him. A day was fixed and this is what the actress said to him, "Your tract led me to the Saviour, and I immediately felt I must leave the stage. But what was I to do ? I was the understudy of one of the leading actresses of the day, and was under a seven years' contract. The day you received my letter asking you for prayer, was the day I fixed to see the manager of the theatre. I went to his office, and told him I was converted. Could he release me ? The manager, deeply moved, said, "Years ago, when I was a young man, I had to choose between my profession and Christ. I chose the stage, and from that day I have not known what happiness is. I am going to hell, and I dare not take the responsibility of ruining you. I release you from this hour."

That actress, now a child of God, is a missionary in China.

"Our God is Able" or The Story of Pat—cont.

to our readers a rough idea of the building now in course of erection. It measures 30ft. by 80ft., and will comfortably seat 350 in the Main Hall and a further 150 in two large Classrooms at the rear.

At the time of going to press we have already had gifts, promised and received, amounting to almost one third of the total amount required, and we believe that by the time this is in our reader's hands this amount will be considerably augmented—so persuaded are we that God is behind the work.

We definitely ask for *your* fellowship in prayer, yea, the prayers of every reader of "Threshed Wheat."

Our hope is in God, and we believe that the this new Gospel Hall in such virgin soil will soon be ripe unto Harvest and we are confidently expecting to have the Hall built and ready for use by April, 1934, and then get right ahead with evangelistic services.

Brethren—pray for us.

G. F. V

SPURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM.

By Wm. Luff.

No. 1.—SPURGEON'S EYE LESSON.

I WAS riding one beautiful summer evening over a high ridge in Cornwall : the hills, the sea, the fields, dancing with the joy of future harvest were grand to look upon. My beloved mother was with me ; but something had trespassed into her eye : and so, though beauty smiled on every side, she saw it not. Soon after Mr. C. H. Spurgeon used a similar circumstance to illustrate faith. Here are his words :—

“ Singularly enough, I have an illustration of my theme, and a very painful one, too, in my own eye. I mean that expression quite literally ; I do not know what it is, but a little something or other has found a lodging in my eye, and it causes me much pain. I shall not mind the suffering if some of you learn the lesson that it has already taught me.

I was thinking that the eye is the type and symbol and emblem of faith. Nobody in his right senses wishes to have anything in his eye ; he wants his eye to be, just as an eye should be, without anything at all in it, but bright, and strong, and clear : and that is precisely what we want our faith to be, with nothing in it, so that we may just simply look away to Christ and be saved.

Do not think so much about your faith as about the Christ at whom you are by faith looking. Do not wish to have anything in your eye ; if you do get anything in, it will have to come out, for it cannot help you to see, and will probably cause you much pain and suffering. “ Oh ! ” says one, “ I wish I had a tear in my eye ; I do want to feel repentance.” Yes, my dear friend, but tears do not help a person to see ; on the contrary, they hinder a clear sight of the object before him. Your business is not to look at your own repentance, but at Christ. Looking at Christ alone, you will repent aright ; but looking at your repentance, you will not.”

My mother was so taken up with her eye, that she passed all else without a look. There is something wrong with our faith, when it absorbs our attention.

So C. H. S. continued.

“ My eye does not see itself ; I cannot see my own eye unless I stand before a looking glass. There are some people who are always wanting to see their own faith, but that is not the right thing to look at, or to look for ; you might as well desire to take out your eyes to examine their structure and uses. No, no, the object on which your faith rests and relies, that upon which your salvation depends, is not your faith, but what your faith sees. Do not try to see your own eye ; look through your eye, as the window of your body, and gaze at the object you desire to see ; and just in that fashion use your faith in a spiritual sense. Jesus Christ is the sinner's Saviour, and faith simply the eye that looks to Him.”

As if to doubly fix this illustration upon my mind I heard about the same time the remarks of another Christian who compared faith to the eye thus :—

“ Just as the open eye receives the object that is before it, so *faith receives* : faith, and receiving and having, go together ; they are one. The eye doth not create the object it sees, nor does faith do any more than receive what the Word of God says.

It is easy for a person in health and with good eyesight to see an object ; and yet sometimes there needs an effort to see it ; but child-like faith is more easy, and never needs an effort.”

“ *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God* ” (Rom. 10. 17). “ *Faith cometh.* ” That is the object of faith. There is no hard toil required, no painful effort needed in order to obtain genuine faith in Christ, or in any of the precious promises of God ; the object of faith cometh as easy as an object cometh to our sight when brought in the clear daylight before our eyes : the faith that saves and satisfies cometh in the reading or hearing of the Word of the Lord.

Christian, have you anything in your eye ? A mote, or perhaps a beam ? You will see little beauty in things around. It will make you fear-



Copyright] C. H. Spurgeon. [Photo.

fully conscious of your own existence.

Disobedience is sometimes the grain in the eye : an unwillingness to comply with known commands. John G. Paton says, " Nothing so clears the vision, and lifts up the life, as a decision to move forward in what you know, to be the will of God.—"

Some shut their eyes altogether for fear they should see what they do not wish to see. Like the soldier in the old song

" I've been through all battles with wonderful luck,

From Vinegar Hill down to Ballinamuck,
Where the smoke was so thick and the fire was so hot,

That I shut my two eyes for fear I'd be shot."

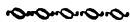
Shutting the eye will not save any ; but opening the eye will.

" There is life for a look at the Crucified One ;
There is life at this moment for thee ;
Then look, sinner,—look unto Him, and be saved,—
Unto Him who was nail'd to the tree."

" I walked along that road in Cornwall another evening, when the eye of my dear one was clear, and then she could hardly believe so much had been visible. To a simple eyed faith the hills of faithfulness, the sea of love, the golden fields of harvests, yea, the heavenly fields themselves, lie stretched to view.

Is thine eye single, clear ? Then thy whole body shall be full of light. If not, listen once more to the closing words of the late Tabernacle pastor.

" I wonder whether this little thing in my eye will be remembered by some of you, whether you will say, " I must have my eye single, and clear ; I must look right out of it to Christ." You know, if a person is in good health, he does not think about his eyes. You may ride a thousand miles in a train, and as long as your eye is all right, you do not think anything about it ; and the less you think about your faith the better ; and the more you think about Christ, the better ; for, after all, what is your faith by itself ? Apart from Christ, there would be nothing to believe in, and therefore there would be no faith ; and really to believe in Christ Jesus, to trust in Him, if we ever weigh it in comparison with Christ Himself, what is it ? Then, away, away, away from all thou hast, and all thou art, and look alone to Jesus."



When Mr. Spurgeon's Orphanage was in hand, at Stockwell, I had a Collecting Book and wrote the following rhyming appeal to accompany the Book when sent or shown to friends.

" Affectionate Friend,
I have ventured to send,
A much valued book,
Wherein if you look
You will see I collect
The names I respect ;

With a helping addition

In shillings and pence,

A small requisition

Of great consequence :

As therefore your name,

Is most highly respected,

I thought it a shame

It should here be neglected ;

So send you a chance,

As you'll see at a glance,

Of recording 'mong autographs, noble and true,

The signature written so often by you.

I do so because

I plead for a cause

Deserving a small contribution :

For some two hundred boys

Partake of the joys

Provided by this institution.

But perhaps,

For mishaps

Are prone to befall

Alike to us all,

I have venture to ask

An impossible task,

Or remind of a duty unpleasant :

Yet surely, a letter thus rhymingly penn'd,

Can never give cause for offence to a friend.

At least at a time like the present.

I wish not to rifle

An oft opened purse,

I ask but a trifle,

And ask it in verse,

A sixpence, or even a few copper pence,

Transformed into stamps, will be deemed no offence :

Or, if you sincerely have *nothing* to give,
That nothing (*if sent*) I will gladly receive.

But the first and the principal

Object in view—

In writing this whimsical

Letter to you,

Is to ask you to show

This unclassical jingle

To friends high and low

With whom you may mingle :

With this one intent,

This letter is sent,

And I ask you to speak

In its favour *one week*.

Forgive me my boldness,

Nor treat it with coldness,

But kindly attend,

Then graciously send

It back to your friend,

Happy and well

Double Hue-Ell.

W. L.

P.S.

Dear Friend, please attend, and
If you can adopt my plan,
Do not neglect, but now collect
From those who read the help we need.

“EVENTS IN EUROPE AFTER THE RAPTURE.”

By J. H. McCormick.

PART I.

OUR Bible Dialogue will deal with coming events in Europe after the church is taken to Heaven at the Lord's descent to the air, which may take place at any moment. Shall we think of how power passed out of the hands of God's ancient people—the Jews, into the hands of the Gentiles, and how later it was transferred in the purpose of God from the east to the west? The times of Gentile world power were revealed to Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon—the first Gentile monarch who attained world power after the captivity of Judah, in a dream (Dan. 2), which was interpreted to him by Daniel the prophet who was in captivity in Babylon, and to Daniel himself in his vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7). The King saw the *glory* of the Gentile rule, the man of God saw its *ferocity and cruelty*. The first of the nations was Babylon, then Medo-Persia, which was overthrown by Greece, whose rise transferred power to the west where it still remains in the remnants of the Roman Empire—the nations of Europe, and will remain as long as the times of the Gentiles continue, and Jerusalem is trodden down of Gentiles—i.e., till our Lord returns to earth and brings power back to the Jewish nation, when the East shall again have power, and Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the world. Daniel and St. John foreshadow the revival of Roman power when the separated nations of Europe will be united under the beast.

Question.—What will be the first great European event after the rapture?

Answer.—The revival of the Roman Empire under its last and greatest ruler.

There will be revolution and anarchy in Europe. The Empire is to rise out of the sea—the nations in strife and turmoil. It was revealed to Daniel (7. 23-26) that “the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth (i.e., be a universal kingdom which the Roman Empire was Luke 2), and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” This Scripture exactly describes the relentless severity and cruelty of the Romans as they smashed all other nations that stood in their conquering way. Compare Dan. 2. 44—“In the days of these kings (the ten toes of the image) shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (the

millennial Kingdom of Christ)—it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms (the ten kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire with all that remains in the lands of the first three empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece), and it shall stand for ever”; with Dan. 7. 24 “The ten horns (on the great and dreadful beast—the Roman Empire) out of this kingdom are ten kings that ‘shall arise’” (in the closing days of the kingdom, for they had not even *then* received their power, 650 years later, when Revelation was written cp. Rev. 17. 12). We see that in the last days just before Christ returns to earth to set up His Kingdom, the Empire will be revived (its deadly wound healed, Rev. 13) in its final form under ten kings. The ten kings established on their thrones shall find another ruler arise after them who shall be diverse from the first ten, evidently he is the beast who begins his conquering march by subduing three kings and putting three of his servants on these thrones as Napoleon I, did, and the remaining seven kingdoms will enter into alliance with him, for the whole ten kings are seen in Rev. 17 as having “one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” Later on “the ten horns—and the beast shall hate the whore” (apostate Christianity in its spued out condition after the rapture of the saints), and later still “these (the beast and the 10 kings) shall make war with the Lamb.” Thus we see the Roman Empire in its ten kingdom form ruling over the nations of the west. It will come to its final overthrow in this ten kingdom form when fighting against the Lord and the Heavenly saints. (Rev. 17 and 19). John beheld the Roman Empire in four stages in Rev. 17. 8. (1) “The beast that thou sawest ‘was’ (it was in existence in John's day as an absolute monarchy undivided), (2) and ‘is not’ (it has ceased to exist as an empire for several centuries, it “is not” in our days), (3) and ‘shall ascend’ out of the bottomless pit (or the abyss—where demons are in prison and Satan will be bound for the thousand years.) This is the Satanic revival of the Empire spoken of in Rev. 13. 2, “the dragon gave him his power and throne and great authority,” (which cannot take place until after the Church is caught up to Heaven—possibly about the time when Satan and his angels are cast to earth), (4) and “go into perdition” (at Christ's

coming to earth when it shall be found in open revolt against God and Christ). The ten horns (or kingdoms) had received no kingdom in John's day, nor yet, but they shall "receive power as kings one hour (a short period) 'with' the beast." (Rev. 17. 12). They shall rule in alliance with Him, acknowledging his supremacy over them.

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Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXIII.

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." Luke 19. 12. 13

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Mat. 25. 14. 15

"OCCUPY, TILL I COME," or The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents.

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Seeing that in the case of the pounds, every servant receives exactly the same amount to start with, we may fairly assume that the gift represents some thing which is heavenly in its origin, and divine as to its character. For all God's great gifts to man are on an equal basis. Take for example, Heaven itself. It is the same heaven for the King as for the beggar, the same for the nobleman as for the peasant, and Mary Magdalene stands with Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus when Heaven is in question. Or again, the gift of Eternal Life. Each and everyone have equal opportunities of

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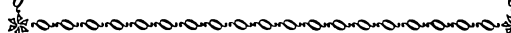
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The Christian to-day, has a backward look, and a forward look. When gathered with God's people around the Table of Communion we look back to Calvary and we show forth "the Lord's death,"



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It is only a little while, Christian,
Till labours and troubles shall cease;
And instead of heartaches and sorrows,
There shall be a wonderful peace.
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but we also look forward, remembering that it is only "till He come." But between the backward look and the forward look, or in other words between the Cross and the Crown, there is this present period in which you and I find ourselves, in which we have the privilege and opportunity of Service. Over this period we might well write the words of our chapter "*Occupy till I come.*"

Now when the master returned to see how much every man had gained by trading, the first servant had ten pounds to show, whilst another only had five. When our Lord returns and we are all called before Him at the judgment seat, then will be disclosed how much each of us have gained by trading. There was a time when the writer thought that the first servant who had ten pounds to show, had made a gain of 100%, but he does not think so to-day. Why, the servant who brought back only five pounds, showed a 500% return, for instead of doubling his capital it had gained five more pounds, and in the other case ten more pounds, or 1,000% profit. This is the more remarkable when we remember that each commenced with exactly the same gift. The lesson for us to learn here is this, that diligence in Christian service is a tremendous asset.

(To be continued)

"Threshed Wheat" to Missionaries Fund.

A Missionary writes :—

British Guiana.

Please allow me to express my sense of indebtedness to you for the regular coming of "Threshed Wheat" for the year now closing

It is most profitable reading. Good, wholesome, nourishing, digestive Bread. The Lord abundantly bless it, is the prayer of your fellow servant in the Gospel.

THOMAS WALES.

Another says :

"Threshed Wheat gets better every year."

Will friends who kindly sent Subscriptions to this fund during 1933, kindly advise us if they wish to renew same or not for 1934 ?

The cost of an annual subscription post paid is 2/6, but if any Christian friends care to have fellowship with us, for every 1/3 sent in, a copy of "Threshed Wheat" will go regularly to some worker at home and abroad, for one year.

D. B., Wimbledon	2—6	W., South Africa	3—3
H. S., Bournemouth	1—3	R., London ...	1—3
J. H., Bognor ...	1—3	D., Bury ...	1—3
C. R., London ...	1—3	A. P., Worthing...	1—3
E. O., Kirkby ...	2—6	F. C. Sheffield ...	1—3

Day—Unto Day.

"Day unto Day uttereth speech."—Psa. 19. 2.

To-day ; speaks to To-morrow,
 " I am here to-day :
 YOU will come to-morrow,
 But you cannot stay !
 You will tell the *next* day
 What I tell you now ;
 Speak the words God tells you,
 That the world may know.

Then, when comes to-morrow ;
 Much like yesterday,
 Passing on the message—
 " You—you cannot stay : "
 Sure—the world *must* hear you
 In our wondrous " speech : "—
 You will join the past days,
 God has used—to teach.

Night—Unto Night.

"Night unto night showeth knowledge"

Psa. 19. 2

Night, will " shew " us " knowledge " :
 So—our God has said,
 Then—we'd better listen
 As we lie in bed.
 Night, will speak His message—
 Tell of loving care.
 Watching while we sleep—and
 Giving time for prayer.

Night, will give this knowledge.
 We can hear HIS voice
 In the sweet still silence
 Till our hearts rejoice !
 *Let us " meditate "—then
 And be " satisfied."
 Night CAN utter knowledge,
 DAY has never tried !

L. M. WARNER.

* Psa. 63. 5, 6.

" No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous . . . nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Heb. 12. 11).

TALEBEARERS.

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

—Prov. 26. 20.

"Pray for one another."

Perfect Peace and Everlasting Strength.

By the late WALTER SCOTT,
(who passed away to be with the Lord he loved and served so well,
on Nov. 2nd, 1933, at the age of 95 years.)

"Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace* whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee, Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is *everlasting strength*." (Isa. 26. 3, 4).

PERFECT peace in trouble, and everlasting strength in weakness from Jehovah Himself, is the sure portion of the soul who trusts Him, for faithful is the Promiser. It was not always so. Once we were restless like the ever troubled sea (Isa. 57. 20). Once we built upon the crumbling sand (Matt. 7. 26). But now how blessed the contrast! Peace, Peace! instead of the wild tossing and heaving of former days; the Rock of Ages set in Jah Jehovah, in place of the old house without foundation and set on the crumbling shifting sands of the sea shore!

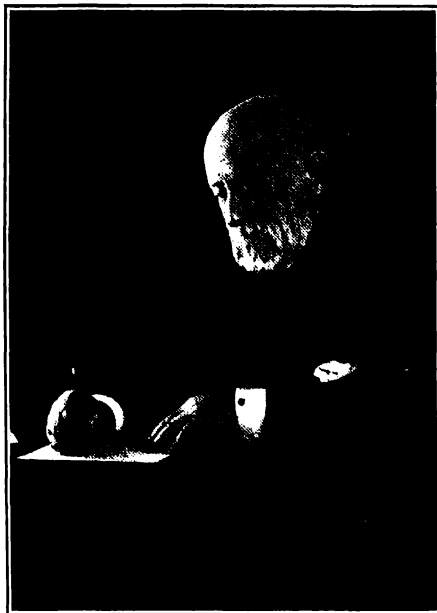
It may be for our soul's profit to briefly consider some of the various aspects of this "perfect peace."

1. *Peace of Conscience.* This was made between the rebellious sinner and God. We hated. He loved. We were His avowed enemies; we declared open war against Him, and lifted up our proud hearts and puny arms in mad opposition to Him who in love to us

gave His Son to die. Who could make peace and reconcile the sinner to God? the fruitless, weary, never-ending and impossible task of a sinner, "making his peace with God." Christ was the One great Peace-maker. The believing sinner is the Peace-taker. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1. 20). It

was this same perfect peace which the Lord bequeathed to us as a priceless legacy (John 14. 27), and the first word with which He broke the stillness of the first Lord's-day evening and calmed and hushed the fears of His troubled disciples, was "Peace unto you" (John 20. 19). It is peace with

God, and we have it. Blessed be His adorable name (Rom. 5.1). This perfect peace of conscience can never be disturbed, or broken, or interrupted. It is enduring as the throne of the eternal God. It may not be ever consciously enjoyed, but it cannot be lost, for "He is our peace" (Eph. 2. 14). The memorials of that conflict in "the place called Calvary" — where Christ in the might of irresistible love grappled with the question of our sins and gloriously overcame Satan, were witnessed in the body of the conqueror (John 20. 20), and will yet be seen in the Lamb on the throne (Rev. 5. 6). Where, then, is there room for doubt or fear?



Copyright] The late Walter Scott.* [Photo:

Peace, Perfect Peace, Unbroken Peace is the present and blessed fruit of the cross, irrespective of the strength or weakness of your faith, apart too from what you think, or feel. Peace with God is a *fact*; many confound it with experience, with enjoyment, with happy frames and feelings. But neither one nor all of these constitute "Peace with God:"

this is God-given, these are its effects. We can scan our past life and look boldly forward—the past with all its guilt and utter ruin, the seething mass of iniquity; and the future with its possibilities of sinning—and rejoice and triumph in that soul-emancipating truth “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. *The Peace of Christ.* We have the perfect peace of Christ given us. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you” (John 14. 27). The former is peace of *conscience*; the latter is peace of *heart*; the former is left as the fruit of the cross; the latter is given personally by Christ. Two practical illustrations from Scripture will show what the peace of Christ is, and how a believer learnt it.

In Matt. 8. 23-27 the Lord entered a ship. The wearied Master laid down His head on a pillow, lovingly provided by an unknown devoted heart and a loving hand (Mark 4. 38). Satan knew that the Lord was there. Quickly the Galilean sea was lashed into fury; the tempest raged, and wind and wave combined to engulf the ship with its sleeping freight. He Who holds “the waters in the hollow of His hand,” whether awake or asleep, was in calm, profound slumber. That was the peace of Christ. The terrified disciples awoke their Master with the reproach: “Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” (Mark 4. 38). As if He could cease to care for His much-loved disciples; as if their sorrow and distress could be a matter of indifference to Him! Ah! they had to learn that the storm that would sink *them* would equally engulf *Him*. He is with us in the wildest storms of life, as we will be with Him in the deep glories of heaven. Calmly opening His eyes and fixing a look of mingled love and sorrow upon them, He hushed the storm in the troubled breasts of His Own. We have hung again and again with wonder, and worship, and delight over this exquisite picture! Before ever the Master raised His head from His pillow; before ever He quieted the storm without—while too the tempest was at its height—the calm, reproving voice of the Lord first stilled the tempest and conflict in the hearts of His beloved. “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” He spread this “great calm” in the souls of His Own and on the face of nature; first the one, and then the other. Believer, is this great calm keeping you amidst life’s troubles in perfect peace? The Lord of the Galilean sea is our own Saviour; our own everlasting friend. It is His hand which wipes away the tear, His tender word, and love which assuages the deep, deep sorrows of life. He knows how to hush to sleep and rest the tired and wearied. “My peace I give unto you.”

There was at least one on the ship who learned the profound lesson—one who so shared in the perfect peace of Christ that he had to be roused

from sleep, not by a whisper, but by a stroke on the side by an angelic hand. A storm of persecution unto death has burst upon the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 12). The sword has sent James to Paradise (verse 2). Now Herod and the Jews thirst for the blood of Peter, whose brave words and testimony with his fellow-apostles had turned Jerusalem upside down (Acts 5). He is apprehended, lodged in prison, chained, and committed to the safe custody of sixteen soldiers, besides the prison keepers. Herod was about to bring forth *his* prisoner to gratify the cruel malice of the murderous Jews. But look at the *Lord’s* prisoner. Calmly he sleeps, bound with two chains and lying between the wakeful soldiers, while warders keep guard outside. The Master slept in the ship. Peter slept in prison. He is a practical illustration of Psalm 4. 8, “I will both lay me down in *peace* and *sleep*; for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.” How deep the peace! How profound the slumbers of the apostle, may be gathered from the action of the delivering angel. “He *smote* Peter on the side and raised him up” (verse 7). The Christ who once slept in the almost sinking vessel had given His peace to Peter, and now oversees and guards His faithful servant as *he* slept in fearless peace. The Master is unchanged, He giveth His beloved sleep as He did to Peter (Acts 12. 7), and songs in the night as He did to Paul (Acts 16. 25). The peace and holy calm which never disturbed the heart, or ruffled the brow, of our Lord amidst the wildest storms of life, He gives to us each one. “Why are ye troubled?” Why do the storms of life affright the soul? Is thy Lord not with you in the ship? Can He not say at the fitting moment to the proud waves of passion or sorrow “Peace, be still”? He will calm the loudest tempest at His own fitting moment.

3. *The Peace of God.* (Phil 4. 7). Many of the Lord’s dear people embitter their lives and shorten their days from sheer neglect of the Word of God. They carry a load of care utterly beyond their strength, and sooner or later they break down. They are consumed with an anxiety which leaves its certain impress upon soul and body. The government of the world, the church, of individuals, and of circumstances are borne on the shoulders of the blessed Lord (Isa. 9. 6, 7; 22. 20-25). The end is sure, and for the believer most glorious; while the *way* and *means* to the grand consummation is all clear and light to Him, if dark and unknown to us. He would carry both you and your burden. “Casting *all* your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5. 7). Here is a blessed sentence of but four words which have lightened many hearts and brightened many dull souls: “*Be careful for nothing*” (Phil. 4. 6). Do not be worried at the apparent wreck of the Church or ruin of the world. Do not distress yourself about anticipated or imagined evils; they may

never come. Stay the anxious mind upon God and He will keep you in perfect peace. Don't be anxious about the future of your family. Leave the issue as to the sickness in your household in His hands. Don't trouble about a coming winter, or the care and provision of the family. Don't be careless or indifferent as to all these and other matters which ought rightly enough to exercise the soul and lead to diligence of heart and business activity too. But cast every weight and cause of anxiety on *Him* who careth for you. Turn everything as it comes into matter for prayer. Lift up the daily and hourly care and lay all down on the throne of the Eternal with thanksgiving: "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds." Clouds, tempests, winds and waves are all beneath the throne of God. No storm ever sweeps through the palace home of the king; no cloud, or mist, or shadow ever rolls across the eternal summer sky of heaven. The throne of God is undisturbed by the storms of earth. The holy calm of the eternal God—His unbroken peace which passeth the knowledge of man or angel—is the safeguard of the heart and mind which has *first* emptied itself and poured out its tale of sorrow and care into that mighty receptacle of human griefs and cares—the heart of God.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Peace amidst the thronging duties of life! Peace in the hour of death and near prospect of eternity! Peace in the wreck around and in the race for life! Peace amid the strife and din of the ecclesiastical world! Peace while surging billows roll around! Peace amidst circumstances of trial, of poverty, of wealth, of sickness, of death! Blessed Lord, keep Thine own in perfect peace till we see Thy face in glory!

We have not only, however, perfect peace assured us by Jehovah amidst life's circumstances of sin, of sorrow, of trial; but in Him, in the very heart of its source, we have EVERLASTING STRENGTH, "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," or, as in the margin, "the rock of ages." Luther was more than a match for the combined forces of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of Christendom. His strength was in God, and Jah Jehovah fought the forces of evil through the simple monk of Wittenberg, and won for all succeeding generations the ever glorious Reformation. The truth is that in human history it is no question whatever of difficulty. Circumstances and occasions of utter wreck and ruin are grand opportunities for God to display Himself. Impossible, is not the language for a man of prayer and faith. The moment you bring the power of God into the most desperate circumstances, there is an end of fear and doubt; questioning ceases, and the case is settled. Jehovah shall do it and faith says "it is done." Again and

again has the Living God lifted up His glory out of the ashes of a ruined corporate and individual testimony. There is just one thing God cannot do. He cannot deny Himself. This then is faith's confidence and stronghold. Utter weakness grips the throne of the Eternal God; faith clings to the Living God and laughs at the word *impossibility*.

In Jehovah—the Self-existing One—"whose Being none can know," is everlasting strength. Jehovah was Israel's memorial name (Exod. 6. 3); the import of which is taught us in Rev. 1. 8, "which *is*, and which *was*, and which is to *come*." The public mention of the dread and sacred name JEHOVAH is strictly forbidden by Jewish law. Sabbathai Sevi, an impostor, falsely claiming to be the Messiah, dared to pronounce the awful name, and was at once deemed worthy of death by the Rabbis; this was 270 years ago. Veneration for the name is unchanged. This sublime title is Israel's stronghold through centuries of national degradation, and in the darkest moment of their sorrowful and chequered history, with strength broken, hope perished, persecuted in every land, crushed in spirit, and without home and country. Yet the seeds of future national glory are laid deep in this magnificent title—Jehovah. Is He not as much to us as He is to Israel? Is not His name, and what it signifies, enough for Gentile need as for Jewish want?

Yours Sincerely
Walter Scott

We have just 12 Copies only of the photo of the Author shown on Page 15 (size 6" × 4", on Bevelled Mount 11" × 7½"), which we should be pleased to let any reader have at 2/- each (2/3 post paid). As there are only twelve please do not ask for more than one.

HAD YOU THOUGHT OF THIS?

"There is a time, we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
For glory or despair."

I would have you stop in your reading now for a full five minutes; quietly—if that be possible—meditate on this fact, that maybe this day someone will reach that point, walking side by side with you, and a word of Gospel from you, aptly given, may give them glory and not despair.

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and O. Lambert.

No. 1 (Continued).—FAITH.

Suppose a man's faith is always weak, will he yet be saved?

It goes without saying that it is good to be like Abraham, who was “*strong in faith, giving glory to God.*” It has been truly said, however, that while strong faith *brings heaven to us*, weak faith (so long as it is faith in Christ alone) will *bring us to heaven.*

I was once travelling by train to the city of Birmingham. Two ladies were in the same compartment. One was evidently accustomed to travelling, and, having ascertained that she was in the right train, sat quietly in her corner, reading a book till she arrived at Birmingham.

The other was an elderly lady, whose great concern seemed to be that, after all, she might not reach her destination. At nearly every station at which she stopped she put her head out of the window, and inquired of some railway official whether she was in the right train. All their assurances seemed powerless to set her mind at ease.

Let me ask you a question. Which of those two ladies do you think got to Birmingham first? Both, of course, got there at precisely the same moment. Their arrival did not depend on the amount of their faith, or the lady with the doubts and misgivings would have been left far behind. Their arrival depended on the fact of their *both being in the train that was bound for Birmingham.*

In the same way two persons may have committed themselves to Christ, resting upon His precious blood as the only hope of their souls. One is filled with holy boldness and calm assurance; the other is the victim of torturing doubts. But there is no better likelihood of the one reaching heaven than the other! Both are *sure* to get there, because the One in Whom they have trusted has pledged His word never to let *any* of His sheep perish.

Suppose a man tries his best to believe, what more can he do?

For anyone to talk about “*trying to believe*” shows that he is entirely mistaken as to the nature of faith. If you came to me and said, “*I live at*

No. 10, in such-and-such a street,” and I were to say, “*Well, I will try to believe you,*” how would you feel? You would draw yourself up, and with an indignant tone you would say, “*What? Try to believe me? Do you think, then, that I would tell you a lie?*” Your indignation would be natural. Yet people talk of “*trying*” to believe in Christ! Is He, then, of such doubtful trustworthiness? Is He not rather the one Person in the Universe Whom we should find it the easiest to trust?

Do not let us get occupied with our faith. Like everything else about us, it is disappointing, and no amount of “*trying*” will improve it. Let us look right away from self to Christ. We cannot trust ourselves, but, thank God, we can fully trust *Him.*

Is there not such a thing as “vain faith?”

Indeed there is, and the apostle Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 15. 14, 16. But this is only another way of expressing what we have already spoken of, namely, *faith in an unworthy object.* The apostle was showing the Corinthians that the resurrection of Christ has proved Him to be an Object worthy of our fullest trust. If He had not risen, it would have proved that the load of our sins was too great for Him to bear. Faith in Him would in that case have been in vain. But He is risen from the dead, proving thus that His work of atonement is complete. He sits in heaven a mighty Saviour. None who trust in *Him* will trust in vain.

Must not faith go hand in hand with works?

Faith without works is dead, but it is faith that saves, not faith and works. The works come in as the evidence of the reality of the faith, and very important they are. I am suspicious of the man who tells me that he believes in Christ and yet is not “*zealous of good works.*”

If you see smoke coming out of a chimney you know there is a fire inside. You cannot see the fire, but the smoke is evidence of its existence. But it is the *fire*, not the *fire and smoke*, that gives warmth. Faith is like the fire; works are like the smoke. They do go hand in hand, but not in securing salvation. No works that we could

do could add to the value of the work done by Christ on our behalf. Faith rests upon *His* work, and shows itself in works which are done by the saved ones out of gratitude to Him

"By grace are ye saved through faith," we read, "*not of works*, lest any man should boast." But in the very next verse we are told that we are "created in Christ Jesus *unto* good works" (Eph. 2. 8-10).

Do we, when we believe in Christ, exercise faith once for all, or is it a continuous thing?

In trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation, we trust Him to give us what we seek, *once for all*. From the judgment which our sins deserve, from the hell towards which we were hastening, from the wrath that hung over our heads, we trust Him to deliver us *once for all*. In trusting Him thus we find that the question of our eternal future is divinely settled, *once for all*.

But in saying this I do not mean that there will ever be a time, throughout the whole period of our earthly life, when faith should not be in lively exercise. We do indeed believe in the Lord Jesus Christ once for all, but we never cease to trust Him.

Moreover, there are other things than the salvation of the soul that call for the constant exercise of faith. Salvation itself is viewed in more aspects than one. Besides being the present portion of the believer, it is looked at as something which, in its fulness, yet awaits us, and which will be "revealed in the last time." For this, according to 1 Peter 1. 5, we are kept by the power of God, not as mere machines, but *through faith*.

Then there are a hundred things, great and small, connected with our pathway here, each one of which calls for the exercise of faith. For even the smallest temporal mercy we are dependent upon the goodness of God, and in connection with such, as well as in reference to those higher things, to the enjoyment of which we are called, we need from day to day to exercise faith in God.

Here our first dialogue ends. May each and all know what it is to lay hold of Christ by faith for salvation, and for all the blessings that God's grace has stored in Him for us.



We are making day by day,

As we suffer and serve and pray,
Making a garment wondrous fair,

The beauty of which will be revealed there,
The beauty of life of the Christ within,

Wrought out in a world abounding in sin,
Beauty of deeds recorded above,

Wrought in the power of the Spirit of love.

EVENTS IN EUROPE AFTER THE RAPTURE

By J. H. McCormick.

PART II.

THE Roman Empire which once dominated the whole world has passed away. The lands over which it held sway are split up into many separate states. But Scripture clearly reveals (1) That the Empire will be revived, and come into all its old power again. (2) That it will embrace the territory of the four world empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan. II, with possible extensions as colonies and allied states (in the new world for example). (3) The Emperor—the first beast of Rev. 13, will possibly be a Grecian. "The beast—was like unto a leopard—the leopard in Daniel 7. 6 is the symbol of the Grecian Empire. (4) The beast will rule the world from Rome. (5) He will receive his power from Satan. (6) There will be ten kings associated with him in government. (Rev. 13 and 17). This will all take place after the rapture.

Question—Are the two beasts of Revelation 13 the same or different persons?

Answer—Certainly they are different persons. The first beast will be a Gentile, possibly a Grecian, or out of the eastern portion of the old Roman Empire. He will be the head of the civil power and will have associated with him in government the ten kings. He will rule (in the last portion of his reign at any rate, if not from the beginning) by the power of hell which will be placed at his disposal in exchange for his worship of the Devil which shall become compulsory in his dominions. He will accept universal dominion from hell. Christ had the offer in the wilderness but He refused it! The beast will accept it, and have it for a few short years at the cost of his soul. The second beast is Antichrist who will be a Jew, the head of the ecclesiastical power. The miracle worker whose signs and wonders will delude men and make it easy for them to worship Satan, the beast and himself—hell's trinity. Many confuse these two persons and their work in the latter days. Some think that Antichrist is the head of the empire, others that the beast and Antichrist are one. The truth is that the first beast—the Emperor, will be the master of Antichrist, and the second beast will be the Emperor's servant, ruling under him as King in Palestine, and acting as prophet and priest there also. He will claim divine honours in the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Thess. 2), and will bring all men (except the Godly) to worship his royal master

and his image on the pain of death. To do this, he will exercise all the might of the civil power in compelling men to receive the mark of, and worship, the beast. (Rev. 13).

Question—What shall be the relation of Antichrist to the Jewish and Christian apostacies ?

Answer—He will be the leader of both. He will deceive the Jewish nation who, having returned to Palestine in unbelief, and rebuilt the Temple of Jerusalem, are ready to receive him as Messiah. By his signs and wonders he will have such power over them that he will persuade them to enter into covenant with the Roman Empire. He will deny that Jesus is the Messiah, and will reject the God of Israel, thus setting aside the Old and New Testament revelations of God and Christ. He will lead the nation into apostasy so deep as to worship himself, the beast and Satan. As leader of the Christian apostasy, he will deny every Christian doctrine of "the" faith. He will turn Christendom to idolatry again. They will forsake the truth for a lie, Christ for Antichrist, and the worship of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, for the worship of the Devil. By miracles and flatteries he will lead Christendom to the worship of the Satanic trinity. (Rev. 13. 2. Thess. 2). He will deny both the Father and the Son revealed in Christianity. 1 John 2. 22).

Question—When will the covenant be made ? and how does God describe it ?

Answer—The covenant will be made at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week, about 7 years before our Lord's return in glory and judgment to the earth. Daniel's 70 weeks of years—490 years are divided into periods of 7, 62 and 1, of which the first two periods—483 years were completed on the very day the Lord entered Jerusalem (the first Palm Sunday), when though acclaimed by His disciples and the multitudes, He was rejected by the rulers, who conspired to slay Him, and so five days later "He (Messiah) was cut off and had nothing," or none of His royal rights as King of the Jews and King over all the earth. The acceptable year of the Lord now running for almost 1,900 years has intervened in the interval between the end of the 69th and the beginning of the 70th week which is yet future, and cannot begin until the Jews are back in the land and God begins to deal with them again. At the beginning of the 70th week the Jews back in the land will have built the Temple in unbelief and received Antichrist as their Messiah. The Assyrian hosts on the borders of Palestine are threatening Jerusalem, and the Jewish leaders will enter into a covenant with the Roman Emperor (the prince that shall come) through the mediation of Antichrist, his deputy, in Jerusalem. He confirms the covenant which will bring the power of Rome to protect the Jewish nation against her foes, and give her full exercise

of her civil and religious liberties. God describes it in Isaiah 28 as "a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement," and He foretells that it will be broken, and will fail to protect Israel against the overflowing scourge of the Northern armies. It will be broken by the Emperor in the midst of the week. He will cause the worship of Jehovah to cease in the Temple and set up instead the abomination (idol) of desolation in the holy place, where divine honours shall be given to Antichrist, then the overflowing scourge—the desolator, the Assyrian or King of the North shall come upon the land, and the Great Tribulation shall burst upon the ungodly nation for all its many crimes. Terrible days these shall be, such as the world has never known before, nor shall again. The nation will suffer for its murder of Christ and rejection of His gospel, and for the reception of Antichrist and his demon worship. But the Godly Jewish remnant shall have no share in the covenant, it will be made with "many"—the mass of the nation, not with all. They shall long and cry in these awful days for Christ to appear unto salvation.

The saints of this present age will be in glory before those terrible days come upon the world. They are expressly excluded in Rev. 3 from this day of sorrow which shall tempt many to deny Christ, and the method of their deliverance is signified in the words "Behold I come quickly." Reader! Christ is coming to complete the salvation of His own by the redemption of their bodies when He comes to the air, by raising the sleeping saints in glorified bodies, and changing the living saints. Will you be caught up to meet the Lord when He comes for His own? Are you one of them, or no? Antichrist is also coming! His mission is to deceive and damn all who neglected the great salvation of the Gospel! Will you be one of them? or will you own and accept the Saviour as your own?



"FOLLOW ME."

In the great old church at Innsbruck in the upper Tyrol, amongst the wonderful bronze figures that are circled about Maximilian I, is one in armour, and the helmet on his head is surmounted by a crown of thorns. What a strange contradiction: the helmet to go forth to fight, and the crown of thorns, as worn by Him who is the Prince of Peace! We only understand it when we know that the figure is that of Godfrey de Bouillon, who in the Crusades was one of the few successful ones in driving the Saracens from Jerusalem, and his enthusiastic followers wanted to make him king. But he said, "No! I will not wear a crown of gold where my Master wore a crown of thorns."

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART II.

IN the introduction of this series last month we saw that the reason for Israel's undertaking that great journey from Egypt to Canaan was that God might have His people in a land of His own choosing, a land that depended upon His rain from heaven for its life and fertility.

The first three types of the death of Christ on that journey we also mentioned: The Passover, by which they were redeemed from the judgment of God, The Red Sea crossing, by which they were saved from the wrath of Pharaoh, and finally the Waters of Marah where the bitterness of all they had lost became sweetness through the "Tree" which was cast in.

Ere they reach the foot of Mount Sinai, as recorded in Ex. 19, and where they are still found in the opening chapters of Numbers, they are taught the lesson of the Smitten Rock at Rephidim—Ex. 17. The early verses of 1 Cor. 10 make this type very clear. The Rock is Christ, and in being smitten it provided yet the *fourth* type of the Lord's death on their journey. This is particularly to be noted, for along the whole of their journey there are seven distinct and glorious types of that wonderful death, the remaining three being in Numbers. It is, therefore, very necessary to consider these early ones, that the later ones may be understood in their place.

AT SINAI.

Exodus, chapter 19, chronicles the arrival of the people at this Mount where they were destined to remain so long, and here a change in their relationship with God, of the deepest importance, takes place. It is a change that embraces in its scope the whole of their future course through the wilderness, and hence includes the entire period covered by the book of Numbers. It demands, therefore, our most careful consideration.

In Exodus 19. 3, Moses goes up into the Mount, and hears from Jehovah Himself a remarkable proposition, which he is commanded to put before the people:

"Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people."

Remembering that these words were addressed to a nation that had already murmured grievously against their God who had so marvellously cared for them, one would have thought that owning their weakness they would have cast themselves upon His mercy, and desired yet more of His undertaking grace. But instead they have the effrontery and supreme vain-confidence to reply:

"All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." (Ex. 19. 8).

Moses reported these words to the Lord, and He knowing so well the folly of the people's pledge, declares that He will come to them in thick darkness. Their presumption thus brought distance and obscurity between them and God. So awesome was the subsequent manifestation of His presence that the people were stricken with terror, and even Moses himself did exceedingly quake and fear (Heb. 12. 21). The giving of the law follows, not the decalogue only, but also the fuller details of Exodus chapters 21-23.

Chapter 24 of Exodus which concludes the first section of the book, is too little studied in view of its great importance. In it the covenant of obedience to Jehovah that the people so lightly took upon themselves is now ratified by blood of sacrifice. The effect of this covenant upon their future course is quickly apparent.

Because Moses stayed so long in the Mount, Israel turned aside to other gods, an idol made by their own hands. But note the immediate effect of their transgression. When on the way to Sinai they had cried out in unbelief, Jehovah had answered with the gift of the Manna, and again by smiting the Rock, but now He meets their folly not with grace but with the threat of condign judgment. Why is this? Entirely on account of the legal position they had deliberately taken before Him. When Moses came down from the Mount and saw the condition into which the people had come, he cast down those two tables of stone which had been written by the finger of God, a symbolic action not hard to understand. Had those holy tables entered the camp intact, then instant doom would have come upon the lawless assembly.

Upon the personal intercession of Moses, grace comes in, and God in mingled tones of promise and warning, consents to go with them yet.

Now that we have examined the relationship in which Israel came to stand before Jehovah, we are prepared to turn to the book of Numbers itself. In doing so it is important to note that the events of chapters 1 to 8 of that book actually take place after those of chapter NINE. To make it clear we give a brief calendar of Israel's journeys up to this point, counting always from that Passover night in Egypt:

	Year	Month	Day
Passover. Ex. 12. 1.	1st	1st	14th
Reach Wilderness of Sin. Ex. 16. 1.	1st	2nd	15th
Reach Sinai. Ex. 19. 1.	1st	3rd	
Tabernacle set up. Ex. 40. 17.	2nd	1st	1st
Numbers 9. 1.	2nd	1st	14th
Numbers 1. 1.	2nd	2nd	1st

The opening verses of Numbers illustrate a most important principle of Holy Scripture: they take for granted that the reader has previously gone carefully through the preceding book of Exodus. This is the reason, indeed, that we have ourselves spent so much time by the way of introduction.

Hence the book plunges immediately into the matter of numbering the people. In order to understand the meaning of this, we must refer to a couple of other Scriptures. From these we shall find that either *numbering* or *measuring* indicate appropriation for God. Rev. 11. 1 tells of a measuring in the Temple of God, but adds an instruction that the outer court is NOT to be measured "for it is given unto the Gentiles." Then in Revelation 7 there is an example of numbering for God, the great company of the 144,000.

Note that in Numbers chapter 1, it is only the *men of war* that are in question, and that here the numbering is in view of the march across the trackless desert to the land of promise.

Each man ere he was numbered had to fulfil two conditions.

1. He had to trace his descent back to one of the twelve sons of Jacob. (Num. 1. 18).
2. He had to pay the invariable half shekel for his redemption.

The application of the first point in the light of the present day is clear. Only those who can trace their connection with the Risen Christ can be numbered with those who maintain the testimony to-day. The second point is curiously not mentioned in the context, but the regulation is evident from Ex. 30. 11-16. That rich and poor, great and small were required to pay the identical amount is a clear reference to the one all-covering work of Christ. There are many references to this remarkable payment in the Scriptures, such as 1 Pet. 1. 18.

It should be noted from v. 20 of Numbers 1. that this numbering in chapter 1 is in view of *war*. Israel were to travel through lands hostile to them, to take possession of another land still more hostile. This is the position of God's people to-day. We are living in an enemy's territory, and if a witness to the Lord Jesus is to be maintained, it will involve us in conflict with the powers of darkness around.

In verse 49 it is ordered that the Levites be not numbered with the rest of Israel, for their's is a special place in relation to Jehovah God. This is clear from v. 53.

"The Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be *no wrath* upon the congregation . . ."

If God's pleasure is to be secured, there must be divine order in the camp. Needless to say this is true to-day in the church

Concerning the actual numbers of the tribes we need not comment at the moment, as the figures are more interesting in the light of the second numbering that is recorded later in this book.

CHAPTER 2

Here a re-capitulation of the tribal statistics is added to instructions as to the order of march for the whole camp. Every man is to pitch his tent by his own standard; nothing is left to human device. The man of Judah the tribe of praise, must be found by the standard of praise, and so for each other of the tribes. Note that Reuben, the eldest son by birth, is set on one side, and that Judah, from whom the royal line sprang, must lead the host.

The Tabernacle, the place where Jehovah had deigned to dwell was to be in the centre of the column of route—six tribes ahead and six behind.

All Israel had seen this wondrous Tabernacle constructed, and they all had some appreciation of its preciousness because they had all contributed to its cost. Unless we realize the value of the testimony of Christ we shall have but little energy to contend for it in a contrary world.

In the next of this series, we shall, God willing, deal with the separate numbering of the Levites and something of their work and place in the divine scheme of things in the Tabernacle service.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS

AS I HEARD THEM.

By Wm. Luff.

No. 2.—THE WOMAN WHO TOUCHED.

FOR his morning portion, the Pastor read Matt. 9. 18-39; taking as his subject, the woman who touched, Mark 5. 25-29. Her disease rendered her by law unclean. She tried the physicians, their arts, and quackery, but they had done her no good: she was worse. She heard of Jesus: she believed He was the Messiah, and said, "If I may touch but His clothes," etc. She did, and was cured. This woman has her parallel in the spiritual world: those who under conviction of sin, try various physicians, until they are penniless, and nothing bettered, grow worse.

1. *I shall expose the Physicians.* There is one who, if his patient is melancholy, prescribes that he should mix in more society, go to the theatre, etc. Which is like trying to cure a leper, by thrusting him into a lazar house: or attempting to save a drowning man, by telling him to dive deeper into the water. When Geo. Fox was under concern of soul, one told him to smoke tobacco, another to get married, and a third to join the volunteers. There is another Doctor living near Mount Sinai, named Mr. Legality, who has an assistant, named Mr. Civility: this firm existed in our Saviour's day, under the name of "Scribes and Pharisees": their prescription is, be careful what you eat and drink, and what you do, and observe certain forms and days. The third is Dr. Ceremonial, I have not much respect for this gentleman: his drugs are all trash: he keeps a patent lotion for regenerating children, by applying it to their foreheads. He has also a patent food, which he says is something for the soul to feed upon. You must be very particular how you turn, for there is more grace in the east than the west. Prayers too are much better said in white, though certain colours are best for certain days. There is another Dr. near, whose name is Dr. Ascetic. He does not thrive quite so well as he did. His prescription is that you give up everything that is dear to you, loosing all ties of affection, etc. His day is past; but he flourished in the times of the monks, who slept in their coffins upright, until they could sleep in no other posture. There are two other physicians, who live near by. One is Dr. Orthodox, who demands that the patient must believe certain doctrines, and understand them. The other is Dr. Preparation. He says you must deeply repent, be humbled, and

feel great terror of conscience and alarm, before you come to Christ.

2. *Why is it that none of these effect a cure?*
1. They do not understand the disease, that the heart is affected, and treat the complaint as if only skin deep. 2. Their remedies are impossible: they tell you to feel, to be in earnest, pray: but the sufferer cannot. It is like telling a man to walk with a broken leg. 3. They do not touch the cause of the trouble. 4. The case is humanly incurable.

3. *The plight of the poor soul who has tried the physicians, and has brought himself to despair.*

1. She had lost time—twelve years. 2. She was no better. 3. Rather grew worse, and had suffered much in getting worse. 4. She had spent all. Thus a blessed thing for her, for she could now no longer go to the physicians. When a soul is thus reduced, Christ Himself is sought.

4. *How a sure cure can be wrought.* It began in getting near Christ. She then touched His garments, the least touch was enough. Her finger did not work the cure, but Christ: it is not thy faith, but the object of faith that saves.

SUGGESTIVE OUTLINES.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

1. <i>Provides</i>	...	...	Gen. 22. 13.
2. <i>Protects</i>	...	...	Est. 6. 11.
3. <i>Punishes</i>	...	...	Dan. 5. 30.
4. <i>Helps</i>	...	...	2 Kings 8. 5.
5. <i>Inspires</i>	...	...	Acts 16. 9.
6. <i>Guides</i>	...	...	Acts 8. 27.
7. <i>Satisfies</i>	...	...	Luke 2. 28-30.

PROVERBS 23.

(Two Studies).

The <i>Instructed</i> heart	...	...	v. 12.
The <i>Wise</i> heart	...	...	v. 15.
The <i>Guided</i> heart	...	...	v. 19.
The <i>Surrendered</i> heart	...	...	v. 26.
		or	
The <i>Evil</i> heart	...	...	v. 7.
The <i>Envious</i> heart	...	...	v. 17.
The <i>Perverse</i> heart	...	...	v. 33.

A Summary of the Book of the Revelation.

By the late Walter Scott.

- Chapter 1. Jesus Christ revealed in judicial glory in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks—*i.e.*, assemblies.
- Chapter 2. History of the professing Church, from the close of the first century (Ephesus) till Popery (Thyatira).
- Chapter 3. History of the Church continued, from Protestantism (Sardis)—fruit of the Reformation—till its utter rejection (Laodicea).
- Chapter 4. The due ordering of the Throne of Judgment in heaven.
- Chapter 5. The slain Lamb the centre of God's counsels as to the earth; His redemption-glory celebrated.
- Chapter 6. The Seal or *Lamb* judgments.
Connect the trumpets with the *angels*, and the vials with *God*.
- Chapter 7. A defined number of *all* Israel sealed for millennial blessing.
A countless number of Gentiles saved.
- Chapter 8. The first four trumpet-judgments. Christ is the Angel priest of verse 3.
- Chapter 9. The fifth and sixth trumpets, or "Woe" judgments falling upon apostate Israel and the apostate Roman Empire.
- Chapter 10. Christ the Angel of Might asserting His title over the earth, and winding up "the mystery of God."
- Chapter 11. An adequate testimony in Jerusalem to royalty and priesthood.
The millennium introduced under the third "woe."
- Chapter 12. The actors in the scenes of the closing days.
The woman (Israel, or rather Judah) in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years' tribulation.
- Chapter 13. The Beasts. Apostate civil power—the revived Latin empire, verses 1-10; .
Apostate ecclesiastical power—the Anti-Christ, verses 11-18.
- Chapter 14. The seven results in grace and Judgment respectively, closing with verses 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20.
- Chapter 15. The martyred, but victorious, Jewish remnant standing on the sea of glass before the throne of God.
- Chapter 16. The seven vials in which "is filled up the wrath of God" poured out upon the prophetic earth.
- Chapter 17. Babylon—the corrupt Church; the relation to, and destruction by, the full power of *the* Beast—Roman Empire.
- Chapter 18. Babylon glorified on earth, and her utter ruin mourned by those in distant relation to her.
- Chapter 19. The marriage of the Lamb celebrated in heaven, and the Lamb's wrath upon the western powers *on* earth.
- Chapter 20. The reign of 1000 years, and the judgment of the dead in the eternal state.
- Chapter 21. The Church in eternity—verses 1-5.
The Church in the glory of the millennium—verse 9-27, 22. 1-5.
- Chapter 22. Warnings and encouragements with the threefold announcement of the Lord's coming "quickly"—verses 7, 12, 20.





Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXIV.

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." Luke 19. 12. 13

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Mat. 25. 14. 15

"OCCUPY, TILL I COME," or The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents (Cont.)

We often remind the unconverted that "procrastination is the thief of time," but we do well to remind ourselves of this very wise proverb in a far greater measure. One fears that many Christian workers will be robbed of their reward through nothing more or less than procrastination. How many there are with such GOOD intentions. Many who really INTEND to do something for the Master, ONE DAY. Whereas if only they would get on and *do* something; *accomplish* something for Him, they would find that in the doing of it there would open up before them such a great field of service that they would not be able to stop. The fields ARE indeed white already to harvest, waiting only to be gathered in by the reapers who, alas, are so few.

"AH!" you say, "but I am not gifted for service, I cannot preach, I cannot teach, I cannot"—but stay a moment friend, ere you make any further comment and let me remind you that each servant in the parable received

THE SAME AMOUNT.

It is *not* a question of special gift, we may have something to say about this when we come to Matt. 25, but here we are dealing with that which is common to every servant, those special blessings of which no Christian at the commencement of the Christian pathway can claim any greater portion than another. Those blessings, such as, the Word of God, Eternal Life, The Holy Spirit, the Presence of Christ, etc. It all depends on how we USE or, to keep to the phrase of our parable, on how we TRADE with these gifts, as to what return we shall have to show in that day.

It is not a question of *possessing* the Holy Spirit of God, but it is a question of how much we allow that blessed Person to take possession of our lives. It is apparent on the surface that the servant who brought back ten pounds must have been twice as diligent as the servant who brought back only

five, and I venture to suggest that he might well represent those diligent servants of Christ, who live only and wholly for Him. Their one aim and object in life is to magnify their Saviour to exalt His name, and to serve Him. But there are others who cannot perhaps go to that extreme because of legitimate claims, but who nevertheless desire to serve Him as faithfully as possible, and is it not better to be a servant with a five pound return, than with a two pound return? But better still is it to bring back the ten pounds, though it mean sacrifice and denial. I hope that you are not one of those who are waiting for what some call the "Second Blessing," when they refer to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. If you have not yet received this second blessing, then you have not the first blessing either, for the Spirit of God indwells every believer the moment they are converted.

Seeing then that each and all of us as believers, have the spirit of God indwelling us, may we seek to give Him more place in our lives, and to be "filled with the Spirit" in far greater measure than ever before. Filled in the sense of allowing Him who is there to take full possession. An incident from the old Testament comes to my mind in this connection. It is that of the widow woman with the cruse of oil, who in great distress and utter poverty resorted to the Prophet to unburden to him her heart and to ask his help on her behalf. With sad heart she told him how that her debtors were great, her creditors many, and her possessions nil.

Said he to her, "You have told me what you have NOT, now tell me what you HAVE." "Ah!" says the widow, "Thy servant hath not anything save a pot of oil." Now that is the condition of many a Christian to-day, they are miserable and unhappy for their lack of power, and bemoan their shortcomings. They have as

it were, taken stock spiritually and have found themselves empty, and lacking of that which can give them true satisfaction. But the truth of the matter is, that in their stocktaking they have overlooked a matter of vital importance. They have forgotten that they are indwelt with the Holy Spirit Himself. In other words, they have forgotten the cruse of oil which is standing in the corner waiting to be utilised. It is *THERE* but it is idle.

When the widow woman returned home and acting on the prophet's advice, gathered together all the empty vessels she could find, (that is, those without any oil) and began *pouring out* of HER Cruse, she found that there was more than enough to fill all those other empty vessels, and then when she had sold all that she had poured out, she not only paid all her creditors, but she had enough to live on besides.

Will you heed the divine injunction. Will you allow the Holy Spirit already within you, to have His way? In other words will you allow Him, to use you as a vessel meet for the Master's use, to fill others who are but empty vessels. If so, then I can assure you my friend, that you will not have any more idle moments or any more miserable feelings, but you will know something of the joy of Christian service, the joy of ministering to others, the joy of pouring out, even of your want, and by so doing, meeting their deficiency, and giving yourself a super-abundance to live on besides.

In like manner the lad with the five loaves and two fishes gave out what he had, for the blessing of others, with the result that not only were the 5,000 fed, but there were 12 baskets over.

It may seem strange to the natural man, and contrary to reason, that any increase can come by scattering, but after all, is it not true that that which is spiritual is in direct contrast to that which is natural, and faith to reason?

God's word assures us that His ways are not our ways and that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth and there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty."

The man of the world saves all he can, and puts by in store for a "rainy day" but the child of God has a Heavenly Father who cares, and His desire is that His child shall be given to liberality; for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver and the liberal soul shall be made fat. Do we not read, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

What better illustration could we have of the subject in hand, for as a result of that blessed scattering what an abundant harvest has, is, and will yet be reaped, for "He shall yet see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

The farmer in Spring believes in this divine principle as he scatters the tiny grain far and wide and in Autumn he proves God's word to be true that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

The prosperous business man adopts this rule when he spends thousands of pounds in advertising

—what for? Why, that in the scattering of his capital he may reap an harvest.

Nations and Statesmen are beginning to realise that God's way is best. They are beginning to see that hoarding and withholding only tends to poverty and who among us has not constantly seen of late "Spend more and increase employment." Prosperity lies in the pathway of abundant scattering whether it be individually, nationally or spiritually, but seeing the principle to be a divine one surely we, God's people, should be the first to put into operation that which is according to His mind and will. The Thessalonians of old first gave themselves to the Lord. May you and I follow their excellent example and spend and be spent in His blessed service who said "He that loseth his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall find it" again reminding us of the truth of the words that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

(To be Continued.)



" WAS IT WORTH WHILE? "

We feel sure many readers will be looking for further news this month, regarding our new work at Fairlop, but as we go to press several weeks in advance it is not possible to tell you much regarding the new Building at the moment, but we shall hope next month to have more to report in this direction. This month, there is, we are happy to say, news of far greater importance and that is a reaping from the seed sown. It commenced a week or so before Xmas with one scholar in the afternoon trusting the Saviour, and another in the evening and since then almost without a break at least one a week have followed without persuasion. Until as we go to press we have the joy of knowing nine more put their trust in our blessed Lord last Lord's Day evening after listening, with wrapt attention, to the Story of the Cross. Little did we think eight months ago when Pat's Sunday School first started that within that short period almost forty Boys and Girls mostly over twelve years of age would put their trust in the Saviour. We are persuaded that much prayer has been up to God on our behalf and therefore we would hasten to publish the Good Tidings so that you, with us, may give God thanks whilst continuing to pray that this wave of blessing may continue so that when we open our new "Fairlop Gospel Hall" later in the year, if the Lord will, there may be a happy band of saved Scholars to grow with the work, and to be little Missionaries in getting their parents and unconverted relations under the sound of the Gospel. A Missionary in Central Africa cheers us by writing "We are praying for Pat and her Sunday School, out here in darkest Africa." We reply "Yes and Pat's Sunday School is praying for Africa."

Brethren, Pray for us—without ceasing. Editor.

“BIBLE DIALOGUES”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and C. A. Miller.

No. 2—CONVERSION.

EVERY householder in this city claims the right to say who shall cross his threshold and who not. Now the right that we claim for ourselves we must surely allow to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew xviii. 3 He distinctly tells us that some shall not enter His kingdom. Unless a man is *converted* it is useless for him to expect it. We read: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

This shows the immense importance of conversion. We do well to devote an evening to this subject. Apart from conversion, there can be no blessing, no lasting joy, no heaven for anyone.

Will you please explain what is meant by Conversion?

We cannot do better than turn to Scripture for an answer. Look first at 1 Corinthians vi. After mentioning many awful vices prevalent amongst the heathen, the apostle says, in verse 11 “*Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.*” That is a lovely definition of conversion. Turn now to Ephesians ii. 13: “*Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*” That is how the apostle puts it to the believers of Ephesus. Then look at 1 Peter ii. 25: “*Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*” All these passages show very clearly what conversion is, but I do not know any that puts it more beautifully than another verse in that same chapter in Peter, verse 9: “*Called . . . out of darkness into His marvellous light.*”

These scriptures make it very plain that conversion is a vital and radical change affecting the soul—a transference from darkness, danger, and distance to light, salvation, and nearness to God.

The other evening I had occasion to go into my bedroom to change my coat. It was dark, but knowing where my other coat hung, the change was easily effected without a light. An outward change was thus brought about. I had laid aside an old coat for a better one, but *all the time I remained in the dark!* A similar thing often takes place in the history of men. They become religiously impressed, they forsake their evil companions, sinful habits are dropped, and efforts are made to live a better life. Instead of frequenting low places of amusement they attend a

place of worship, and become sober and respectable citizens. All this and much more is true of them, yet all the while they remain in darkness. No heavenly light, revealing a Saviour full of love and power, dawns upon their souls. An outward change, most desirable, of course, has taken place, but their souls have not been brought from danger to safety or from darkness to light. We cannot be too emphatic in saying that such reformation is not conversion. Turning over a new leaf is not the same thing as being made nigh to God by the blood of Christ.

Some people seem to think that if they have had remarkable dreams or exhilarating experiences and religious feelings, it amounts to conversion. But conversion is a far deeper reality than anything of this kind; it is nothing short of a passing *from death unto life* (John v. 24).

Do those who have been baptised and never committed any gross sin need to be converted?

There is no sin that is not gross sin in God’s sight. Men are accustomed to regard some sins as heinous and some as trivial, but every sin is abhorrent to God. The slightest sin as effectually bars heaven’s gate against the one who commits it as the sin of murder, and it calls as loudly for atonement by the blood of Christ.

But it is not only because of what *we have done* that conversion is such a necessity, but because of *what we are*. And in this respect there is no difference; all are sinners, all must plead guilty, all are exposed to judgment. Scripture declares most decidedly that “there is no difference.” The baptised, educated, refined, amiable, religiously-inclined lady must be converted if she wishes to go to heaven, just as truly as the swearer, the drunkard, and the thief.

Can we be converted just when we please?

God never gives a sinner the choice of times; His time is always the present. “*Now is the day of salvation,*” and “*to-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*” If a man puts the matter off, he does so at his own most terrible risk. He may never have another chance. I do not say He *will* not, for God’s longsuffering is great, and His mercy lingers over many; but it would be safer to play with the forked lightning than to *trifle* with His mercy or the pleadings of His Spirit.

How long does it take to get converted ?

Last Friday evening we read a note from a young friend here, who said that in less than a minute she received the blessing which, as a guilty sinner, she sought. Her tale could be echoed by many. How long did it take the dying thief to get converted? How long for the bitter persecutor on the Damascus road to be stricken down and the cry of "Lord!" to be wrung from his lips? How long was it before the cruel, heathen jailer at Philippi was changed from a would-be suicide, into a rejoicing believer in Christ?

No doubt there are usually many exercises of soul that accompany conversion, and these may be spread over weeks or years. But I believe there is a definite moment when the exercises reach their climax, when the soul puts its confidence, once for all, in the Saviour and His precious blood, and is pardoned and cleansed. It is not a long process; it is the act of a moment. **If any converted person falls into sin, does he need to be converted over again?**

That is a question asked, in one form or another, by thousands. I venture to say, however, that the question would never occur if we really understood that when a sinner is converted he is also justified from all things, becomes a child of God, and by the gift of the Spirit is made a member of Christ's body. If all this needs to be repeated whenever a believer falls into sin, then it needs to be repeated twenty times a day in the case of many! But one passage of Scripture will put such a notion to flight. We read, "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. iii. 14). When a soul is saved, it is God that saves it, (2 Timothy i. 9), and "it shall be for ever." When a sinner is justified through faith in Christ, "it is God that justifieth," and "it shall be for ever."

No earthly parent can sever the relationship that exists between himself and his child. So is it with the heavenly and eternal relationship formed between God and the believing soul. If one of His children falls into sin, He may chastise him and subject him to various kinds of discipline; but disown him? Never! Such a one needs to be restored to communion and to the right path, but he cannot be converted over again.

In saying this I do not forget Luke xxii. 32. Peter was a truly converted man ever since that memorable scene when he owned himself a sinful man, yet clung to the Saviour's feet, if not before. But he grievously fell, and denied his Lord with curses. The Lord, however, tells him that He has prayed for him, and even before his fall looks on to his restoration. "When thou art converted," He says, "strengthen thy brethren." It would be better translated, "When thou art restored," for it refers not to the conversion of

a godless sinner, but to the restoration of a backsliding saint.

Let me give an illustration. A man enlists as a soldier. After a time he grows weary of a soldier's life and, seizing an opportunity, he runs away. He is now a deserter, and lives in constant fear of detection. By-and-by he resolves to return to the army. His regiment has been ordered to the front, and he would like to rejoin it. How is he to get into its ranks again? He cannot re-enlist as if he had never worn the King's uniform: not as a recruit, but as a deserter, he must return. His proper course is to report himself to the military authorities, and submit to any penalties that they may see fit to impose.

So with the erring child of God. He is a deserter from the ranks, and he cannot enlist as a recruit. As a wanderer he must return, not to seek acquittal by a judge, but pardon from a Father. Let such remember that God's restoring grace is as great as His saving grace. If the guilty sinner is welcomed, so the wandering child will be; but it is as a child he must return, needing not conversion, but restoration, and he will assuredly obtain it through the advocacy of Christ. **Is conversion all that is needed to make one a Christian?**

If it were, there would have been no need for Jesus to come down from heaven and die upon the cross. That mighty work was necessary before anyone could become a Christian. But perhaps Mr. Miller is thinking of a notion that is current in certain quarters that no one can properly call himself a Christian until, at the end of life's journey, he prepares to pass from earth to heaven. Ask one who believes thus, "Are you a Christian?" and the reply will be, "I am trying to be one."

Now, no amount of trying has ever made anyone a Christian. A man does not become a soldier by trying to behave like one, but by enlisting. The moment he enlists he is as much a soldier of the King as the commander-in-chief. The one has never set foot upon a battlefield, and the other may be the veteran of a hundred fights, but both are soldiers of the King.

What are the marks of a converted person?

There are four marks most noticeable in the converts at Thessalonica. You will find them in 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10.

(1) *They had turned to God.* This is the first mark of a converted person. Instead of fearing God, he is at peace with God; instead of hiding from Him, he says, "Thou art my hiding-place"; instead of regarding God as a stern taskmaster or severe judge, he knows Him as his loving Father.

(2) *They had turned from idols.* Others amongst us, besides ignorant heathen, have had idols. Anything that is allowed to usurp God's place in the soul is an idol; anything of

self that one bases a hope of future bliss upon, is an idol. Are you hoping for God's favour because of your moral living, or your praying, or your vows? Then these things are your idols. They stand between you and God's blessing. A mark of a converted person is that he has flung to the winds all that he previously built his hopes upon—his own efforts and resolutions, everything that stood between him and God.

(3) *They were now serving the living and true God.* An unconverted man serves self and Satan; a converted man seeks to serve God in all the details of his life. Everything under his control becomes converted, too, as it were. If he is a draper, he is careful to give thirty-six inches to the yard; if a milk-seller, he sees to it that his milk is milk, and not milk and water. Everything about him bears witness that he is now a servant of God.

(4) *They were waiting for God's Son from Heaven.* Popularity, fame, success, wealth, are not objects of ambition to the really converted man. He knows Jesus as his Deliverer from wrath to come, and his hopes are fixed upon that bright world where God's Son is the Centre of all. He looks for Him, and his dearest wish will be gratified when he finds himself in His presence for ever. Oh that these four marks might be more visible in each of us!

Can every converted person tell for certain the exact date of his conversion?

A great many can. They can put their fingers upon a certain day in the almanac and say, "That is my spiritual birthday." But all cannot do that, and no one need be troubled on that account. If you are sure that you *are* converted, that you have been brought out of the shadowland of sin into the sunshine of grace and liberty, it is enough. There is no need to be anxious because you cannot tell the precise moment of your conversion.

Is conversion always accompanied by deep sorrow for sin?

I am exceedingly doubtful of any conversion in which there is not a measure of self-judgment and sorrow for sin. It is no pleasing sight to see a person "receive the word with joy," as did those of whom we read in Luke viii. 13. The next thing recorded of them is that they "have no root," only believe "for a while," and soon "fall away." I have seen people profess conversion and immediately get down on their knees and pray for their friends, for the preachers of the gospel, for those exposed to danger by sea, for the Jews, and I know not what else. They seem to have no sense of the seriousness of their sins, which needed such a sacrifice as that of Christ to atone for them. There is no deep ploughing up of their consciences, no distress over their hardness of heart. For my own part I love to see tears of contrition on the cheeks of a repentant sinner, and to hear the heart-broken cries of the prodigal as he turns to God. I think *He* values it too.

"God loves to hear the contrite cry,
He loves to see the tearful eye,
To read the spirit's deep-felt sigh."

But it is a true saying that "still waters run deep." Often those who feel most are the slowest to give expressions to their feelings. But one looks that there should be some indication of a broken and contrite state of soul, and some realisation of the seriousness and awfulness of sin.

Why do we see so few conversions nowadays, compared with what we read of in bygone days?

It may be traced to more causes than one. Perhaps it is due in no small measure to the fact that in many quarters conversion is no longer looked upon as a necessity. Sermons are delivered without mentioning it in any way. People are exhorted to "follow Christ" and "walk in His steps" without being told that in order to do so they *must* begin by being converted.

No doubt another cause is the lamentable coldness and indifference often found among us evangelical Christians, who *do* believe in the necessity of conversion.

When David wandered from the Lord, he ceased to have any influence for good over others. In Psalm li. we see him penitent. Listen to his words: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit: then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." While David's heart was cold there was a dearth of conversions. The restoration of his joy would be the means of blessing to others besides himself. Sinners would be converted. Fellow-Christians, we should not have to mourn over the fewness of conversions if only, *our* hearts were warmer and more responsive to God's mighty love.

If a man says: "I want to be converted, but I don't know how to set about it," how would you advise him?

I should turn him to Acts iii. 19: "*Repent, and be converted.*" I should urge him, in true repentance, to turn to the Saviour. I should also read Acts xvi. 31 to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." A repentant sinner, who truly believes in Jesus and trusts Him for salvation, is converted. He has turned to the Lord from his sins.

Our dialogue is ended. It is now *my* turn to ask a question, and I want everyone here to answer it honestly, as in the presence of God.

Are YOU converted?

My ardent desire is that you should seek a personal interview with the Saviour. Acknowledge your guilt. Make no excuses. Keep nothing back. Then put your trust in Him. He will save you and bless you. Then you will be able to say, "Thank God, I am converted."

“EVENTS IN EUROPE AFTER THE RAPTURE.”

J. H. McCormick.

PART 3.

ANTICHRIST shall be received and worshipped by the Jewish nation. He shall enter into covenant with them on behalf of his Royal Master, the Roman Emperor, to protect them against their Northern foes, and preserve their civil and religious liberties. The Beast shall break the covenant in the midst of the week, introduce idolatry, and *then* begins the Great Tribulation and the Assyrian Desolations.

Question—When shall the Apostacy take place, and upon whom shall strong delusion come?

Answer—The Apostacy shall take place after the Church is taken. It will be a complete turning from God and Christ on the part of Christendom. We have the order of events in 2 Thessalonians 2—(1) The coming of our Lord and our gathering together unto Him, described in 1 Thessalonians IV. (2) There were demons and men who troubled the Thessalonians by telling them that the Day of the Lord was now present (i.e., they were passing through its horrors). But Paul assures them that that could not be, for two things had to happen before the Day of the Lord's coming in Judgment would begin—*first* the Apostacy or falling away from the faith, not a *denial* of some doctrines of the faith, as many do to-day, but a denial of the profession of Christianity itself; and the second thing that must take place before the Lord comes back in Judgment, is

THE REVELATION OF ANTICHRIST—

the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition, who will exalt himself above God and every object of worship, and claim divine honours in the Temple in Jerusalem. (3) Antichrist shall be consumed with the Word of, and destroyed by the Glory of, the returning Lord, Who shall bring in, the Day of the Lord, with its judgments upon Jew and Gentile by punishing the chief actors in the Apostacy; the Antichrist and the Beast being cast into the Lake of Fire alive, there to be tormented throughout eternity, and Satan taken and chained and imprisoned in the Abyss for the thousand years. The Apostacy will take place before the beginning of Daniel's 70th week. The Apostates will be those who have not received the truth of Christianity in the love of it, that they might be saved—all professors in Christendom who were left behind.

when Jesus came. Antichrist's coming, claims, signs and wonders shall deceive them. They received not the love of the truth which would have saved them, and because of this, God shall send them strong delusion that they might be damned, through believing Satan's lie—Antichrist. The multitudes who will not believe the truth of God and His salvation now, shall believe the Devil's lie to their eternal ruin then. Why did they not believe? Alas! “they had pleasure in unrighteousness,” and that blinded their eyes and damned their souls. How many reject the Gospel because they love their sins and sinful pleasures too well to forsake them!

Question—Who is the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18? When shall “She” come into her great power?

Answer—The Babylon revealed to John, is seen as a woman and a city. She is Apostate Christendom headed up in Rome. There will be a union of all divided Christendom after the true Church is raptured to the Lord at His coming to the air. The *true* Church is seen as a woman, “The Bride,” and a city, “The Holy Jerusalem”; and the *Apostate* Church is also seen counterfeiting the true as a woman, “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,” and as a city, “Babylon the Great—the habitation of demons and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

The angel showed John

THE TWO WOMEN.

The true Church “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (i.e., righteous acts of the saints reviewed and rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ, and now become the wedding garment of the Bride).” Thus arrayed, she is married to the Lamb, and becomes the Lamb's Wife, and when she appears to the earth she has the glory of God. (Rev. 19 and 21). But the harlot appears in her gaudy array of earthly glory. “The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls (she claims the glories and powers of Christ and seeks to be seen as the Virgin Bride, “The Pearl,” but alas for her claims), having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations (idolatries) and filthiness of her

fornication" (using worldly power, in league with the world which crucified her professed Lord). Her name is blazoned on her forehead that all may read and be warned thereby—"Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." The true is God's mystery now told out to saints. The False is the Devil's counterfeit mystery; all spiritual fornication and idolatry are mothered by her. Her drunkenness is seen as caused by blood. "Drunken with the blood of saints (in past centuries), and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (under the seals). She will be blotted out before the Great Tribulation begins by the action of the Emperor and the Ten Kings (Rev. 17, 16-18). She shall come into universal power after the Lord's coming to the air, and she will be destroyed in the first half of the 70th week by the Emperor and the Ten Kings, who "shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." In doing this they are fulfilling the purposes of God, though her destruction will blot out the last vestige of profession of God from the earth and open the way for the worship of the Beast, the Antichrist and the Devil. Her identity is made perfectly clear. "The woman whom thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (It was Rome who reigned in John's day, and it will be Rome that will reign again in the Beast in a coming day.) The kings who were led away from Christ by her, will eventually hate her for her tyranny, wickedness, and riches, and will destroy her. When John beheld her he wondered with great admiration. How different was the harlot, from the Church he knew! It was poor, but holy. It was humble, but great. Its simplicity and faithfulness to Christ was its glory, and its testimony to the world brought upon it reproach, suffering and death. It was commended for its faithfulness to God's Word and the doctrines of grace. But *this* woman—why, she is the very opposite.

Question—When, and how, will Satan be cast down to earth?

Answer—Satan is now the prince of the power of the air, and he directs his warfare from there against the saints, and from thence by his angelic hosts he controls this present age of which he is prince and god. In the middle of Daniel's 70th week he will be cast down from the air by Michael and his angels to the earth (Rev. 12). He will come down with great wrath for he knows that he will have only a short time of power before he is cast into the Abyss (Satan can read the Scriptures and he knows more about prophecy than many Christians). "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth" when an angry Devil comes down to it. He will begin his wrath by persecuting Israel because Christ came of her, and he will obtain control of

the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 13). Satan offered universal power to the Saviour, Who refused it. He will offer it then to the Beast, who will accept it, and "the Dragon (Satan) will give him his power and his throne and great authority." The price, will be universal worship of the Devil and the Beast, which will mean eternal torment for all who do it. The Beast and Antichrist will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire. It is a foolish transaction to sell one's soul to the Devil, even for a world's homage and power. The power continues but a little while, but the torment and the anguish of hell are eternal. Reader! wilt thou sell thy soul to Satan or the world, for a mess of pottage? or wilt thou take the Saviour's offered gift of life eternal? *Not both*, but which?

SPURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

No. 3—THE CHEERFUL GIVER.

THIS was an evening discourse, the reading being 2 Cor. 9; 11. 18-30, and 2 Cor. 9. 7.

In the Church there are various forms of service, some teach, some evangelize, some by a humble life adorn the Gospel: but all in some way or other give to God.

"GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER."

Some give their *substance*, and from the rich He accepteth much, and from the poor little. We should always have an eye to God in giving. Paul had been speaking of what the men of Macedonia would say as to the giving of the Corinthian church.

"Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a *matter of bounty*, and not as of covetousness."

He then speaks of God, and says, "God loveth a cheerful giver."

1. WHAT IS A CHEERFUL GIVER?

The verse tells us what is not. "Nor *grudgingly*, nor of *necessity*." A cheerful giver gives *proportionately* and willingly. Does not have to be "bled," as we say: but like the dropping of honeycomb, needs no pressing. The cheerful giver is beyond the slavish way of giving. He gives to God as a child to its father. He gives *earnestly*, this is

specially seen in service. It makes one's flesh crawl to hear some men preach : one word to-day the next to-morrow, and because the congregation thinks he has nothing to say, it grows "small by degrees and beautifully less." The cheerful giver wishes he could give more. What work some have done! Henry Martin, who laboured on and on among the heathen, without seeing a convert. Brainard, missionary to the Indians, who in old age could only teach a poor child its letters, and thanked God for the privilege. Francis Xavier, papist though he was, crossing seas and threading woods to spread what little knowledge he had. *Such* were cheerful givers.

2. WHY DOES GOD LOVE A CHEERFUL GIVER ?

He loves all His people ; but specially cheerful givers.

(a) Because *cheerful givers* are in march with all creation. The sun's glory consists in giving light. The moon would only be seen as a dark spot, passing before some luminary, if she did not reflect light. The earth is continually giving, and land that does not yield fruit is cursed. Go back and look upon the earth before man inhabited it. See the forests that cover it : they give themselves up to make the soil, and after they have been kept for years in the cellars of Mother Earth, man finds the key, and unlocks the stores of coal.

(b) *The cheerful giver* marches in order with redemption, which is all of grace. Free election, calling, justification, sanctification, etc.

(c) God loves anything that makes His people happy, and He loves the cheerful giver, because He sees in him the work of the Spirit : the last part of a man to be converted is his pocket.

(d) He sees he does not love the world.

(e) He is a cheerful giver Himself, and spared not His own Son, etc. He gives us the covenant, and grace for the day : if we ask an egg, He does not give us a scorpion. His wonders in Providence bring us many gifts. You were poor, and He prospered. Sick, and the sole bread-winner, and He healed you. We shall soon find Him a cheerful giver, giving harps, crowns, and thrones of gold.

3. WHY WE SHOULD BE CHEERFUL GIVERS.

(a) Because all we have is His.

(b) Out of gratitude that we are saved, and should live above the lower life of the world.

(c) The time for giving will soon be past.

(d) We still need a giving God.

The preacher related the following story. A merchant had prospered and built a house, laying out the garden at considerable cost. At his office one morning a collector called upon him to give

his name to a subscription list. He replied, "I'm very sorry, but I cannot. I have so many calls." It a little touched him to say it ; for he had been liberal, and hardly liked to draw back. When home at night, and wife and children had retired, he sat by the fire meditating. "I do not know if I have done right in building this house : it has cost much and my expenses are increased. We have risen into a higher circle of friends, and the girls want more for dress, I doubt if I have done wisely." And I have been stinting the Lord. It is supposed he fell asleep. The door opened, a stranger meek and lowly. "I have called to ask a subscription for the heathen, who are perishing." "I cannot give you anything," said the merchant, "my expenses are so great." The stranger looked sad, but proceeded, "perhaps you think the heathen are too far away ; but there is a Ragged School in your own city, about to be closed for want of funds ; will you give something for that." "My house and my family cost me so much, I really cannot." The stranger brushed a tear from his eye, and said, "will you give me something for the Bible Society, which is the root of all." "Now do not tease me," said the merchant, "I've told you I cannot."

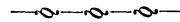
Then the stranger changed, and became majestic: yet in his face were marks of grief, as He said softly, yet sternly.

"Five years ago that little daughter, with the golden curls, was sick, and you feared would die. You prayed she might recover. Who gave her back into your arms?" The merchant covered his face, and then the stranger proceeded, "Ten years ago you were pressed in business : many houses broke, and you were near failing. To whom did you apply, and who helped you over your difficulties?" Tears began to trickle through the merchant's fingers. "Fifteen years ago, you felt the burden of your sins, and went about wringing your hands : who spoke the word of comfort?" The merchant sobbed aloud : the stranger said solemnly, "If thou wilt never ask anything of Me, I will never ask of thee." The merchant fell on his face at the feet of his God, and wept, and henceforth became a prince in liberality.

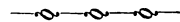
"God loveth a cheerful giver."



God's promises are sure. If you fulfil the conditions, He will fulfil the promise.



If you want to help your hearers, speak of the excellencies of Christ, not of the failures of erring men.



Works do not show the character of the worker, but only his skill, a bad man may make a good chair."
Hudson Taylor.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART III.

CHAPTER 3.

IF the full history of the House of Levi is read in the Scriptures, the grace that brought them so near to the sanctuary will be appreciated.

Concerning the Levites (other than the sons of Aaron himself) it is recorded that they were *given* unto Aaron to minister unto him. See thus the divine chain of service in Israel. The priest was to minister unto Jehovah (Ex. 28. 1), the Levite was to minister unto the priest (Num. 3. 6), and finally the warriors and people at large were called upon to maintain the Levites throughout the land (Num. 18. 21). So the whole company is linked with the sanctuary in a triple-expanding circle of service and worship. Compare the three-fold circle of worshippers in Revelation 5.

From verse 14 of Numbers 3 there is a full statement of the duties of the three families into which the Levites were divided, also particulars of their numbers. The warriors of Chapter 1 were only counted from 20 years old and upward, but the Levites from *one month* upward, although they did not enter into full service until 30 years of age. (See chapter 4).

The three Levitical families and their duties, etc., are as follows :—

<u>Family</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Duties</u>
Gershon	7,500	West	Curtains, hangings, cords.
Kohath	8,600	South	Ark and Holy Vessels themselves.
Merari	6,200	North	Boards, pillars, sockets, all the heavy things.
	22,300		

Now that the camping positions of the Levites have been noted, we can trace the general disposition of the whole camp, as it surrounded the central Tabernacle. Note that the priests themselves camped on the East of the Inner position.

N.

DAN }
ASHER }
NAPHTHALI }

W. EPHRAIM }
MANASSEH } Gershon
BENJAMIN }

Merari
TABERNACLE
Kohath

Priests { JUDAH
ISSACHAR } E.
ZEBULUN }

REUBEN }
SIMEON }
GAD }

S.

Here again there is the three-fold circle in evidence : the outermost, formed by the twelve tribes ; the middle, of the Levites and priests ; and the centre, by the Tabernacle in which Jehovah Himself appeared and spake. The relative positions of the tribes and Levites are of considerable importance in the light of later history.

From verse 40 onwards, another matter is introduced, but one that has much bearing on what we have just considered. Moses is commanded to number the firstborn of every family in Israel. Upon these men Jehovah had a special claim, for were they not spared from His stroke a year before, on the Passover night in Egypt? But God ever would work on the principle of substitution, and here He directs that the Levites are to be taken as His special possession instead of these first-born sons. In this connection an interesting point comes out. An addition sum of the numbers for the three families of the Levites given higher up the chapter gives a total of 22,300, but verse 39 tells us that the total figure is 22,000 only. Then again in verse 43 it is stated that there were found 22,273 first-born sons among all the other tribes, and further that there was a deficit in the available number of Levites to replace these to the extent of 273. Where then are the 300 odd Levites that would have more than made up this deficit?

The solution of

THE SEEMING DISCREPANCY,

as it is ever in Scripture, is found in a minute examination of exactly what is said in the passage.

Of Gershon and Merari it is stated "Those that were numbered were . . ." (vv. 22 and 34), but of Kohath it says:—

"In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were 8,600, keeping the charge of the sanctuary."

The varied statement undoubtedly explains the difference, and forms but another of those traps into which the hasty, unwary and unbelieving are so apt to fall. There is too, the possibility that the priests, who were of Kohath, may have been included in this number.

It is concerning the first-born in excess of the Levites that interest specially centres. Here were 273 for whom no substitute could be found. From these FIVE shekels instead of the customary HALF shekel is demanded. Ten times the normal redemption is thus required, suggesting a full responsibility before Jehovah in the light of His holy law. If we have no substitute, then we must meet the undiminished claims of law against us.

A STRIKING NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL.

Regarding the actual number involved, it is noteworthy that here are 273 sons of Israel for whom no substitute is available; in Acts 27. 37, Paul preaches THE Substitute to 273 Gentiles, and every one was converted. Note there were 276 on board the ship, but Paul, Luke and Aristarchus were already believers.

CHAPTER 4.

The numbering of the Levites *in view* of service, was from one month old, but the period of active service was from 30 to 50 years of age—the very prime of life for God. According to Luke 3. 23, the Lord Jesus Himself set forth upon His amazing life of public ministry when He began to be about 30 years of age. Though He were God, yet would He fulfil all righteousness in God's requirements of man. Then, too, in 1 Timothy 3. 6, Paul enjoins concerning special responsibility that a man should be "not a novice."

It is noteworthy that although the Levites are in their turn numbered, there is no figure given for the priests, the sons of Aaron. There is no arithmetic of worship. Ten worshippers multiplied by ten equals a hundred worshippers, but it by no means indicates that ten times the volume of worship ascends to God.

"PREPARATION FOR THE MARCH."

There are two states in which the Tabernacle could be found during the long wilderness journey:—

1. When erected, and Israel are "in assembly."
- or
2. When packed up for transport from camp to camp.

When the Tabernacle is set up, the priests are prominent; when it is packed up, the Levites come to the fore. So it is with us in the church to-day. When we are gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus, it is our priestly calling that is in function, as worship ascends to God on high from adoring hearts. But when Monday morning comes, and we have to face the stern realities of a wilderness world,

the other side of things comes into view. It is not that we forget the testimony, but rather the reverse, we carry it with us wherever we go, but it is so to speak, folded up and not in display.

The early part of Numbers describes the procedure when the camp is to set forward, and the details in these verses are particularly full of typical teaching.

The first act is for Aaron or his sons to take down the veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holiest of all, and cover the ark with it. Here we need not guess the meaning of the symbol. Hebrews 10. 20 tells us that the veil is "His flesh." The ark and golden mercy seat that contained those unbending and yet unbroken tables of stone, typifies the Lord Jesus, the divine Propitiatory. But He came among men shrouded in garments of holy humanity, even as the ark went through the wilderness covered with that veil.

But there is yet more in this remarkable figure. Over the veil is placed a covering of badgers' skins, and yet again over all, a cloth, all of blue.

While the Saviour trod this earth there were many who realized that here was One from another scene. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God," exclaimed Nicodemus. He, as did others, caught a glimpse of the Cloth of Blue, the token of the heavenly origin of the Lord. Some, however, who knew Him better, saw that though he were indeed "God with us," yet He graciously bare the tokens of wondrous humiliation "He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." They detected the badger-skin covering beneath.

Still fewer were able to discern the inwrought beauty of His Holy and Glorious humanity. Nathanael said of Him "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel," but the Lord would lead his thoughts still further: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the SON OF MAN."

Finally, only the direct revelation of the Father could enable the eye of faith to pierce to the Mercy seat of gold right within. "Thou art the Christ" said Peter. He saw by revelation that his Lord was indeed the Anointed One, the Messiah who should save His people from their sins.

Thus the Holy Ark, with its three-fold covering, was borne on the shoulders of men through that great howling wilderness on the way to the land of promise.

What a wonderful thing for the sons of Kohath to be in the secret of that curious "bundle" that they bare! So we, carrying what men slightly call "religion", are found in this world, entrusted with the witness of the reality of which the ark was but a figure. But how many of us are able to spiritually discern through cover after cover, and behold the amazing glories of the Saviour God?

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

By the late H. W. SOLTAU.

1 SAMUEL, 31.

WE have seen that self-will and disobedience were the leading characteristics of Saul's life and the closing scene of his history is what we should expect: he died in the battle with the Philistines, and his three sons with him. He called on his armour-bearer to put an end to his life, lest he should fall into the hands of the "uncircumcised Philistines." See the pride of the man's heart! He thought this religious profession dignified him; and thus he perished with the thought in his heart that he was a great deal better than the Philistines, when in reality he was a great deal worse, for they had never had the word of God, nor the instruction of Samuel. Disobedience, stubbornness, and pride are very closely linked together in our hearts. We find that when we are disobedient we are not very willing to own it. We resolve to defend ourselves, and thus stubbornness will be manifested; and the root of it all is pride.

How melancholy is it to see the end of Jonathan, the faithful, loving friend of David! How came he to such an end? He had evidently a misplaced affection for his father, though it was a right affection; yet he did not follow as he should the fortunes of David. He expected to be the second in the kingdom, but God allowed him to be smitten on the battle-field because he did not cast in his lot with the rejected David.

THE SCENE ON MOUNT GILBOA.

There is much instruction in this scene. We see the stubborn, wilful king, with no heart for God, and Jonathan, the true-hearted one—true to God and to David—a man of faith—both falling together. What a contrast to the beautiful scene of Jonathan and his armour-bearer! When he was separated from his father, and not under his influence, we saw what he was: he could storm a strong fortress of the Philistines, and slay them right and left. See, too, how he loved David and encouraged him when away from Saul.

We who are Christians must beware of making friends with the world. If anyone could have an excuse, surely Jonathan had; but the Spirit of God says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This text does not only extend to

the marriage of a believer with an unbeliever, for that is apparent on the very face of it. No one who really understands what the love of Jesus is can make such an alliance with an unbeliever. They could not kneel and worship together; they would have no common interests for eternity. This text therefore warns us not to have any "yoking" with unconverted people, specially where the interests of Christ are concerned. Be assured that the believer will never pull round the unbeliever. The stubborn wilfulness of the ass will master even the ox; the unclean animal is sure to have the mastery over the clean.

Saul's history ends not far from where it began—with the men of Jabesh-Gilead. His first victory was in rescuing them from the Ammonites. It was the only one he gained that was untarnished, and it was remembered after the lapse of forty years, for the men of Jabesh-Gilead took his body and the bodies of his sons by night, and burnt them; and they fasted seven days, in memory of the seven days given them in which to answer Nahash. If they could do so much for a man like Saul, what ought we to be doing for Christ?

How does David's character stand in the time of his triumph, when the throne was now empty for him to fill? We find a striking contrast between his treatment of the Egyptian at Ziklag and his treatment of an Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1; he spared the one and he killed the other. In both cases he was acting after God's ways.

THE BEARER OF GOOD TIDINGS SLAIN.

The Amalekite brought the crown and bracelet of Saul to David, expecting to receive a reward; but as soon as he found out who the man was, there was no hesitation, and he was slain. David knew that Saul had lost his victory, his throne, and his life, because he had not executed God's judgment upon Amalek. He was in no temptation when he spared Agag, but did so for the sake of his triumph. Satan evidently came in now in a very subtle way to tempt David. He had had his delight in revenging himself on Saul, and his question was, "Can I dethrone David as I have Saul?" He knew that David had fled to Ziklag for fear of Saul, and Satan thought he would delight in hearing of Saul's death, and in receiving the Crown. What prevented David falling into the snare? It was God's word. In Psalm 19, he wrote of God as "true," "perfect," "clean," "righteous," "pure"; and he knew that God had sworn everlasting opposition to Amalek: "I will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." An Amalekite was never to be Israel's friend, because he could not be God's friend. An altar had been built to commemorate Israel's first victory over Amalek, and called

Jehovah-nissi—"The Lord my banner"—because of God's oath. So David would not receive the crown from the hand of an Amalekite. He discerned Satan in the messenger. It was a sore temptation, but he was not overcome, for He knew God's word.

Be assured that Satan never brings a blessing, however much it may seem so; he is never a friend, though he seems friendly. And we must not trust even in providences, but only to the Word of God, for there were apparently many providences in this case. We constantly get into trouble by not taking the Word of God for our rule and guide. We often say, "This must be right, for see how these things are placed around me." It is often said, "You must do your duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to place you." But has God placed you there? He may have permitted you to be there, but is it your proper place? We often justify many things, because they happen to be there in our way, without thinking of judging them by God's Word. If they are contrary to that, we ought not to hesitate to give them up.

DAVID'S LAMENTATIONS.

Thus David acted, and then opened his lamentation for Saul and Jonathan. He made no reference to any of Saul's past dealings with him: love in his heart covered a multitude of sins. He selected from Saul's history all that he could for praise, this showing that his heart was a little like the heart of God. For God delights to cover up the sins of His people. He values every little action which springs from love to Him, and treasures in His heart every thought of Himself. He remembers many little things that we have forgotten—many a little act of faithfulness to Him—and what He cannot remember with joy He is glad to forget.

Then David turned to his brother Jonathan. He spoke of his love as wonderful, and very pleasant. He could not say that Saul was pleasant to him though he was to others; but when he spoke of Jonathan, all his heart overflowed towards him. We have One, slain "upon the high places," of whom we can indeed say, "His love is wonderful"; One who is not ashamed to call us brethren—our gift of Jehovah.

David had lost his brother, and he never had another. His brothers in the flesh were no brothers to him; they despised him, but Jonathan clave to him. Let us trust in the One who "loveth at all times"—the "Brother born for adversity." We have gained Him in death, and He gained us in death. Let us strike our roots firmly down into the love of Christ. Nothing can shake a deep-rooted tree; and if we would have strength, it must be by being "rooted and built up in Him."



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXV.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matt. 25: 16, 17, 23.

“OCCUPY, TILL I COME,” or The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents (Cont.)

The Pound laid up in a Napkin did no good at all, neither will your Pound dear reader, unless you trade with it. Take what God has given you so bountifully and trade with it—use it—endeavour to do something with it. It is a remarkable thing that whilst two servants traded to profit, and one servant hid his Pound, no servant lost it until it was taken away at the Lord's return. Do not fear losing what God has given you—accept it, appropriate it, use it, trade with it, and then at your Lord's return you will have far more than One Pound to show Him in that day. Faith without works is dead, so is the Pound without profit as we shall see later. Suffice it here and now for you and me to learn this lesson and learn it well, that diligence in service is what is expected of us as His Servant and His Steward.

“Oh,” you say “if only I had more time !” What then? Have you ever thought that like the Pound in the Parable, time is one of God's great gifts, and no one can claim to have more time than any one else. There are only 24 hours in any day and they are for us all. But the point is, what *use* are we making of these hours God has given? That is just what our parable seeks to emphasise. All had the same gift, but what a difference they accomplished with it.

What a lot you could do with the time you have, if only the principle herein expounded was applied. There is a very apt proverb in the world which says that it is the willing horse which can do the work and this is by no means restricted in its application,

to the worldling, for among Christian people to-day we must admit that it is those who are actively engaged in the Lord's service, who seem to get more to do, and who are very willing to do it. “Whatsoever *thy* hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” says the Word of God, and if you, my

friend, are looking for something to do for the Lord, here is the answer to your many petitions. “Whatsoever thy hand FINDETH TO DO, do it.” And as those of old said concerning some of David's followers, “NOW THEN, do it,” for there is no time like the present. We ask the Lord for some great work to do for Him, but if we would do the

very work which lies at our hand, we should find that in the doing of it, some greater work would open up before us, and we should find the principle of our text in operation before we knew where we were: that in the scattering of our time, for example, there was already an abundant harvest, and at the end of the day we should be surprised to find how much we had really accomplished in so short a time, and on the other hand we should correspondingly wonder whatever we had done with our time in the days that were passed.

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When all your life is lived in serving others,
And you have neither time for sport nor play,
When you have both your hands full, like the
mothers,
Who have to think for children every day.

When all your life seems like a closed-in garden,
And you get out of touch with men and things,
And all the music that you have to cheer you
Is just to hear the way the blackbird sings.

When troubles gather thick and fast around you,
And you are saying, "Will it never end?"
You may be sure your life is never wasted,
And what is more, you're serving God, my friend.

"Prove Me now," says the Master, "if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." If we will "pour out" OUR all, God will *pour in* HIS all, until our measure of grace, power, love and joy in the Holy Ghost will be "pressed down, shaken together, and running over. GOD IS FAITHFUL," who also will do it."

Have you time? Then scatter it.
Have you talent? Then scatter it.
Have you possessions? Then scatter them.
Have you but little of this world's goods?
Then scatter in the Master's service.
Have you only a cruse of oil?
Then scatter it until there are no more pots to fill.

But now shall we turn to the other parable in Matt. 25. where we have the Talents brought before us, and we immediately find that this time when the Master goes away he leaves to the care of his servants *unequal* amounts, not in the form of pounds but in the shape of talents. To one servant he gives five talents, to another, two, to another, one. Thus we see that each servant is placed on a different footing. Therefore the Master will not expect when he returns, that the servant with the two talents will bring back the same as the servant who had five talents. But I venture to suggest that he *will* expect upon his return, the same *quality* from each, and the same value *in proportion*, and this is just what we find. For when the Master calls these servants before him, he who had five talents committed to his care, brings back other five talents—a 100% return; whilst he who only received two talents, only brings back a further two talents, but *in proportion* this was equal to his co-worker, for it was also a 100% return.

If God has not given you the gift of an Evangelist he will not expect an Evangelist's work from you. If God has not given you the gift of Ministry he will not expect you to minister, and if you do, it can only end in disaster. But if God *has* fitted you for personal visitation, or to speak a word to the children, or distribute tracts by the wayside, then He *will* expect you to do that service for which He has fitted you, and will look for a return in that direction.

You will notice with interest, that each of these servants received identically the same commendation from his Lord, for they both doubled what was entrusted to their care. Now we must ask ourselves just *what* do these "Talents" represent?

We lose what on ourselves we spend,
We have as treasure without end,
Whatever Lord to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.

OPENING of the NEW FAIRLOP GOSPEL HALL

WILL YOU COME?

As we go to press, our New Gospel Hall nears completion. Standing in an excellent position in the main road 50 feet back from noise and traffic and covering an area of 30 ft. by 80 ft., it brings cheer to our hearts, to know that God has thus far made it possible for the work to go on.

(D.V.) we are hoping that it will be ready to commence an evangelistic campaign by the middle of this month, and that honoured servant of God, Mr. Gavin Hamilton, the Scotch Evangelist has kindly consented to give us at least a fortnight of continued services commencing Sunday, April 15th.

We now ask the continued fellowship in prayer of all our readers that this fortnight might be marked with signal blessing. Please pray *very definitely* for these fourteen days, *especially each evening whilst the services are in progress*.

We already have a Young Converts Class with an average attendance of thirty of our scholars, and our prayer to God is that their parents might share in their new-found joy.

Any fellowship in the expenses of the Mission, or the cost of the Building will be valued and appreciated, and below we give a list of latest gifts received.

FOR GENERAL EXPENSES.

E.H. Bermuda ...	3/-	M.S. Bournemouth	5/-
J.F.	2/6	Young Folks Band	
		Bermuda... ..	3/-

FOR BUILDING.

E.H. Higham ...	£2	Anon	£2
S.J. Ilford ...	5/-	M.T. Ealing ...	2/6
W.S. Bracknell ...	1/6	A.M. Southsea ...	£1
Glevum	4/-	E.W. Ilford ...	4/-
S.S. Charlton ...	10/-	N.N. Saffron Wldn.	10/-
Bush Hill Park ...	£2	E.B. Basingstoke	10/-
G.T. Shetland ...	3/-	J.S. Ipswich ...	2/-
W.Y. Silchester...	8/8	R.C. T. Heath ...	10/-
S.S. Charlton ...	15/-	M. Bexley Heath	5/-
A.E. Dorchester	10/-	A.O.	£100

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART IV.

CHAPTER 4. *Cont.*

THE typical significance of the various coverings that shrouded the ark as it was carried upon men's shoulders across the desert was considered in Part 3 of this series.

Next in the description given in Numbers 4 comes the

TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

The construction of this piece of furniture is explained in Exodus 25. 23, and typically it refers to the Lord Jesus, risen and glorified, and in wondrous association with His redeemed people whom He supports before God in priestly power.

The chief concern, naturally speaking, about anything placed upon a table is that it shall not fall to the ground. Is there not a danger that we, who are typified by those loaves of shewbread, might fall from our present place of favour and acceptance in the sight of God? What says the type? It is wonderfully provided against such a contingency. There is no fear whatever that the Holy Shewbread may be jolted from its appointed place during the rough desert journey as the Table upon which it rests is carried from camp to camp.

Note the precautions that were taken. In Ex. 25. 24 it is commanded that there shall be a "crown of gold" round about the Table. This word "crown" is peculiar to the Ark, the Table of Shewbread, and the Golden Altar, and it has the special meaning, as the margin indicates, of a rim or moulding round the edge. Then in v. 25 (of Exodus 25) there is a further detail given. "Thou shalt make a *border* of a handbreadth round about." Neither the Ark nor the Golden Altar have this additional feature, but the same word in the original occurs in Ps. 18. 45 as "close places." Certainly the loaves on that wonderful Table were securely held in a "close place," and not likely to fall therefrom. Finally it is found that this border in its turn has yet another crown around it, so making up a triple line of protection for those loaves that were so precious, a three-fold cord not easily broken. It is certain that these serried ranks of crown, border and crown are more than equal to any disturbing force that would shake the holy loaves on their rough journey through the desert.

When the camp is to journey forwards, the vessels of the golden table and the shewbread that stood upon it are first of all wrapped with a cloth of blue, indicating the heavenly character of the communion of God's people with their Lord. But over the blue is put a cloth of another colour, something fresh in the typology of this chapter—a cloth of scarlet. Literally it is "worm-scarlet," the national colour of Israel, telling of kingly might through the gates of death. This colour is the "cochineal" of the confectioner, and is obtained by the crushing of the tiny insects of that name. The cloth of scarlet suggests that the royal priesthood of believers to-day is derived from the death of the Saviour with whom they are in so close communion.

Over all is the dull cover of badgers skins that shrouds the glorious colours and vessels within from ungodly eyes. The unconverted eye can see but the uninteresting meeting, the unintelligible, to him, "saying of prayers," and knows not the glorious communion that exists in the drabest brick building or wooden shed where saints are met to remember their Lord.

THE LAMPSTAND.

The fact that the Lampstand—please do not read "candlestick," for that is to take away the idea of dependence that the constant refilling with oil conveys—equally with the Table, is covered with a cloth of blue indicates the heavenly character of the light that it gives.

When the Tabernacle was erected this Lampstand was the only source of light in the Holy Place, for no light of nature could penetrate there. This is significant in view of our experience to-day. Only spiritual discernment can probe the problems of worship and service of the Lord Jesus, and can perceive the principles of divine order.

With the lampstand there are associated certain vessels such as tongs and snuffers, which are also covered with this enveloping cloth of blue. All these "corrective tools" for trimming and clearing the light are thus marked equally with the lampstand as of a heavenly character. A flickering testimony to-day cannot be made to shine more

certainly by a stinging rebuke delivered in the flesh, but rather by spiritual concern and prayer.

The outer covering again is the drab badger-skin. That which is "light in the Lord" is not understood, nor is its patience perceived by those who are without.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

When the Lord Jesus met with the woman (John 4) she was occupied with the local controversy as to the correct place of worship. The Lord cleared the matter once and for all with: "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem . . ." The worship of God is a spiritual matter, and a heavenly matter, too. So over the Golden Altar from which the savour of the fragrant incense ascended to God yet another *blue* cloth was placed in preparation for the desert journey. Then once again we read of that dull over-all covering of badgers skins. Men in their folly speak of "public worship". They may see the building of bricks or stone, but never thus can they understand ought of the real thing. It is hidden beneath the dull outward show that marks to the worldling a gathered company.

THE COPPER ALTAR.

Yes, please note that it should be "copper" and not "brass" as given in the A.V. Brass is an alloy, a mixture, a thing hateful to God; copper is the pure metal. The copper altar was the place of sacrifice, and here in the study of the coverings something new comes to light. Instead of the new familiar *blue* cloth, one of *purple* is used. Here is the Imperial colour, and was it not by sacrifice that the Saviour achieved His greatest conquest of all?

He hell in hell laid low :
 Made sin, He sin o'erthrew ;
 Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
 And death, by dying, slew.

In common with all the sacred vessels, except the ark itself, this altar has the outside covering of dull badgers skins—all that is seen by the stranger's eye. The world by wisdom knows not God, nor knows His ways and plans, and it is among the cleverest and most learned, as men count, that the sceptics as to the truth of the Cross are found. They talk of the Saviour as a martyr, as the victim of a conspiracy—and He was truly both, but they see not beyond those dull skins unto the vicarious sacrifice that only can explain the amazing death of the Author of Life Himself.

Verse 15 of this 4th chapter is significant. "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary . . . after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it, but they shall not touch any holy thing." Here is manifested the vital importance of divine order in the sanctuary. David indeed said "None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites," but this was after a bitter lesson from His God, who took vengeance when David in his foolishness had put it on a new cart. In the verses that follow throughout the chapter

full and instructive details are given, as to the respective duties of the three families of the Levites. Note how diverse they are. One may superintend a wagon upon which some of the great silver sockets are carried; another may be occupied merely with the cords that stay the pillars of the outer court, and still another with one of the holy vessels that we have already considered. In these varied occupations there is an interesting foreshadowing of the diversity of gifts in the church to-day. Each one is needed, and each is apportioned, not by human preference but by divine ordinance.

CHAPTER 5.

After that certain matters concerning the "inner circle" of the camp have been dealt with in detail in chapter 4, attention is now given to things in the camp as a whole.

The section may be regarded as presenting an ascending scale of judgments—three in number.

The first is corporate. Every leper is to be put out of the camp. The inference from this command is solemn; lepers hitherto had been tolerated at large among the assembly. A careful study of Lev. 21 and 22 will serve to distinguish between mere disability from various causes and the dread disease of leprosy. In some articles upon the book of Leviticus last year we pointed out that leprosy is a type not simply of sin as such, but wilful sinning against the light for which the law provided no sacrifice.

No distinction of sex, so often found in Levitical law, operates here. The sufferer from the dread disease, whether low-born woman, or priestly male, must needs be expelled.

This is instructive for us. A manifest working of self-will cannot be tolerated under any circumstances whatever. The will-worker must go.

After leprosy, which is evident to all, comes those things which call for *self* (rather than corporate) judgment. Verses 6-10 deal with these matters, which typify those uncleannesses of mind and spirit, and body too, that must be dealt with by self as before the Lord.

Finally there comes the curious ordinances of "*Trial of Jealousy*," spurious forms of which have been found in varied guises the world over. But the place in this ascending series of judgments is clear. Corporate judgment is followed by self-judgment, but here is something beyond the wit of man to deal with, and *divine* judgment is brought in. Behind the account of the jealous man and the indicted woman there is undoubtedly a prophetic picture of Israel herself, of whom Jehovah as Husband had such good reason to be jealous. "The Lord make thee a curse" (v. 21) has come solemnly true of the nation as a whole.

For the faithful few among the mass, actual history goes even further than the type. Instead of their drinking that dust-laden death-bringing water, it was their sinless Messiah who cried "Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death."

How to Distribute Gospel Tracts

By A TRACT DISTRIBUTOR.



At the commencement of another Season's Tract Distribution we feel that a word to Tract workers may not be out of place and commend the following suggestions to the prayerful consideration of all who engage in this excellent service.

BE COURTEOUS.

I shall never forget witnessing a young man giving tracts away at the seaside. It was impossible for anyone to be offended at his approach. With the air of a born gentleman, and the bearing of a perfect Christian, he went uninvited into the midst of little groups, and was never once repelled. Let us remember those to whom we offer tracts will read us, even if the tract be cast away.

BE TACTFUL.

If one kind of tract will not do, try another. Pray for this grace of tact, for it is surely a saving grace in tract distribution. If tracts are to be wisely and tactfully distributed, it is pre-supposed that the workers will take pains to read what is given away beforehand.

BE PATIENT.

Never resent a rebuff. In the giving away of a tiny Gospel tract remember you are proclaiming the good news just as assuredly as though you were standing in the pulpit. It is so easy to be rebuffed by a cynical remark, but the remembrance that one is a witness for Christ will restrain the temptation to retaliate. "Are you a city missionary," remarked a gentleman to one, somewhat patronizingly, as he was politely handed a tract. "Yes, I am," was the reply, "as every true Christian should be."

BE PRAYERFUL.

Let no tract be given away that is not first of all steeped in prayer.

BE CONFIDENT

of blessing. It is the living seed that is being scattered, and therefore we may look for the harvest.

A Servant of Christ had been summoned to the condemned cell to see a murderer named Seddon. The condemned man asked him what there was to show that there would be any retribution for sin. The preacher turned to the stories of the flood and destruction of Sodom, and further to the "Green hill far away"; but Seddon said, "Stop there, Jesus Christ was a good man, but, after all, only a man." Then the memory of the tract entitled, "God or Devil?" which had set aside doubts he himself once had in regard to the divinity of Christ, came to him, and he left a copy with the condemned man. When he returned to see the

prisoner a few minutes before the execution, Seddon said: "You have brought me back to my old faith, I know Him to be my God and my Saviour," and he went to the scaffold ten minutes later, singing, "Just as I am, without one plea."

WHERE TO DISTRIBUTE GOSPEL TRACTS.

If general distribution is the method employed, then there is no limit to the sphere of operation. It may be done in places of public resort, the seaside, race courses and fairs, sporting centres, street cars, railway trains, ocean-going vessels, ferries, etc. Facilities for distribution abound, and should be fully taken advantage of.

HOSPITALS AND INFIRMARIES.

These afford a fine field for tract work. Patients with plenty of time on their hands are glad to read anything brought to them. Wide-awake Christian workers will not neglect this sphere.

HOUSE TO HOUSE.

The old-fashioned weekly or "Monthly Visitor" is not so much in evidence now as aforesaid, but they are needed as much as ever. When a district is once taken up it should be conscientiously and regularly adhered to. The residents look for the visitors and their silent messengers.

OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES.

"Tracts may be dropped into a letter-box or in at an open door or window; may be left in a house, the shop, the waiting-room, the railway carriage, the cab, between the leaves of books—anywhere, in fact, where they are likely to be found. The finder might sometimes be impressed and induced to read by the very singularity of the place where the tract was found. An invalid mother who was most solicitous for the conversion of her sons, inserted two or three tracts into her sons' pockets that they might come on them unawares. Love had found a way. I have no doubt that she will rejoice in the conversion of all her sons right early." "Blessed are they who sow besides all waters."

The work deserves the best we can put into it. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they shall both alike be good.

"BIBLE DIALOGUES"

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and P. Brown.

No. 3—REPENTANCE.

SOMETIMES in seeking a correct definition the force of a thing is lost. I fear it is so, very often, with Repentance.

I remember hearing a preacher of the Gospel mention a visit which he paid to a certain man.

"I have only one message for you," he said, "and it is that you must *repent*."

"And, pray, what is repentance?" asked the man.

"Well," replied the preacher, "when you think of your guilty life, and the necessity of your meeting God by-and-by, *if you don't know what repentance is, I can't tell you!*"

Still, I will try to make its meaning clear. Briefly, the word signifies a change of mind, but it is a change of mind that affects a man's moral

being to its deepest depths. It is a change of mind that causes him to turn from his sins with loathing, and to hate himself for having committed them. A repentant sinner thus *takes sides with God against himself*.

Suppose a man has not committed any very dreadful sin, is there the same necessity for repentance in his case?

Before we speak of what would be necessary for such a man, produce him! The fact is that all sin is dreadful in God's sight, and there is not an individual living who has not sinned. Hence the need for repentance is universal. God "now commandeth *all men* everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30).

I suppose you could hardly find a man freer from the grosser excesses of sin than Job was. God Himself bore record that there was "none like him in the earth," and that he was "a perfect and an upright man" (*i.e.* in his outward conduct), "one that feareth God and escheweth evil."

If any man could be supposed not to need repentance, surely Job was that man. He could truthfully say of himself: "I put on righteousness, and it clothe me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor" (Job xxix. 14-16).

Dear, noble, kind-hearted, charitable man! Did he need to repent? Let him answer for himself. While speaking of his outward life and character he could rightly claim pre-eminence in goodness, but when he refers to his state and condition before God, listen to his words: "Behold, I am vile..." "Mine eye seeth *Thee*. Wherefore I abhor myself, and REpent in dust and ashes" (Job xl. 4; xlii. 5, 6).

We sometimes hear of "death-bed" repentance. What is meant by that?

There are those who live all their lives careless and Christless. If the importance of their soul's welfare is pressed upon them, they say they will consider the matter "some day," and thus they put

it off again and again, and go on with their sins and their pleasures. At last, when they find themselves upon the brink of the grave, they become alarmed and begin to cry to God for mercy, and make a profession of faith in Christ. That, I suppose, is what is called a "death-bed repentance."

But death-bed repentances are very unsatisfactory things. I am far from denying that a man, even at the eleventh hour of life, if he really turns to the Saviour and puts his trust in His precious blood, will find mercy. The grace of God is infinite, and I have no doubt many will be in heaven who were saved upon a dying bed.

But in many cases persons who thought that they were dying, and professed to be repentant, have recovered. With renewed health came a renewed love of sin. Their impressions wore off, their alarm vanished, and their so-called repentance proved to be unreal, the mere result of terror at the thought of death.

It is easy to see that the folly of putting off repentance to one's dying hour is great indeed. Even if permitted to have a death-bed (which is by no means certain), can it be the best time to think of one's soul when the body is racked with pain and the mind enfeebled by continued suffering?

Besides, does it not seem a very mean thing to devote all one's best years to the service of sin and self, and then when strength is failing and life ebbing away to turn to God because one can no longer pursue one's own way?

What is the difference between repentance and remorse?

In remorse there is no real loathing of sin. A man may be full of remorse for what he has done without having much sorrow for the sin itself. In such a case the soul turns in upon itself in bitterness. There is no turning to God in self-judgment.

Judas was full of remorse for his sordid treachery when he beheld its awful results. But there was no true repentance, no real turning away from sin and self to God. In the bitterness of his soul he went and hanged himself.

The truly repentant soul is affected by the love and goodness of God. It does not plunge into the darkness of despair, but feels that, in spite of its terrible sin and depravity, it must cling to Christ. Like Peter in Luke v., the sinner who is truly repentant feels that he is unworthy to be noticed by the Saviour, and cries, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," and yet at the same time casts himself at Jesus' feet.

How may one know when one has repented enough?

I strongly suspect that anyone asking that question is making a saviour of repentance. He thinks perhaps that the sincerity of his repentance will induce God to be gracious to him. Now it cannot be too much emphasised that when God blesses a sinner it is not on account of the depth of his repentance or the strength of his faith, but *because of the atoning work of Christ on the cross.*

Repentance is never as deep as it should be; but if a repentant sinner turns from self to *Christ*, then his repentance has taken the right direction. He need not further be occupied with it, but will find peace and blessing in putting his confidence in Christ, and resting upon His finished work for salvation.

If God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, why does He allow men to die without repenting?

God never forces His blessings upon men, or treats them as if they were mere machines. It is the "longing soul" that He satisfies. The gospel offer of salvation is made to all, and all are commanded to repent. But if a man willfully closes his ears to the call of grace, and turns his back upon God's mercy, he has no one to blame but himself, if he miserably perishes in his sins. All that divine love could give has been freely given for him; all that divine righteousness claimed has been freely offered; all that was necessary to be done has been fully accomplished. What more can a man expect?

What would you look for in a man who says that he has repented?

I should expect him to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." It is useless for anyone to say that he repents of his sins while he continues in them. A man that is genuinely repentant not only confesses his sins, but *forsakes* them (Prov. xxviii. 13).

Amongst other signs of true repentance we shall observe a willingness to make restitution to anyone who has been wronged.

We see this in the case of Onesimus. He had wronged his master, Philemon, by running away. After his conversion he seeks to make compensation, as far as he can, by going straight back to his master. In Zacchæus we have another instance of this. When the Lord Jesus responded so graciously to his desire to see Him, and brought salvation to his house, Zacchæus said, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke xix. 8). That is a case of bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance.

Is there anyone that you have wronged? Anyone whom you defrauded long years ago by a bit of sharp practice that has never been discovered from that day to this? Anyone you have wronged with your tongue, whose character you have damaged by slander and gossip? Is there such a person? Don't tell me that you are repentant, then, unless you are willing to do what you can to make amends.

A lady who was converted at one of our tent meetings had been employed, in her younger days, in a draper's store. She had bought a new hat, and needed some ribbon to trim it. Not having the necessary money, she was tempted to take some from her employer's shop. No one was the wiser; the ribbon was never missed.

When that lady was converted the circumstance recurred to her mind. Taking her pen, she wrote to the forewoman of the shop somewhat like this:—

"DEAR —,—While an assistant at Mr. —'s I am sorry to say that I stole some pink ribbon of the value of ——. I am now a Christian, by the grace of God, so I enclose the amount in stamps, and beg that you will accept this expression of my sincere regret."

That is the sort of thing we expect to see when anyone professes repentance.

If a man says, "I should like to repent, but I feel that my heart is so hard, and I don't grieve over my sins as much as I should," how would you help him?

I should tell him that I was very glad to hear that he felt the hardness of his heart so much, and that he was so grieved because he didn't grieve as much as he should. How often it is that we find people in a state like that, sorry because they are not more sorry, grieving because

they don't grieve more! But what lies at the bottom of all that is *self-occupation*. Now, never yet has a sinner been turned away from the Saviour *because his feelings were not deep enough about his sins*. Nor has a sinner ever been received and saved *because his heart was sufficiently melted and his grief sincere*.

If there is anyone troubled because his heart is so hard, I would say to him, "The hardness of your heart is another reason why you should go to Jesus at once. *He can soften it.*" If the man protests that his grief over his sins is not deep enough, I should say, "All the more reason why you should lose no time in turning to the Saviour. Trust in Him, think of His dying love upon the tree, and if *that* does not cause you to grieve over your sins, no brooding over your own condition ever will."

When the jailor at Philippi asked, "What must I do to be saved?" why did not Paul and Silas say anything to him about repenting? Because it was a repentant sinner that asked the question. Note the change that had been wrought in him during the course of a few short hours. From a brutal, hard-hearted man he had been transformed into an anxious inquirer for salvation. What had made the difference? Terror, no doubt. But there was another influence at work, which seems to have touched his heart and produced a measure of repentance. What influence was that? *The goodness of God.*

When, in desperation, that jailor was about to take his own life a loud voice fell upon his ear—"Do thyself no harm." That voice revealed to him the fact that there was *someone who cared for him*. The care and interest which Paul and Silas showed for their cruel keeper was the echo of the interest and love of God Himself. It was a revelation of *God's goodness* to the man's soul, and it broke him down and wrung from his lips the cry of a repentant sinner, "What must I do to be saved?" Repentance was there; all that was needed now was that he should be pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the One whom he might trust for salvation.

If a man dies unrepentant, will there be any chance of repentance after death?

It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Rom. ii. 4). When a man dies in his sins he passes for ever out of the sphere where God's goodness is active. There may be remorse in the regions of the lost, but no repentance. On the contrary, the weeping and the wailing is accompanied by "gnashing of teeth," which is a very different thing from repentance. There is nothing in hell to change a man's heart. Scripture is clear that "*now* is the day of salvation." It is in this life that our eternal destinies must be fixed.

In Luke xvi. the rich man in hell is represented as desiring that his brethren should be warned. He says, "If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But he never says such a thing

as "*I will repent.*" The lost in hell realise that the day for their repentance is gone for ever.

You say it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. But are not men ever induced to repent by fear?

I have no doubt that the fear of coming judgment has been the means of awakening many. Some of the most richly blessed servants of God have seen hundreds turn to Him as they shook their audience over hell. Different men are affected in different ways. Some can be gently drawn, others need to be driven. With some the "still small voice" carries most weight, others are moved by the peal of thunder and the crash of the tempest. Some hearts are melted under the sweet story of God's love; some are broken under the awful warnings of death and judgment. The Lord's servants have to deal with men differently, and they must ever keep near to their Master, that they may know how to speak. But God's goodness is seen as much in the messages of warning as in the messages of grace. It is His mercy that warns. So in that way it always remains true that the goodness of God leads to repentance.

What is meant by the Scripture in 2 Corinthians vii, which says that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation"?

The repentance and salvation spoken of there, are the repentance and salvation of Christians. The believers at Corinth had grievously erred, and the apostle Paul had written a letter of faithful remonstrance. This letter (the First Epistle to the Corinthians) had produced the desired effect. Godly sorrow had taken the place of shameless glorying in evil, and this sorrow for their sin had wrought repentance in that it had led the Corinthian believers to turn from their evil course and clear themselves from the wrong that they had countenanced. Thus repenting, they were saved from going further down the hill of declension. In this way "repentance to salvation" was wrought by their godly sorrow. It shows that when a believer sins, his repentance should be as real and as practical as one expects a sinner's repentance to be at the first. It is a good thing to be so anxious to be clear of sin, and to be kept from grieving the Holy Spirit, that it can be said of us, as of the Corinthians: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort. What carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. vii. 11).

WERE YOU THAT LADY?

"My dear Mrs. Booth," said a lady to the late mother of the Salvation Army, "you are doing far too much; you work far too hard; why do you do so much?" "Because, my sister, you do so little," was the quiet reply.

“EVENTS IN EUROPE AFTER THE RAPTURE.”

J. H. McCormick.

PART 4.

SATAN and his angels who now inhabit the heaven of the air will be cast down to earth by angelic power in the middle of Daniel's seventieth week. He will come down in great wrath, will persecute Israel and give all the power of hell to aid the Emperor in establishing his power and throne in great authority on earth.

Question—Can you tell us some other results of Satan's personal presence on earth ?

Answer—Yes. Scripture reveals that Antichrist will be in control of the religious affairs of the Empire. He will also receive his power from the Devil for he is called the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition (2 Thess. 2), and he is as the False Prophet, one of the satanic trinity who counterfeit the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and who will be worshipped over the earth in these coming days. (Rev. 13, 2 Thess. 2). Antichrist will use all the power of the Emperor to cause the earth and all earth dwellers to worship the Emperor. (Rev. 13.12).

He will do

GREAT WONDERS,

even making fire to come down from Heaven on the earth in the sight of men. Baal's prophets were unable to do this in Elijah's day. (Rev. 13. 13, 1 Kings 18. 21-29). He will work miracles to deceive men as to his origin and power, and will thus be able to command earth dwellers (i.e., apostates from professed Christianity) to make an image of the beast. The image will be given breath by him, and it will speak and cause that all those who do not worship it shall be killed. The times of the Gentiles commenced with Nebuchadnezzar's golden image in the plain of Dura, with the burning fiery furnace for all who refused to worship it, and they will end with the image of the beast, when all who refuse to worship it will be killed. He will "cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive

those who worship the image or receive the mark of the beast shall drink of the awful cup of the wine of the wrath of God, unmixed with mercy, being tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever in a restless eternity of torment and misery in the lake of fire. It will be either worship the beast and receive his mark and be tormented for all eternity, or worship God, starve here and enjoy eternal blessedness hereafter. Awful alternative for men then ! To-day men must choose Christ and His reproach here with glory in eternity, or the world and its fame, riches and pleasures, now with eternal wrath in the lake of fire. Which wilt thou choose ? Choose now !

Question—How will Antichrist work in Palestine in the last days ?

Answer—In the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week Antichrist, who is reigning in Palestine as the wilful King (Dan. II.), will cause the mass of the Jewish nation to enter into covenant with the Prince that shall come (the Emperor) to protect the nation from the Northern King and his hosts, and give the Jews the full exercise of civil and religious liberty. But in the middle of the week, the Emperor having entered into alliance with Hell, will break the covenant with the Jews, and he will cause the worship of God to cease in the Temple, and will set up the abomination (possibly the image of the Beast) in the holy place in the Temple. The worship of man taking the place of the worship of Jehovah. Moreover, Antichrist will claim divine honours himself, and as the Jewish nation will refuse to worship the image this will bring about the great tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble." "Great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." A time so terrible that were those days not shortened for the elects' (the Godly remnant) sake, there should no flesh be saved—none should be left alive in Palestine. (Matt. 24). The purpose of Satan in the Great Tribulation is to blot out Israel from the earth, and thus frustrate the divine purpose to make them the head of the nations and to bless the world through them. God will use this time, as judgment upon Israel for its murder of

THE MARK (OF THE BEAST)

in their right hand (service) or in their foreheads" (allegiance), and all who refuse the mark will be boycotted and allowed to starve to death, while

His Son and His servants, and will thus purge the nation of rebels, bringing those who are left to repentance and blessing, being saved, as Paul was, by the sight of the coming Christ.

Question—Will the Church or any part of it pass through the Great Tribulation ?

Answer—No. The words that the Lord gave Jeremiah about it are "concerning Israel and concerning Judah," not concerning "the church," and it will be "the time of Jacob's (not the church's) trouble." (Jeremiah 30. 4, 7). Moreover, it cannot refer to any of the Church's sufferings, for it will be immediately followed by Jacob's deliverance from Gentile rule when they shall be ruled over by Christ (the true David) as their King. This time is yet future, for Gentiles still tread down Jerusalem. (v. 8-9).

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

of judgment are upon Daniel's people (the Jews), and Daniel's city (Jerusalem) not upon Christ's Church. These seventy weeks include the great tribulation which shall be in the last half of the seventieth week. (Dan. 9). When Michael, the guardian angel prince of Israel, stands up for them "there shall be a time of trouble such as was never since there was a nation even to that same time, and 'at that time' thy people (the Jews), not the church) shall be delivered" (Dan. 12), the deliverance being restricted to those who are written in the book (i.e., the Godly remnant). Our Lord speaking of it in Matthew 24 uses characteristically Jewish terms, "abomination in the holy place," "Judea," "Sabbath Day," "false christs and prophets," which proves that it comes upon the Jewish nation, not upon the Church. Moreover, we have the risen Lord's promise in Rev. 3, "I will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation (to worship Satan) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (this hour will try not the church, but earth dwellers—apostates from Christianity). The Church will be kept out of the tribulation by the second coming of her Lord to take her out of the world. "Behold I come quickly." Just as blessing extended beyond the borders of Israel to Gentiles in the past, so will judgment extend beyond Israel's borders in great tribulation days. It will be upon Judah and Jerusalem in all its fierce wrath, but all the Roman earth shall suffer too. There are

TWO GREAT KEY SCRIPTURES

about the rapture—1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15, and they teach that "we which are alive and remain" (upon earth) unto the coming of the Lord "shall be caught up together with the risen dead to meet

the Lord in the air." It is the living Christians who shall be caught up, irrespective of looking, watching, or faithfulness which are never mentioned. We shall not all sleep (i.e., die) but we shall all be changed." Every sleeping saint shall be raised, and every living saint shall be changed, and "be caught up together—and forever with the Lord." How could they pass through the great tribulation ?

Question—Who are they which come out of great tribulation ? (Rev. 7).

Answer—They are multitudes of Gentile saints, who, converted through the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, will enter into blessing on earth. The whole chapter is an earthly scene.

Question—Will there be an offer of salvation then to those who have rejected it now ?

Answer—No. The foolish Virgins who had not the oil (the Holy Spirit) were left outside a shut door when Christ came, and no knocking of theirs availed to let them in. It is upon those who neglect the great salvation now, that strong delusion will come and they shall believe the lie of Satan, that Antichrist is Christ and follow him. They obeyed not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ when it was preached to them, and so when He is revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, it will be to take vengeance on them, punishing them with everlasting destruction. Those who neglect or refuse the gospel now, will have no further day of grace. They will be reserved for judgment. Reader! How important then for you now to accept the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour and thus be saved from all coming wrath. "Behold 'now' is the day of Salvation."

*** SPEAKING TO THE HEART. ***

"I had been often spoken to about my soul," said a man of God, "and often warned to flee from the coming wrath. I felt there was truth in what was said to me, but it was often said in a harsh unfeeling way. I was addressed as a culprit receiving his sentence. A dear, godly young man linked his arm in mine one night, as I came from a Gospel meeting, and walked with me to my lodgings. He spoke of "the wrath to come," but it was with such feeling and solemnity as I never heard before. Before I slept that night I was converted. Dear fellow-workers, seek to reach the heart with your words, and do not hurl the truth in a hard and unfeeling spirit, at those to whom you speak. Words coming from the heart, go to the heart again.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM.

By Wm. Luff.

No. 4.—JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY AND FOR EVER.

MR. SPURGEON read this morning Heb. xiii. Jesus, the great sacrifice, was not offered in the Tabernacle or Temple; but outside the camp, to show His sacrifice had nothing to do with the Jewish ceremonies; all who keep to such, have no right to this altar.

I. OUR LORD'S PERSONAL TITLE.

1. "**Jesus.**" The Hebrew name "Jesus," or "Joshua," means, Saviour. He was this *at His birth*, for the work then began, "the holy child, Jesus." *In His middle life* when as a teacher, He loosed men's minds from traditions, etc., healed the sick, rescued Peter and saved the ship. He was Jesus *at death*. Pilate wrote "This is Jesus." *At His resurrection*, for He saves from death. *In heaven now*; and He shall come as "this same Jesus." The word "Jesus," is said to be derived from a word signifying "amplitude," and another word meaning "to deliver." It is also a contraction for "Jehovah." It suggests "riches," and sometimes "to cry." Jesus is Jehovah's Salvation, the answer to His people's cry, and comes with all the amplitude and riches of God.

2. "**Christ,**" this Greek name is derived from a Greek root "Christus," anointed. This indicates His office as Prophet, Priest and King.

If He is a *Prophet*, we must listen to His teaching.

If He is our *Priest*, we cannot come to God but through Him, he offers our sacrifices and presents our prayers.

If He is *King*, we must stand up for His rights, as King in His church and our hearts.

Anointing, denotes Christ's *rights* to these offices: God has made Him Prophet, Priest, and King. Anointing also denotes Christ's *qualifications* for these offices. He is a *better Prophet* than Moses: a *better Priest* than Aaron; and a *better King* than David or Solomon.

3. The two names united suggest that Jew and Gentile are one in Him.

II. CHRIST'S MEMORABLE ATTITUDE.

1. *Not the same in conditions*: once glorious in Heaven, but afterward despised of men.

2. *Not the same in occupation*. He came to save: He will come to judge.

The words in the original seem to mean, He is always Himself, always Jesus Christ.

1. *He was always to His people what He is now*. Some say He was not the Saviour of those who lived before He came; but He was.

2. *He is the same now as He ever was*, when He covenanted to die for us—the same—as when on earth, in His willingness and power to save—the same as in apostolic days—as in our father's days, when the fires of Smithfield and other places burned. The same as He has been to us in the past.

3. *He always will be what He is*—through the rest of our life, at death or at His coming again. Some tell us He is going to change and leave some of His people in the world and take the rest with Him. Nonsense! He will be the same through eternity.

III. CHRIST'S EVIDENT CLAIMS.

1. He ought to be followed to the end.

2. We ought to be steadfast in the faith.

3. He claims our worship, for if always the same, He must be God.

4. He is to be trusted.

5. Rejoice in Him always; for though we may change, *He changes not*.

WILLIAM LUFF.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE JEWISH MONTHS.

By WALTER SCOTT.

CIVIL YEAR.	SACRED YEAR.	SIGNIFICATION.	REFERENCE.	CORRESPONDING MONTH IN ENGLISH CALENDAR.
7th Month.	1st Month. Nisan or Abib.	"Green Ears."	Exodus. xiii. 4.	Part of Mar. and Apl. Part of Apl. and May.
8th Month.	2nd Month. Zif.	"Blossom."	1 Kings vi. 1, 37.	Apl. and May.
9th Month.	3rd Month. Sivan.	"Bush or Thorn."	Esther viii. 9.	May and June.
10th Month.	4th Month. Tammuz.	"Concealed."	(Not named).	June and July.
11th Month.	5th Month. Ab.	"Father" (?)	(Not named).	July and Aug.
12th Month.	6th Month. Elul.	"Glean or cut off."	Neh. vi. 15.	Aug. and Sept.
1st Month.	7th Month. Tisri or Ethanim.	"Month of Streaming Rivers."	1 Kings viii. 2. 1 Kings vi. 38.	Sept. and Oct. Oct. and Nov.
2nd Month.	8th Month. Bul.	"Rain." (Doubtful).	Zech. vii. 1.	Nov. and Dec.
3rd Month.	9th Month. Chisleu.	"Winter."	Esther ii. 16.	Dec. and Jan.
4th Month.	10th Month. Tebeth.	"Shoot."	Zech. i. 7.	Jan. and Feb.
5th Month.	11th Month. Sebat.	"Large."	Ezra vi. 15.	Feb. and Mar.
6th Month.	12th Month. Adar.			

In several instances, the meanings of the months are strikingly appropriate, as: *Elul*, "Glean or cut off" "the late grapes; *Tebeth*, "Winter," the coldest season of the year; *Bul*, "Rain," the time when heavy rains fall; *Nisan*, "Green ears," commencement of harvest, etc.



The Book of Isaiah would seem in many ways to be a miniature Bible.

It has 66 chapters, as the Bible has 66 books.

Chapter 1 begins with "Hear O heavens and give ear O earth."—Genesis begins with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

In this same chapter, as in creation, animals (the ox and the ass) with their limited capacities come first, while man is seen last but with a capacity to reason (verse 18) with his Creator.

The last chapter contains a reference to "New heavens and a new earth," which is also true of the book of Revelation.

In keeping with the 400 or so years from the dispersion to the commencement of the New Testament, the 39th chapter mentions the captivity and the 40th commences with a message of comfort from God to His people and John Baptist's stirring cry of "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," etc.

Thus the main division occurs in the same relative position as between Old and New Testaments. The Messianic prophecies of the O.T. portion are mainly in the future tense, and those of the N.T. portion in the past and present tenses.

As the N.T. is made up of Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation, so the last 27 chapters of Isaiah are sub-divided into three parts of 9 chapters each. Chapter 48 ends with "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked." Chapter 57 ends with "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Chapter 66 ends with "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched."

In the centre of the middle portion of 9 chapters is the wonderful 53rd of Isaiah with its New Testament themes of Calvary in the past tense and the Person and Work of Christ.

As it is generally understood that the last three verses of the preceding chapter are really a part of chapter 53, verses 4, 5 and 6, setting forth the Atonement, form the grand centre.

This remarkable arrangement can be explained only in the light of Divine Inspiration and is moreover another evidence that we have the complete canon of Holy Scripture.

E.C.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XXVI.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matt. 25 : 16, 17, 23.

“OCCUPY, TILL I COME,” or The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents (Cont.)

If the “Pound” speaks to us of those blessings which we receive as Christians, which are heavenly in character and divine in origin, then the “talents” surely speak to us of those gifts which, while undoubtedly still being from God who is the Giver of every good gift, have more to do with our Service on earth, and things down here than with those things which the Pound represents. That which has to do with the local and earthly sphere, rather than the general and heavenly.

I am thinking now of those “Gifts” which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the care of His servants and which we must all agree in the light of the Scripture vary according to our several abilities, just as the talents of our Parable were awarded according to every man’s several ability. The God who hath set the members everyone of them in the Body of Christ as *it has pleased Him*, also commits His gifts to every man severally as *He will*. Ephesians 4.11 tells us that “He gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers.” You will notice that in each case it is to the “Some” only, therefore it is evident that we cannot all be Apostles, or Prophets, or Evangelists, or Pastors and Teachers, and seeing that the foundation of the Church consists of the Apostles and Prophets, and Revelation reveals only twelve Apostles of the Lamb in the Foundations of the New Jerusalem, we must not expect to find these “Gifts” in our midst to-day.

But what of the other “gifts” such as those of “Evangelist” or Pastor and Teacher? These we are told are also given to “some” “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. 4. 12-13).

In 1 Corinthians 12, we read something more concerning these spiritual gifts:

“God hath set *some* in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”

(1 Cor. 12. 28-31).

And earlier in this same chapter we read,

“Now there are *diversities of gifts*, but the same Spirit. For to one, is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12. 9-10)

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will.”

(1 Cor. 12. 4, 8-11).

All this mass of clear scripture teaching surely emphasises that these Gifts of the Spirit, which the Talents represent, vary widely and immensely in each individual case.

It is not now a question, as in the case of the Pound, of all having the *same* Holy Spirit, but rather is it that seeing we all *HAVE* the Spirit of God within us, He has also given unto us some special gift to be used in its proper sphere for the Glory of God and the blessing of others.

Whilst there are *diversities of Gifts*, it is the *same Spirit* in each. (1 Cor. 12. 4).

Whilst there are *differences of administration* it is the *same Lord* (1 Cor. 12. 5).

Whilst there are *diversities of operations* it is the *same God* which worketh all in all. (1 Cor. 12.6). And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *EVERY* man to profit withal. (1 Cor. 12. 7). But whilst He divides His gifts to every man *severally* (as the Talents) as He will, yet it is the *selfsame Spirit* (Pound) in each.

Thus we see how beautifully the two parables blend in their teaching, and how, if only we would distinguish these things that differ, we should find that rather than contradict, they wonderfully supplement each other.

The whole truth is then presented in the following verses of the chapter (1 Cor. 12. 12-27), in yet another aspect;—that of the "Body and its many members." Only one *Body* and all functioning as one,—all its members drawing from the selfsame source of supply, but yet how different those *members* are? As in the natural Body, so in the Spiritual Body of Christ. "Now ye are the Body of Christ" says the Apostle, in v. 27. One glorious whole, all drawing from one common source of power, The Head—Christ in Glory, but yet though *but one Body ye are also "members in particular"* (v. 27). Each distinct, but each dependent one on the other.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And if they were all one member where were the Body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.

(1. Cor. 12. 15-20.)

And the eye cannot say unto the hand I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Cor. 12. 21-26).

Therefore to sum up, we find that *every* believer has the Holy Spirit within, typified by the Pound, and the result in the coming day will be according to the place we have given Him in our individual lives.

On the other hand with that Holy Spirit we have committed to our care also some special gift, or work to do, (typified in the Parable by the Talents, and in 1 Cor. 12, by the various *members* of the Body), according as our gift may be, so there will be expected from us a commensurate return.

In all this may we be "Found faithful" by our Lord, who says "Occupy till I come." G. F. V.

Next issue "The Unprofitable Servant".

PRAYER REQUEST.

By the time this issue is in our readers' hands we hope (D.V.) to be in the midst of our Evangelistic Campaign in the New Fairlop Gospel Hall. Will you please pray today, for this evening's service?

We believe God will answer your prayer.

Full details of Opening in our Next Issue (D.V.)

TEN - MINUTE BIBLE CLASS TALK.

JOHN'S GOSPEL, Chapter I.

V. 1. A beginning without a beginning, for "In the beginning *WAS*" not "Became."

Therefore there, *before* the beginning.

"*WITH* God"—as distinct from God—

"The Son of God."

"*WAS* God"—the same God—"God the Son."

Creator. (V. 3). See Col. 1. 16-17.

Light. (V. 9). *Revealed* (V. 6-9).

Rejected (V. 10-11). *Received* (V. 12-13).

Life in midst of Death.—

Light in the midst of Darkness.

John the *Prophet* of the Highest—

A Minister—The Voice.

Jesus the *Son* of the Highest—

The Mediator—The Word.

Paradox (V. 27 and 30).

He who came *after*, was *before*.

JESUS made known as:—

Word (V. 1). *Light* (V. 7). *Son* (V. 18). *Lord* (V. 23). *Jesus* (V. 29). *Lamb* (V. 29). *Rabbi* (V. 38).

Messiah (V. 41). *King* (V. 49). *Son of God* (V. 51).

The Lamb of God. The Lamb of God's providing not for a Son, as Gen. 22, nor for a Nation, as Exodus 12, but for the whole World.

Calvin said—

"The death of Christ is *sufficient* for the whole world, but *efficient* for only those who believe."

A CHAPTER FULL OF FINDINGS.

John the Baptist finds Jesus.

Jesus finds Andrew, John and Philip.

Andrew finds Simon.

Philip finds Nathaniel—

In whom was *guilt*, but no *guile*.

Three times Andrew brought others to Christ that we know of.

Simon,—John 1-41.

The lad with the loaves (V. 6-8).

Certain Greeks. (V. 12-22).

V. 39. *Come and See.* First of many "Comes." Note it is not "See and Come" but "Come and See." We must not expect to see, if we have not yet come.

V. 46. *Come and See.*

DEITY MANIFEST IN FLESH DECLARED THE SON OF GOD.

John 1-1. The Word *was*.

John 1-14. The Word *became* flesh, and tabernacled among us full of *Grace and Truth*.

John 1-17. *Grace and Truth* came by *Jesus Christ*.

John 1-29. John seeth *Jesus* and saith "Behold the *Lamb of God*, which taketh away the Sin of the World."

John 1-34. This is the "*Son of God*."

G.F.V.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART V. CHAPTER 6.

THE ascending scale of judgments that we considered at the end of Part 4—corporate, self and divine, find a fitting climax in the **LAW OF THE NAZARITE** that is detailed in chapter 6.

There are some portions of Scripture that can most readily be understood by first considering their closing verses, and then going back to the beginning in the light of the end. This is true of Numbers 6.

The verses in question, 24-27 are among the most remarkable and beautiful in the whole of the Old Testament :

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Here is the blessing of the Lord that indeed maketh rich, and with which He addeth no sorrow.

Save perhaps for the wholly criminal and totally vicious, even men of the world desire to live in the goodwill and friendship of their fellows, how much more then should the creature desire the blessing of the Creator Himself.

But upon what ground may man have his Maker's blessing ? Consider two other Scriptures : “God . . . who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. 1. 3).

Here the blessing is regarded as an accomplished fact for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now look at Lev. 9. 22 :

“And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.”

Here in type is the *basis* of that absolute blessing—the accomplished sacrifice of the Saviour.

Now consider again those beautiful verses at the end of Numbers 6. They speak not so much of blessing absolute (as Eph. 1) nor of the source thereof (as Lev. 9), but rather of blessing *practically enjoyed* in the heart and along the pathway. And where is it that these verses are found ? At the end of a chapter that tells of special consecration to Jehovah—the law of the Nazarite.

Hence it is clear that the path of blessing enjoyed, is the path of special pleasing to God.

Now in the light of all this we will look at the details of the chapter itself.

Note in verse 2 a point of importance concerning the whole ordinance. It was to be entirely voluntary. There was no command given “Thou shalt become a Nazarite.” Consecration to God can never be a matter of compulsion ; its very value lies in its spontaneity.

Then see that even as in the degradation of leprosy (Ch. 5. 3) so here in this exalted calling there is no question of sex. It applies equally to man and to woman.

It might be well to point out at this stage that “Nazarite” has nothing whatever to do with “Nazarene.” The Lord Jesus was called a “Nazarene” because He had lived in Nazareth John the Baptist was actually and literally a **NAZARITE** (but not a Nazarene) as shown in Luke 1. 15, Matt. 11. 18, etc. But the Lord Jesus, although essentially fulfilling every *moral* requirement of the Nazarite's vow, was not Himself a *literal* Nazarite.

The vow that the Nazarite took involved him in a three-fold line of abstinence which must be clearly understood before we go further in the chapter.

1. NOTHING connected with the vine is to be taken (v. 3-5).
2. NO razor is to come upon his head (v. 5).
3. NO contact is to be had with the dead (v. 6).

The interpretation of these three ordinances is not difficult in the light of other scriptures.

The first mention of the vine in the Bible is significant. Noah planted a vineyard, and instead of tending it before God, drank the produce, became drunk and utterly disgraced himself. Such is the result of taking the “old wine” of earth. It brings temporary joy to the heart of man (See Ps. 104. 15), but saddens the heart of God. Compare this with the “new wine” (See margin) of Judges 9. 13, which gladdens both God and man.

The contrast is also well illustrated in John 2. There the wine fails, typical of the joy of earth that runs out in the moment of greatest need. Then it is that the Lord Jesus *creates* wine afresh and freely gives to all at the feast.

Note in the ordinance how sweeping is its scope. Not only shall the Nazarite not drink wine or strong drink, but even dried grapes are forbidden

to him. This is a vivid figure of the uncompromising pathway that is expected of those who have set out to specially please the Lord.

The key to the second condition of the Nazarite vow, the long hair, is found in 1 Cor. 11. 15 :

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering."

But now note a clause in v. 14 :

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him."

The long hair is given to a woman as a sign that she is under authority to her husband. But the man normally is regarded as the head of a household and not in subjection, hence his hair is worn short.

But here is a man who is acting *contrary to nature*, he is allowing his hair to grow *long* in token that he who would normally be *in* authority, has placed himself specially *under* authority. Paul deals with this state in 1 Cor. 9. 21. To gain those without law, he too, became as without law—but in the very sentence he makes a reservation, "Being not without law to God, but en-lawed to Christ" (lit. reading).

Thus those to-day who have chosen the path of particular consecration that is so pleasing to God, are themselves under particular authority to the Lord Jesus Himself.

The third prohibition concerning the Nazarite has to do with "dead bodies." To touch any such thing ever meant ceremonial defilement for an Israelite. The two who carried out the bodies of Aaron's rebel sons, Nadab and Abihu, themselves became defiled, and it would appear that they were thereby hindered from eating the passover in the ordinary month (See Lev. 10. 4, Num. 9. 6).

For the priests, who were concerned with holy things, there were restrictions concerning this seemingly unavoidable defilement, and here for the Nazarite they are intensified: "All the days that he separateth himself unto Jehovah, he shall come at no dead body." Typically this has a double signification. On the one hand it would suggest that believers are not to be unduly concerned with severing of natural ties—indeed they sorrow not as others that have no hope. Even for his near relatives the Nazarite is not to become ceremonially defiled v. 7. But there is a closer and even more searching meaning. The "dead body" seems to have direct reference to "the body of this death" (Rom. 7. 24)—the godless flesh that is in us all. The life that is truly consecrated puts that body indeed in the place of death—and leaves it there.

From verse 9-12 the possibility is contemplated of a Nazarite failing to complete his vow—something breaking down. There are gracious provisions made for a renewal, but the value of all the former days of consecration are completely lost (v. 12). In the grace of God, Israel who have failed so lamentably in their Nazariteship, will be permitted to renew their vow in that millennial

day when gathered back in their own land. Typically this renewal, is seen in Samson, the fallen Nazarite, whose hair began to grow again. With that growth came again his wonderful strength. As regards the church of this dispensation, it is sad to see how utterly the Nazarite character has gone, and still worse to realize that there is little possibility of a general renewal of her early vows.

The Lord Jesus, the true Nazarite, is the only One who ever completed His vows. "After that the Nazarite may drink wine" says Num. 6. 20, and so the Lord said in Matt. 26. 29: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it *new* with you in my Father's kingdom." In that glad coming day the Lord and His people will be united in the common joy of a redeemed creation and enjoy the fruits of His completed Nazariteship here on earth.

It is noteworthy in the ordinance for the renewal of a broken vow (see Num. 6. 11-12) that in addition to the usual sin and burnt offerings, the penitent Nazarite is also commanded to bring a trespass-offering. A thing which would be quite harmless for an ordinary Israelite, becomes a trespass in one who has so specially consecrated himself to the service of Jehovah.

Samson has already been referred to as a Nazarite who sadly failed, but in happy contrast there 'is one other Old Testament character who was likewise destined even before his birth to a path of special holiness before Jehovah—Samuel, the Saviour of Israel ere David came. This remarkable man was able to challenge the whole nation :

"Witness against me, before the Lord, whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? or of whose hand have I received any bribe?" (1 Sam. 12. 3).

Here the literal Nazarite was wonderfully found fulfilling the inner and spiritual meaning of his life-long vow, leaving an example that we, God's people to-day, might well and earnestly desire to follow.

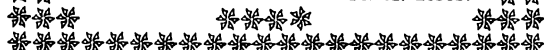


A Morning Prayer.

"Lord Jesus, be, this day, to me,
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen,
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

Amen.

A. A. Rees.



NOTES ON ISAIAH

By F. C. JENNINGS,

Plainfield, U.S.A.

"Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch."

Part I.

SO sang one of our own poets, and he sang truthfully, for always sweet to the ear of faith is the music of prophecy. It was never sounded, and its worth is still rarely appreciated, save in days of depression and declension amid the Lord's people; and whilst it spares not their sins, but exposes them fully, it ever points to a tender grace that is ready to meet and welcome penitence, and to a wisdom that has made provision to meet and welcome it righteously.

If this be true, how peculiarly attractive should dependent and diligent prophetic study be to-day—a day so clearly characterised, not merely by declension, but by incipient apostasy, and filled with gravest portents. We hear amid the nations, self-styled "Christian" boasting of emancipation from the very foundation truths of Christianity, but still we see amid those same nations distress and perplexity for, the "roaring of the sea and the rolling surge": their "emancipation" has not resulted in perfect mutual confidence.

Does it not behove us then to humble ourselves before God, and to beseech Him for that light upon His holy Word that can alone come from Himself as the Father of Lights, that we may cherish no false expectation, nor abandon any true one; but that in quiet and peace amid the turmoil, we may hold fast a divinely accredited confidence that shall never make us ashamed?

In the assurance then *first*, that God's Word has never yet been exhausted; that there are, and ever will be, depths in it still unfathomed; and next, that we need to-day what no other books written by human authors in the past can possibly give us, since they were written in a different combination of events than that in which our lot has fallen, let us enter on our meditations on those portions of the prophet Isaiah that more directly accord with that form of the Gospel committed to Paul, that is "the gospel of the uncircumcision."

ISAIAH! How little that word conveys to our minds! It is but a name given to an individual who lived nearly three thousand years ago; and as far as we get anything of interest or value from it, it might just as well have been anything else.

But is this not merely an unworthy way of treating Scripture, it is really irrational; for this name is simply a compound Hebrew word, and would be as full of simple and clear meaning to an Israelite as are "Worldly-Wiseman," or "Valiant-for-Truth" in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," to us. What reason can there be for ignoring it?

Assume that unrivalled allegory to be translated into Chinese, and these names left in their English form, would the native readers get the significance that the writer intended from them? They would need to be translated as much as any other part of the text. Similarly, if the names in Scripture give evidence of *divinely intended* significance, is it not worse than folly to neglect them? I recognize how limited is our ability, and the danger there is of seeking to make up for that limitation by giving rein to imagination; but, giving full weight to both these objections, candour will find a multitude of Scriptural names as clearly evidencing divine significance as "Jesus," or "Melchizedec, King of Salem" (Heb. 7), and amongst these is that of "Isaiah, the Son of Amoz."

For if we render the word Isaiah into its English equivalent, we get "Jehovah's salvation."

And that this is the very intent of the name being given to this prophet, little as his parents who gave it him may have been conscious of it at the time, is specifically taught us in his eighth chapter and eighteenth verse: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me *are for signs and for wonders* in Israel from the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion." But in what do the signs consist? What, for example, do we know of these children that would make them signs? Not one thing are we told of their doings or sayings; they do nothing, they say nothing that is recorded, we know absolutely nothing of them but their *names*! Surely, then, it is a conclusion that is inevitable that the whole "sign" must be in those names; and indeed we shall find this to be fully justified, if we are permitted to consider them. But this being the case with the children, then their father's name, Isaiah must also be the sign: *Jehovah's salvation*.

And it is indeed; for in that one name is compressed the whole of the contents of the book. All through it, with all its thunderings of stern reprobation of the sin of Israel—the representative of the race as a whole—the words “save” and “salvation” ring like bells of joy, all the more melodious because of the foil of the awe-filling thunderings of judgment that ever precede the sweet melody; as in our own book of prophecy, Revelation, the constantly recurring “lightnings and voices and thunderings” throw into a clear relief the “new song,” the “harpers harping with their harps,” and the God-made tearless scene of endless peace.

But if the name of the prophet and of his children are of such value, is there none at all in that of his progenitor? Surely it is not in vain that we are told that he was “the son of Amoz”; a word translated for us in Psalm 27. 14, “Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart”; to “strengthen” is its prime meaning; while in Deut. 31. 6, 7, 23, and Joshua 1. 6, 7, 9, etc., it is rendered by “be of good courage.” Thus do the simple names of Isaiah, son of Amoz, when interpreted, tell us that “the strength” of faith begets, or results, in “the salvation of Jehovah”; and is not that ever true? Surely those who put aside such significance in the names of Scripture do little honor to the microscopic beauty of the Word of God.

Filled, too, with a significance closely corresponding to these names is the *number* impressed upon the book by its clearly marked divisions.

But in this, too, I am aware that many have an almost invincible distaste to attaching any significance, or deducing any teaching from the numbers of Scripture. Both by temperament and by training they are inclined rather to avoid and reprobate this line of study, than to pursue it. Nor may they lack some grounds for such an attitude in the extravagancies in which some who have followed it may have indulged. But the existence of the spurious is no disproof of the existence of the genuine. Nay, on the contrary, the very existence of a spurious coin is really proof of the existence of the genuine; and the only prudent course is to “prove all, and hold fast that which is good.”

Again, what line of Scripture truth would not have to be abandoned on the same principle? *Prophecy* certainly has been, and is pre-eminently to-day, the sphere of boundless extravagancies; shall we therefore turn a deaf ear to 2 Peter 1. 19, and say, we do well *not* to take heed to it? Alas, many do this; but it is to their own loss. Nor will we then refrain from seeking to discern if there be not a significance in numbers, and in the numerical structure of His word; and the more clearly we see the proof of this divine intent the more will we sing, “Thou Lord hast made me glad through Thy works.” For He who has

imprinted on every minute detail of His works in nature the inimitable imprint of His Finger has done exactly the same with His words, and those who refuse it, do so to their own loss.

“Not a flower

But shows some touch in freckle, streak or stain,
Of His unrivalled pencil,”

Nor are there lacking, guards and limitations that will serve to keep us from error or extravagance. Nor shall we transgress those guards or go beyond those limits in discerning the number clearly marked on Isaiah.

The main divisions are unmistakably clear:

1. Chapters one to thirty-five, in which *Assyria*, and Jehovah’s salvation hold the prominent place.

2. Chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine: Historic interlude, linking the other two.

3. Chapters forty to sixty-six, in which *Babylon*, and Jehovah’s salvation, hold the prominent place.

But not only is the book as a whole thus a trilogy, but each of these parts has the same number *three* imprinted upon it in its subdivisions. Let us take the most evident, first. In the second part, chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine. A child could see that the *first* subdivision consists of chapters thirty-six and thirty-seven; the Assyrian invasion and defeat; the *second*, chapter thirty-eight, the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah; the *third*, chapter thirty-nine, the visit of the *Babylonian* ambassadors: that is surely clear.

The third part, chapters forty to sixty-six is, we may say, even *divinely* divided for us into the following *three* subdivisions:

1. Chapters forty to forty-eight, the terminus marked by the words “*no peace to the wicked.*”

2. Chapters forty-nine to fifty-seven, the terminus again marked by the words “*no peace to the wicked.*”

3. Chapters fifty-eight to the end, in which we see the penalty of “*no peace to the wicked.*”

But Delitzsch who, as far as is evidenced, had no idea of any special significances attached to the number, and therefore had no motive for forcing to attain a preconceived result, writes, “It is equally certain that each of these *three* parts consists of 3 x 3 addresses.” It will not be necessary to specify these at the moment; it is sufficient to recognize that here we have “*three*” cubed, that is in its fullest possible form: telling of the significance of “*3*” in the fullest way.

But turning back now to the first part, a similar structure is marked on chapters one to thirty-five. For here, too, there are quite unmistakably three main divisions, thus:

First, chapters one to six: in which we find is a *threefold* introduction.

Second, chapters seven to twelve: Immanuel and the Assyrian.

Third, chapters thirteen to thirty-five : in which we have another trilogy in "burdens," "woes," and finally "peace."

It becomes absolutely clear then, that this number "three" has been impressed on the book in every part and in the fullest way, and we need only ask what is its significance, again to see the very *Finger of God*, as we may, in an inferior way, see it in the petal of a flower or a butterfly's wing.

To answer this, let me quote from another : "Three is the gospel of cubic measure, or solidity. It stands for what is solid, real, substantial—for fulness, actuality. It is the number of the Persons in the Godhead : *of the divine fulness, therefore ; and until we reach this, God is not fully manifested.* Thus it is the number of manifestation."

But in what way has God been "fully manifested" save in being the Saviour, the righteous Saviour of sinful men ? This, and this only tells out all that He is : for none in all the universe but God could effect it. In this His salvation, are expressed His manifold *wisdom*, the exceeding riches of His *grace*. Here, *mercy*, in all its sweetness, *truth*, in all its purity, "are met together." Here, *righteousness*, as light unreflected and unsullied by the slightest film ; and *peace*, as a river unruffled by one adverse ripple, "kiss each other." In a word, *God is fully manifested as Light and Love* in the salvation of a fallen but beloved race. That is, *three* speaks exactly the same story, gives out the same joyous melody as does the name *Isaiah* : it tells of the *salvation of Jehovah* ! Must we not again say the number has been imprinted on the book by the very Finger of God ?

Thus, too, the book is not sealed, but lies open before us ; or, to employ another figure, the key of the structure has been placed in our hands—we have even found it hanging at the front door, as one may say ; yet not one step can we (nor do we desire to) enter into it, nor tread its courts, nor examine its chambers with profit, till we put our hand dependently and trustfully in His who has given His Spirit to "lead us into all truth," to "take of the things of Christ and show them to us," and "to show us things to come."

Turning then, to the first subdivision of the first main division of the book, we find it made up of chapters one to six : and this, in its turn, clearly, simply, unmistakably divides for us into just three smaller divisions thus : the *first*, introduced by the words, "*the vision*" of Isaiah, chapter one, verse one ; the second vision by "the word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz *saw*," chapter two, verse one ; the third vision by "in the year that King Uzziah died, I *saw* the Lord sitting upon a throne," chapter six, verse one. It thus forms, in three *visions*, or *seings* a three fold introduction to the whole book.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

FOR the evening lesson Mr. Spurgeon. read Rom. x. taking his text in Luke. 8. 18. "*Take heed therefore how ye hear.*" This implies that ye take heed what ye hear, and that ye hear the Gospel.

1. **THE CAUTION.** Do not think it a light and frivolous thing to hear a sermon. Preaching is a solemn work. Luther feared no man ; yet never preached a sermon without his knees knocking together. It is a solemn thing to hear a sermon to profit. It is no light thing to hear amiss, or to miss anything that might be a blessing. A child used to lean forward, so as to hear all the minister had to say. When asked why, she replied, "The minister once said, if there was anything in the sermon, that was likely to do you good, the devil was sure to take your attention off just then. *So I listen to all.*"

2. **RULES.** by which to hear profitably. They are seven, and to aid memory the preacher gave them in alphabetic order.

(a) Hear *Attentively*, and the speaker added, *Retentively*. There was once an errand boy who was very good at delivering messages word for word. When receiving a message he would stand with one hand over his ear : as soon as he had got it, he quickly clapped his other hand over his other ear to prevent the message going in at one ear and out at the other. Get rid of all other thoughts. Retain what you hear ; for if not useful now, it may be at another time. A man heard Flavel preach, and 70 years after was sitting under a hedge in the United States, and remembered it was just 70 years since he heard it, and it was blessed to him.

(b) Hear *Believingly*, and that will lead to obedience.

(c) Hear *Candidly*, without prejudice. Some make up their minds not to hear. Hear for yourself.

(d) Hear *Devoutly*, as listening to God's message.

(e) *Earnestly*, that is spiritually.

(f) Hear *Feelingly*, asking God to impress it upon you.

(g) Hear *Gratefully*.

3. Certain **REASONS** for taking heed how we hear.

1. *It is God's word*, though man delivers it.

2. *It is precious truth*, and may save your soul.

3. *By it you will be judged.*

4. *How many are now in hell*, who listened to saving truth carelessly.

5. *How many on their death-bed*, would be glad to listen.

6. *How many are in Heaven*, through rightly hearing the Gospel.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

AS PRESENTED BY

MATTHEW

The manner of presentation and the ministry of John the Baptist in the different gospels bears a noticeable relation to the character of the presentation and ministry of our Lord. For example in the gospel of John where our Lord is presented as Son of God, whom the Father has sent into the world, John the Baptist is abruptly introduced as "A man sent from God" (Ch. 1. v. 6). In contrast Luke who presents our Lord as Son of Man, and who gives a lengthy account of His birth, also gives in detail the circumstances relating to the birth of John. Again Mark presents our Lord as Jehovah's perfect Servant, so in his introduction he quotes from Mal. ch. 3. v. 1: "Behold I send My Messenger." Last of all Matthew thinks of the King and Kingdom and ch. 3 opens with John appearing in the wilderness preaching "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

MATTHEW.

The prophetic introduction, taken from Isaiah ch. 40, is quoted only in part. It goes no further than his preparing the way of the Lord, making His paths straight. John comes into the wilderness—a place where men wander and finds no city to dwell in,—a place devoid of paths and highways,—a place where no man establishes a kingdom, and in this seemingly profitless waste he begins to tell men of a Kingdom.

The desert is to become an highway there necessarily follows the breaking up process, and laying of foundations. God's foundations are always laid in righteousness, so in Matthew he first unmask the true state of the people, primarily the rulers. It is here we learn of the coming of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who represented the ruling and scholarly classes. They were familiar with the history as well as the prophecy of the nation, and ought to have recognised him. Also his appearance and manner of life ought to have indicated to them who he was. Just similarly was Elijah attired when the messengers of Ahaziah met him in 2 Kings ch. i, and addressing the Pharisees in Matt. ch. xi, after the departure of John's disciples, our Lord says, "And if ye will receive it this is Elias which was to come." Just prior to using these words, which Luke omits, He had been reminding them of the characteristics of the man they had gone out into the wilderness to see.

Here he specially directs his message to the Pharisees and Sadducees, for as the acknowledged guides and rulers they were more responsible.

First of all he puts his finger on their moral condition—"Generation of vipers." Scrupulously careful in avoiding all forms of outward defilement, he unmasks the truth that in their moral veins the poison lurked. Smooth they looked outwardly, as the sand of the desert is smooth, but just as barren. But not only is the viper poisonous. It is subtle, and the Pharisee used subtlety in dealing with our Lord. They took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk, Matt. ch. 22. v. 15, and just as the viper does its deadly work under cover, they did not come themselves, but sent their disciples with the Herodians. Next John sweeps aside their hope in the promises, "Think not to say we have Abraham to our father." The issue has changed, it is no longer their relation to Abraham, it is their relation to the King—the Son of David the Son of Abraham." Lastly he warns them of the futility of mere profession; they must demonstrate the sincerity of their repentance by bringing forth fruits. Later in Matt. 21 the nation is represented as a tree, having leaves but fruitless, the King presented has been refused, and thus by rejection they become not only fruitless but leafless, withered away, a spectacle to passers by.

Like the psalmist in Ps. 45, John can no longer refrain from speaking of the things which he had made touching the King, and, always, when speaking of our Lord, his tongue is the pen of a ready writer. He sees the moral attractiveness and fitness, as well as the power of this One coming after him—"He that cometh after me is mightier than I." Might was associated with God's King. In Ps. 24 the question is asked, "Who is this King of Glory," and the answer is "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Again in Ps. 45. v. 3, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh most mighty." Israel might see in the King presented to them no beauty, as without form or lordliness, Isa. 53. v. 2, N.T., but John saw their King as fairer than the children of men. Continuing in v. 11, he says, "Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." In Mark and John he speaks of his unworthiness to untie the Lord's shoe, which rather implies an act of service. Here he is as one going before the King bearing His shoes, it is more the thought of office. The Pharisees were officially proud of their place in this kingdom which had become but a tributary state in the Roman Empire, but John's office was held in relation to God's King. Again, this One coming after him had the right to execute judgment. John could denounce evil and pronounce judgment, but he did not hold the "fan" and he could not purge the floor Matt. 3. v. 12. The rightful owner held the fan, and He alone would gather His wheat and burn the chaff. How careful he is to distinguish what is the Lord's, from what is not. In Matt. 13. v. 41, our Lord Himself speaks of the time when all things that offend shall be gathered out of His kingdom and all that do iniquity. A.W.B.

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and S. W. Royes.

No. 4.—JUSTIFICATION.

THE subject about to engage us is of great importance. We may trust in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, and derive a certain amount of comfort from thinking of His precious blood and its power to cleanse from all sin. But until the soul knows what it is to be *justified*, there can be no solid peace.

As for those who are not believers, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the matter in their case. For justification lies at the very threshold of all true blessing. None can enter heaven save those who are justified from their guilt. Let me therefore bespeak the earnest attention of all to the questions asked and the replies given.

What sort of people are they whom God justifies ?

I have no doubt that many would say, “ Good people,” or “ People who do their best.” But we would discard human opinions, and turn to God’s Word for light. The apostle Paul speaks of God under a very sweet title in Romans iv. 5: “ *Him that justifieth the ungodly.*” The ungodly, then, are the people whom God is prepared to justify.

An illustration of this is found in the case of two men who went up to the temple to pray. One was religious, and his religion greatly affected his life and conduct. It kept him from many an act of extortion, injustice, and immorality. Eight times in every month he observed a rigid fast. He regularly tithed his income, and devoted the proceeds to the service of God.

The other did not belong to the religious class. A sinner indeed he was, and he made no secret of it. Even as he ventured into the temple he felt his unfitness to be there and, standing afar off, he hung down his head in evident shame.

Which of these two men, think you, was more likely to be justified? The Lord Jesus, speaking of the latter, the irreligious, ungodly sinner, says, “ I tell you, *this man* went down to his house **JUSTIFIED** rather than the other ” (Luke xviii. 14).

Yes, it is the guilty, the sinful, and the vile whom God justifies when they acknowledge their condition and turn to Him. Those who imagine themselves to be “ just persons, which need no repentance,” remain unjustified and unblest.

What is the difference between justification and forgiveness ?

Forgiveness is the removal of the *penalty* of our sins; justification is the removal of the very *charge* of guilt that once lay at our door.

We shall understand the difference better if we pay an imaginary visit to a court of justice. Two prisoners are being tried for theft. The first has many witnesses to prove that he was miles away when the offence was committed. His innocence is completely established. In acquitting him the judge says, “ The prisoner leaves the court without a stain upon his character.” In other words, being innocent, he is *justified*.

Not so the other. But there are extenuating circumstances. He is young; it is his first offence, and others seem to have drawn him into the act against his better judgment. The judge addresses a few serious words of warning to the prisoner and discharges him. No penalty is inflicted, and he leaves the court a free man. In a word, he is *forgiven*. But, though forgiven, he is not cleared of the charge.

Now that illustration will help us to see the difference between justification and forgiveness. But we must remember that amongst men, only the *innocent* can be justified and the *guilty* forgiven. Solomon realised this when praying at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii.). In verse 32 he prays: “ Hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants, condemning the wicked, . . . and *justifying the righteous.*” Then in verse 34 he prays again: “ Hear Thou in heaven, and *forgive the sin* of Thy people Israel.

Mark that! Justification for the righteous and forgiveness for those who sin.

But the glory of the gospel is that it shows how God can do what is impossible amongst men. He can justify the *ungodly*, and that when there are *no extenuating circumstances*. He can take a vile, depraved sinner, and not only forgive him, but clear him of every charge so completely that the challenge may be rung out and be for ever unanswerable: “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth ” (Rom. viii. 33).

If it is God that justifies, why is it said that we are justified by faith ?

Faith is simply the principle upon which God justifies. If God declares Himself ready to justify ungodly sinners, it stands to reason that He must state the principle upon which He will do it, and the principle must be one that makes it clear to all that it is of *grace* from first to last. This is why it is "by faith," or why, in the words of Romans iii. 26, God is the justifier of "him which believeth in Jesus."

It is thus "faith," and not works, or vows, or prayers, that is counted for righteousness, but it is *God* who counts it as such. It is His act altogether.

We read that Christ "was raised again for our justification." What has the resurrection of Christ to do with our being justified ?

Everything! It is the hinge on which the whole matter hangs. Suppose that I were convicted of some offence and sentenced to pay a fine of twenty pounds. Utterly unable to find the money, imprisonment stares me in the face. A friend, however, steps forward and undertakes to pay the fine for me. But until the money is forthcoming, either my friend or myself must be detained. My friend, having taken upon himself my liability, remains until a messenger can arrive from the bank with the twenty pounds, and I am allowed to go out.

Anxiously I pace up and down in front of the court-house. Presently the messenger arrives from the bank and enters the building. In a few minutes my friend himself joins me. At once my anxiety is over. The fact of his re-appearance proves that every claim of the court has been met. I am now a free man indeed, *because my substitute is free.*

It is hardly necessary to point out the application of this little parable. You and I are the offenders, subject to the judgment of God. Christ has offered Himself as our Substitute, and upon the cross He met the claims of justice on our behalf. *He paid the fine for us.* Was His payment sufficient? Did God accept it as a full discharge of all our liabilities? Before He died He cried, "It is finished." He gave His all, His life, His blood; but *was it enough?*

Out from the grave He came on the morning of the third day. The question was answered. *It was enough.* The One who had taken our sins upon Him was free! *Then we are free also!*

Thus the resurrection of Christ lies at the basis of our justification. Of course, when I say "our," I mean believers" "He was raised again for *our* justification."

In Romans iii. 28 it says that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." How do you reconcile that with James ii. 24, where we read that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?"

The two passages do not need reconciling. Sometimes people imagine that they have discovered contradictory statements in Scripture, but the flaw is in their own understanding, not in the Word of God.

In the present case the difficulty disappears when it is seen that in Romans it is *justification before God* that is spoken of, while in James the subject is *justification before men*. The two things are placed in contrast in Romans iv., and in verse 2 emphasis is laid upon the fact that justification by works is "*not before God.*"

God takes note of the believer's faith, and reckons it to him for righteousness. But faith is invisible to the eyes of men. If they challenge us as to our ground for professing to be pardoned and saved, children of God and heirs with Christ, we cannot simply reply, "We have faith." We must justify ourselves for the place that we take otherwise than by words. Zophar once asked, "Should a man full of talk be justified?" (Job xi. 2). No, indeed. Not good talkers, but good walkers are justified in the sight of their fellow-men. Not by lip, but by life; not by words, but by works, can we carry conviction to others that we are what we say we are.

With this side of the truth James deals. Paul, too, in some of his epistles, notably that to Titus, lays much weight upon the importance of good works, not as an auxiliary means to our justification before God, but as a testimony to men, and for the sake of "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour."

Let no one, however, begin to talk about good works before he is sure that he is justified from all things, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read of being "justified by grace" (Rom. iii. 24), "justified by faith" (Rom. iii. 28), and "justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9). Are we to conclude that a man needs to be justified three times?

By no means. The three expressions convey different thoughts, but they all refer to the same act. The grace of God is the *source* of our very blessing; the blood of Christ is the channel by means of which it reaches us, while faith is simply the appropriation of it all to ourselves.

Let me illustrate what I mean. This city is supplied with water from the mountains yonder. There is an abundant supply there for the whole place. Pipes are laid, leading to the houses of the people, and when anyone wants water, all he has to do is to turn on the tap.

The reservoir, containing an inexhaustible supply of water, is like grace. God's grace is the spring and source of all blessing. In this sense we are "justified by His grace."

The pipes are the means by which the water is brought to our doors, just as the blood of Christ is the means by which God's grace is made available for sinners. We are thus "justified by His blood."

And what is "justified by faith"? Faith is *coming with the empty vessel and turning on the tap*. It is the appropriation to one's self of the blessing which originates in the grace of God, and is made possible for us by the blood of Jesus.

Bildad the Shuhite asked : " How can man be justified with God ? " How would you answer that question ?

The first thing is to *cease justifying one's self*. " *Ye are they which justify yourselves,*" said the Lord Jesus to the Pharisees, and as long as a man does that *God* will not justify him. When we cease trying to justify ourselves, we *justify God* in His judgment upon us because of sin. " *The publicans justified God,*" we read, and this was the very opposite of what the Pharisees did. Condemning one's self and justifying God thus go hand in hand. We take sides with God against ourselves, and acknowledge the truth of His verdict upon us as guilty, vile, hell-deserving sinners. That is the first step.

Besides this, we have to look right away from ourselves to Christ. *To believe in Jesus* is to be justified from all things (Rom. iii. 26; Acts xiii, 39. When we learn what His death has accomplished for us, and how His resurrection declares us clear from every charge, we understand what it is to be justified, and "peace with God" is the blessed result (Rom. v. i).

Christians, alas ! are sometimes very inconsistent in their walk. Do such Christians continue to be justified people ?

If none were justified but those in whose conduct there are no flaws, you would have to search a long time before you could discover a justified man.

But let us see how the Christians at Corinth were spoken of. Their conduct was far from perfect. They had laid themselves open to rebuke upon matters connected with the first principles of morality. Nevertheless, in the most unqualified way, the apostle Paul could say of them, " *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified*" (1 Cor. vi. 11). Notice that these words are addressed to them immediately after a scathing rebuke for their contentiousness. True, they were reminded that they were washed, sanctified, and justified in order that they might flee the things from which they had been washed. But they are not told, in view of their sin, that

they *had to be* washed again, sanctified again, and justified again. Their justification is spoken of as a thing that was completed once for all, and that fact is the basis upon which an appeal for a consistent, godly walk can be framed.

How may anyone know for certain that he is justified ?

A scripture that we have already referred to supplies a full and clear answer. Turn to Acts xiii. 39, and you will read these words : " *By Him*" (that is Jesus) " *all that believe are justified from all things.*" I don't think any words of mine could make it plainer than that.

Do not regard these words merely as a saying of Paul's. They are God's words, recorded in God's Book for the blessing of our souls.

Now **WHAT** is it that God says in this verse ? That all who believe **ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS**.

OF **WHOM** is it said that they are justified from all things ? Of **ALL THAT BELIEVE**.

In view of this wonderfully clear and simple statement, clothed as it is with all the authority of God Himself, let me ask everyone here a question : Are you justified from all things ?

If you stand within the circle of " *all that believe,*" you can truly say, " *Thank God, I am.*"

And if anyone should ask you how you know it, you can reply, " *God says that 'all that believe' are justified. I am one of those of whom He speaks, a believer in Jesus, so I am justified.*" How happy when one is simple and childlike enough to take God at His word !

How can God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, be righteous in justifying an ungodly sinner ?

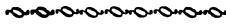
That is a problem indeed ! But, thank God, the solution is to be found in the cross of Christ. The demands of justice were fully satisfied by His blood, and the way opened for God to justify and bless ungodly sinners without compromising His character as a God of holiness and truth.

God's object, from the world's foundation, was the blessing of man, and this object has been attained, not by minimising in the least degree His judgment against sin, but by One being provided who was able to bear that judgment, in all its severity, and exhaust it.

No one, in view of Calvary, can say that sin is a light matter in God's sight. He has made it clear to the universe that He has an infinite abhorrence of evil, and that He does not, and cannot, bless men apart from the claims of justice being satisfied. The blessing that He offers is offered *righteously*. The work of Christ has glorified God in such a way that He is just, as well as gracious, in justifying the ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus.

For how long is a believer justified?

For as long as Christ is on the throne of God, The believer's justification will last until Christ goes back to the cross of Calvary and *undoes* the work which He did there. And when will that be? Never! That work remains in all its abiding efficacy. The One who performed it has been raised from the grave and seated at God's right hand. As long as *He* is there, and as long as *His work* retains its efficacy, for so long will the weakest believer in Him be "justified from all things." No change in us, no failure in our conduct, no coldness of heart, no feelings of despondency can either displace Him from the throne or diminish the value of His work. Then, thank God, they cannot impair our justification. Notwithstanding our failures and our shortcomings, we are as clear of our sins before the eye of God as Christ is.



"Benjamin"

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf".

Gen. 49.27.

"Of Benjamin he said The Beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him".

Deut. 33. 12.

THESE Scriptures give us two entirely different views of one and the same person; the former a picture of what he is by nature, the latter, what he is by grace. In the former, Jacob, the father of Benjamin, standing at the very portals of eternity, tells his sons what shall befall them at the end of days. The pictures given are faithful and true. No attempt is made to conceal anything unfavorable. No mere fleshly feeling governs the speaker. Reuben, Simeon and Levi are presented in a way that leaves no room for doubt as to this.

"Judah is a young lion . . . Zebulun will dwell at the shore of the seas . . . Issachar is a bony ass . . . Dan will be a serpent . . . Naphtali is a hind let loose . . . Joseph is a fruitful bough . . . Benjamin—as a wolf will he tear in pieces." Such are the descriptions of Jacob's sons as given by their own father. But it is only the last of these that we wish to consider just now.

"Benjamin—is a wolf." Now the wolf never symbolizes anything good in Scripture. He is a waster (Jer. 5. 6), ravening the prey (Ezek. 22. 27), leaving nothing for the morning (Zeph. 3. 3). And all of the New Testament references tell the same story. Such is Benjamin by nature. And the history of his tribe gives solemn proof of this.

The horrible crime committed by that tribe (Judges 19) was such that all who "saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt to this day." And when the other tribes enquired about this wickedness the children of Benjamin answered by gathering themselves together "to go out to battle against the children of Israel" and on one day they "destroyed down to the ground" 22,000 men. On the second day "they destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again 18,000 men." Finally, the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel until almost the whole tribe was blotted out.

But it was not utterly destroyed. From the remnant remaining came the first king of Israel, Saul, the son of Kish. It is a matter of history how this man pursued the man after God's own heart and threatened his life on more than one occasion True, he did repent at times, but "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God." It cannot be trusted: no matter how good its resolutions may be. Saul's hatred of David never really ended until he fell on Mount Gilboa by his own sword.

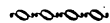
The New Testament presents another son of Benjamin, Saul of Tarsus. Our first view of him is quite in keeping with all that we have seen thus far in the Old Testament. He tells us himself that he excessively persecuted the assembly of God, and ravaged it. As a wolf, he tore and devoured the prey until one day, on the Damascus road, while yet breathing threatenings and slaughter, the proud Pharisee experienced the first workings of that divine grace which transformed him and made of him a new creature in Christ Jesus. Like the demoniac of Gadara, time was when no man could tame him; but from this point on, he answers to the description of his great ancestor s given by Moses in Deut. 33. 12. "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by Him; He will cover him all the day long, and He shall dwell between His shoulders." Divine love had won his heart. The life which he now lives in the flesh he lives by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. Nor does he selfishly claim this for himself only, but when writing to the brethren in Rome he salutes them as the "beloved of God." To be known as such is the birthright of every child of God. What a contrast to our former estate! As we contemplate it we exclaim with adoring wonder, "What hath God wrought?"



Testing times are trusting times.



Great works are but small ones greatly done.



Wolves worry, fools weary, but shepherds feed the sheep.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXVII.

“ And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin :
For I feared thee; because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.” (Luke 19. 22-21).

THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT.

WE have now come to what is generally admitted to be the most difficult portion of our subject. You will have noticed in Luke 19 that there was a servant to whom one pound was given who at his Lord's return had that same pound to show, and likewise in Matthew 25 one to whom but a single talent was given and who merely returned that same talent at the end. It is one of the few parts of the two parables that are similar, and which teach the same lesson in each case.

The essence of the difficulty lies in the question as to whether this unprofitable servant represents a true believer or a mere professor? Read the two portions carefully, and thoughtfully, in the light of all other scripture and little doubt remains.

Let us assume first that a true believer is set forth here, and we at once ask ourselves

(1) Whether a real child of God would speak of His Master as a hard and austere man, reaping where He had not sown, and gathering where He had not strawed? In the light of all we have previously noticed we should rather say that His servants are privileged to reap the fruit of His sowing, and gather as a result of His toil. He is by no means a hard taskmaster, but rather is His yoke easy, and His burden light.

(2) Secondly no true child of God will ever hear from the lips of His Lord such words as “Thou wicked and slothful servant” but rather shall “Every man have praise of God” in that day when only His own shall appear before Him.

(3) Thirdly, no true child of God shall ever be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is the portion only of those who receive not the truth. The believer is in the hand of Omnipotence and *no one* is able to pluck

them out of His hand. One can scarcely imagine any more foolish suggestion than that this unprofitable servant should represent a true believer.

Having seen then from a threefold view-point that a child of God he cannot be, let us now seek to examine carefully the other aspect and see if we are correct in our assumption that a mere false professor is here depicted.

Possibly the cause of much of the misunderstanding of these two parables lies in the fact that we fail to marshal together all the statements in God's Word concerning this class of people. More is said of them than we sometimes care to think, and the more we ponder some of these passages, the more we can see how fine the distinction, how minute the dividing line, between the false and the real. The adversary who is a master counterfeiter can so well imitate the real that you and I are often deceived into believing a mere professor to be a real possessor, and on the other hand, of doubting whether a real possessor may not, after all, only be a mere professor. Who can tell but *God alone*. Ever remember that.

God knows better than we, and therefore He says “The Lord looketh on the heart”—Man on the outward appearance. “The Lord *knoweth* them that are His,” but “By their *fruits* YE shall know them.”

Ever remember that the only means we on earth have of judging whether any person is a child of God, or not, is

- (a) By their own confession.
- (b) By the life and testimony.

The two may, or may not, agree, and we may, or may not, therefore be right in any opinion we form, or judgment we make. How careful therefore we must be to judge nothing before the time.

It is rather striking in these two parables to notice that neither of the other successful servants were in the least concerned about this false professor. They were *too busy*, seeking to do their Master's bidding, to be occupied with his failures and failings.

"Son GO WORK in my vineyard," is a very necessary word to-day when so many are more concerned with what others are NOT doing, than what they themselves *should* be doing if they would gain a full reward at their Lord's return.

There's no time for idle scorning,
While the days are going by,
Let your face be like the morning,
While the days are going by :
Oh, the world is full of sighs,
Full of sad and weeping eyes ;
Help your fallen brother rise,
While the days are going by !

We will therefore now carefully look together at what the scriptures say about this unprofitable servant in each parable, and seek to marshal together a few scriptures bearing on the same topic and see the solemn truths which are therein revealed to us.

As before mentioned, both the servants—he of Matthew 25 and he of Luke 19, are so much alike, that in studying the one we shall study the other, and what is said of one will be true of the other.

It does not now concern us whether it be a pound or a talent, for in each case it was one only. The all-important point is now, as it was with the other servants—

"WHAT WAS DONE WITH THE GIFT?"

In Matthew 25, 24. 25 we read—

"Lord I knew Thee . . . and I was afraid and went and hid Thy talent in the earth."

In Luke 19. 20 we read—

"Lord behold here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin."

We have already noticed that this servant had

(1) Wrong thoughts of his Master. He did not know His heart, or he would never have spoken of Him as "hard and austere." How like those who know not our God! What wrong thoughts they have of Him, and how harsh and severe they imagine Him to be, whereas all those who really know our God, know of a truth that He is the personification of love, and of all that is gentle, kind and true. Can we not almost test our own spiritual standing by our thoughts of God. The unsaved man is fearful and like Adam seeks to hide and avoid his Maker, but the child of God knows the Father's heart and ever seeks to be in His company. Yea, "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17. 3.)

(To be continued)

SPURGEON'S SERMONS AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

REMEMBRANCES.

MR. SPURGEON took for his text the heading of Psalm 38. "*A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance.*" Things to be remembered.

1. David remembered *his past trials and deliverances*. This will do you good; for it will prevent you thinking you have reached the land of rest: for you may expect the same again. It will refresh your memory of God's goodness, and make you thankful. It will cheer you, if now you are in similar circumstances.

2. David brings to remembrance *his natural depravity*, for his words do not apply to leprosy, or any other disease. Remember you are by nature no better than others. Remember there is still the force of sin within you. The speaker described this in very strong terms: and the believer sometimes thinks and says very strong things of himself, so that the world thinks he must be very bad; but it is not because he is worse than others; *but sees it*. A man in the water can bear an immense weight of water on his head; but take him out of the elements, and a pail full will be heavy. So a sinner, in the element of sin, does not notice it; but, if he is taken out of it, he feels very little. John Bradford said, as he saw a criminal taken to execution, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God." A Scotsman, who came to see Rowland Hill, sat looking at him, until Rowland Hill asked, "What are you looking at?" "The lines in your face." "And what do you make of them?" "Why, if the grace of God had not saved you, you would have been a great rogue." "And you are right," said Mr. Hill.

3. David brings to remembrance *his many enemies*. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me; and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long." (Psalm 38. 12). We are sure to have them, though we try to live peaceably with all men—enemies that will seek to turn us aside.

4. David calls to remembrance *his gracious God*. "Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation." Think how much you owe Him, and of the work the Holy Spirit has undertaken in subduing your sin.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

or

THE STORY OF PAT. Part III.

A MISSIONARY sister in far-away China, who had read the first part of the Story of Pat, wrote sending a gift of £1 towards our New Hall, and with her gift the following message: "I hope to come to England this Summer, and I shall want to see what God hath wrought." Knowing the interest which our readers have shewn in this remarkable work we feel sure that our missionary friend was expressing the mind of many, in her question, therefore we take this early opportunity of telling you of the opening of our new Hall.

had almost as many prayers and all for one theme—blessing on that night's service. It is a long day since we were in such a prayer meeting as that, and we felt God's hand was with us indeed.

Then came the long awaited evening. At 6.15 p.m. our Young Converts began to gather: over forty were present that evening. By 6.30 p.m. when the chorus singing began, two hundred people were in the Hall, and by the time the Service was in full swing over three hundred had gathered. Many Christian friends were among this number, but more than half were local people.

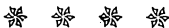


Exterior of Hall.



Interior of Hall.

To any unacquainted with the earlier portions of the story we shall be pleased to forward a leaflet free of cost, telling how this work began. It is one of the most encouraging fields of service we have ever known.



At long last, Sunday, April 15th, dawned. It had been an anxious week, for only by good weather and God's over-ruling hand could the Builders possibly finish and have the Hall ready in time. As it was, they left on the Saturday, at 3 p.m., giving us an unique and wonderful building as will be seen by the illustrations above. We had no idea what our attendances would be. That there was a need for the Hall we *knew*—the Hall had been built for the district—but whether the district as a whole would respond, we did *not* know. Many of our Christian friends advised a week-day opening, in order that they could come, but we did not feel that that would be in the best interests of *the district*, therefore we gave the people living in our midst, and for whom the Hall had been built, the preference, and announced the opening for 6.45 p.m. on Sunday evening. At 8 o'clock that morning a Prayer Meeting was held, when over 80 believers from at least twelve assemblies gathered for prayer. In less than forty minutes we

"HE CARETH FOR YOU"

was Mr. Gavin Hamilton's message, and a real heart to heart talk was heard that night. All through the next fortnight well over one hundred gathered night by night and as we go to press we have just passed our third Lord's Day. The first had the glamour of the opening, but the second had lost this with its attendant visitors from other places, but to our great joy and delight over two hundred local people were at that service and most of them unconverted. What a congregation in these days! The following Sunday evening there was a Baptismal Service when four believers followed their Lord in baptism. Well nigh three hundred and fifty local people were present, and six at least trusted the Saviour that night. Truly we may ask "*What hath God wrought?*" We give Him all the praise and glory for such an answer to our prayers and for thus cheering and encouraging us in this great work. What the future holds we do not know, but *your* prayers with *ours* will tell their tale. During the mission some thirty-six souls passed from death unto life that we know of, and many more under conviction. The news of a "little child" who had trusted the Saviour more

(Continued on page 72.)

SAVED TO SERVE.

by

A. GARDNER, HEREFORD.

PAUL the apostle to the Gentiles, was one of Christ's pattern men, an illustrious example of what the grace of God can do. His sins were pardoned, his transgressions blotted out, and his fetters broken when he who was known as Saul the Pharisee experienced the great joy of becoming the Lord's free man. Nevermore would he be known as Saul the destroyer, henceforth he would be acknowledged as Paul the builder. Indelibly written by the finger of God upon the inmost recesses of his now great loyal, loving heart were the words of his life's motto: "For to me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1. 21). He could truly assert of his new and divine Master, "Whose I am and whom I serve." (Acts 27. 23).

He knew himself an object of divine mercy, that by grace he was saved, and that by the same grace he was also taught, that he might teach others, to "Live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." (Tit. 2. 12). At the very commencement of his Christian life he learned the important lesson that he was saved, to live for, and to serve his royal Master.

The Son of God was his great Deliverer. In the sacred moments of a remarkable life-giving and life-transforming transaction the ascended Saviour captivated his soul, and entwined around Himself a heart once filled with hatred both to Himself and His devoted followers. In return for such unmerited love he manifested his gratitude by continuous, costly and strenuous activity in the self-denying, albeit honourable, work of the Lord. He was a man who truly abounded in devoted service, and who ever made his risen Lord's interests his own.

Privately from house to house, and publicly as doors were opened for him by God, he went and fearlessly proclaimed the blessed Gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ; his aim being usually to penetrate into those regions which had not been reached with the tidings of redeeming love. His was indeed a noble example! May we follow him as he followed Christ.

From those early days to the present, the same compassionate love has been drawing men to the Saviour, to receive salvation, and then sending them forth with thankful hearts and changed lives on a heavenly mission, to take to their fellows the messages of pardon which have brought into their own lives such unspeakable peace and joy. Many of these are appointed to special lines of services by the Lord of the harvest, whilst others have given to

them a ministry of an all-round character, to work both privately and publicly among saved and unsaved. All the Lord's work is important, it is a work of faith and a labour of love, for which the call and the qualifications are needed.

It is sad that in these days much is proclaimed as the Gospel which is but a miserable perversion of it. Then there are some who so jumble together law and grace, which are as opposite as the poles, that both lose their significance and appeal. There are also others, good well-meaning souls, who through the lack of the careful study of the Word of God, and the scarcity of those teachers who rightly divide it, are continually preaching a very deficient Gospel. Hence the appalling need for the clear presentation of the Gospel in all its simplicity, purity, fulness and power.

We may often sing with fellow believers, "To the work, to the work, we are servants of God" but we need to bear in mind that singing of the work is not doing it. Our Lord surely expects more of us than being a testimony for Him in our own homes, and aiding His work where we reside. There is still the great beyond, the guilty, sobbing sin-bound world to be thought of, mourned over, and reached with the tidings of salvation.

It is well to rejoice in the fact that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but do we even in a small measure try to grasp the meaning of the unspeakably solemn conclusion of the same verse, "He that believeth not shall be judged." (Mark 16. 16). Let us lay to heart the fact that these tremendous words refer to those living in our own neighbourhood, to those in the adjacent villages and towns, and also to the teeming millions beyond the seas, living either in the folly and pride of twentieth century civilisation, or in the dense darkness of gross heathenism, all alike without hope and without God.

Let us by all means continue to sing and pray about God's work, yet let us remember that it is only as we individually face the staggering truth, that myriads are hourly dying without the knowledge of the Saviour, to reach whom little or no effort is being made. Surely these have some claim upon us. We may not be called ourselves to go, but we have the privilege of being "Labourers together with God." (1 Cor. 3. 9), and fellow helpers with those who have heard the call and gone forth with the glorious light of the Gospel. We may help by our prayers, our sympathy, and also as enabled by God in a practical manner with our means.

A. GARDNER.



WHICH ARE YOU?

A Christian worker is GOOD,
A worker in Christ is BETTER,
Christ in a worker is BEST.

The Conversion of Children.

ONE of the greatest mistakes our churches and Sunday schools are making to-day is their failure to see the importance of the conversion of children, and their lack of definite and energetic attempts to bring the children to acceptance of Jesus Christ. There are five points to be emphasized upon this subject.

1.—CHILDREN NEED TO BE CONVERTED.

There are many who do not believe that. They talk about the children "Growing up into the kingdom," but unless the children accept Jesus Christ and are born again they are not in the kingdom, and cannot grow up into it. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3). The word translated "man" literally means "anyone" and the passage should read, "Except anyone (that is, man, woman or child) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Children are naturally religious, they love to read the Bible and listen to Bible stories, they love to sing hymns and pray and talk about Jesus, and many are deceived by that fact. But natural religion is not enough. Every child needs to see that he is a sinner and that he needs an atoning Saviour, and that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour that he needs. He needs to be led to accept Jesus Christ as his own Saviour, surrender to Him as Lord, and confess Him as such before the world. If he does this he will be born again and be saved and safe. Natural religion will not stand the stress to which everyone's religion is to be subject to sooner or later. There are thousands of men and women to-day utterly godless, who were very religious in their childhood, but they had only natural religion, and so when the stress came they fell away.

2.—CHILDREN CAN BE GENUINELY CONVERTED.

Many do not believe this. When they see children confess Christ in evangelistic meetings they say, "These children don't know what they are doing." Doubtless in some instances they do not, but in many instances they do, in far more instances than most of us believe.

In 1883 I went into Newman Hall's Church, in London. In the after meeting a gentleman asked me if I knew E. P. Hammond. I replied that I did, and I felt like adding I did not think much of him; for between my middle and senior year in

the seminary I had gone into two of Hammond's children's meetings, and was disgusted with the whole business, and thought the children did not know what they were doing. So I felt like saying that I did not think very much of him, but in a minute or two I was glad I did not say it, for he said, "When E. P. Hammond was in this church fifteen years ago, hundreds of children were converted, and they are the pillars in the church to-day." That changed my opinion of E. P. Hammond and his children's meetings.

Also the best workers in England to-day are men and women who were converted thirty-five years or so ago as children when D. L. Moody was holding meetings in England. If the men and women who were converted as children under D. L. Moody, were taken out of the churches of England to-day, the backbone of the Christian work in England would be broken.

There are many who say that a child ought to be left to grow up "Unbiased" until he is old enough to decide for himself whether he wishes to be a Christian or not. This may be considered wise, but it is the most utter foolishness. Anyone who knows anything about the life of children, knows that no child grows up unbiased. If we do not bias our children strongly for Christ then they will be biased against Him long before they are twenty years old. I would not dare send a son of mine to any modern high school or college unless he was a very strong and intelligent Christian before he entered.

3.—IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN BE CONVERTED.

1. Because it is so easy to convert children.

It is the easiest to lead a child from five to ten years of age to a definite acceptance of Christ. It is harder to lead a child between ten and fifteen years to Christ. But it is easier to lead a child between ten and fifteen than it is one between fifteen and twenty. And it is easier to lead a child between fifteen and twenty to Christ than a young person between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. The younger you begin with the children the easier the work will be, and the more satisfactory.

2. Because persons converted as children make the best Christians.

Every year that one remains away from Christ he learns habits and modes of thought and conduct that he has to unlearn after he is converted. I rejoice in the work done by rescue missions, where we see the wrecks of manhood and womanhood changed into noble men and women. But this is not the work that produces the most satisfactory Christians. The younger we get a child to accept Christ, and begin Christian training, the more beautiful the product.

3. Because children make the best workers.

I have seen this to be a fact around the world. When a child is converted I take it for granted that he is going to go to work at once. When a man is converted, I don't know whether he will go to work or not.

A little girl of eleven was converted in our first mission in Liverpool. When we went to Liverpool for our second mission, the vicar of one of the churches wrote me saying, "We have in our parish a little girl who was converted in your first mission in Liverpool and she has been an angel of light in the whole parish. I know of sixty-seven persons whom she has led to Christ in the past year."

4. Because they have so many years to serve Christ.

If a man is converted at the age of sixty and a boy at ten and they both live to be seventy, the man will have ten years in which to serve Christ and the boy will have sixty. The boy's conversion is as much more important than the man's, as sixty is greater than ten.

5. Because if the children are not converted as children, some will never be converted.

The overwhelming majority in our churches to-day were converted before twenty years of age. This is not because Christianity is a childish thing. It is because every year that one remains away from Christ after he is seven or eight years old, he becomes more entangled in sin and worldliness and every year it becomes harder for him to break away. If we should take out of our churches all those who were converted before they were twenty-one years of age, there would not be enough members left to man the churches.

6. Because if they are not converted as children most of them will be lost for ever.

There are in Chicago to-day hundreds and thousands of children, who if they are not converted as children will spend eternity in hell, for it is certain they will not be converted as adults. If we realize this as we ought, would we not give ourselves as we have never done before to the conversion of the children?

4. CONVERTED CHILDREN SHOULD JOIN THE CHURCH.

When an adult is converted we are very anxious to get him into the church as soon as possible, but when a child is converted, we try to keep him out. This policy is madness. People ask, is the child thoroughly converted? Will he stand fast? Why don't we say that about adults? Because we want their money and their influence in the church. This is a shameful thing to be forced to say, but facts warrant it. When a child is born into our home do we leave that child outside the home on

the porch, saying if the child is truly born it will not starve or freeze? Why then should we pursue this mad policy about the children that are born again? Why do we not give more attention to them than we do even to the adults?

5. CONVERTED CHILDREN SHOULD BE TRAINED.

Here again the church is making a great mistake. When we take the children into the church we make no systematic attempts to train them in Christian doctrines and Christian lives. The old catechetical method was not perfect, but it was far better than the method we pursue at present. Children received into the Church should be arranged in classes and trained in the fundamental truths of the gospel and the great principles of Christian conduct. This should be done patiently and with untiring efforts. If we had done this in the past there would not have been the deadness and destitution that there is in our churches to-day. Hundreds of men and women who are now leaders in commercial and political affairs were once Sunday School children, and if the Sunday School and church had led them to a definite acceptance of Christ and then trained them in Christian doctrine and conduct and service, they would have been even a greater power in the church than they are in commercial affairs and politics. Whatever your assembly does, let it do its full duty regarding the children.

(Moody Monthly Magazine, March 1934).

A MOMENT IN THE MORNING.

A moment in the morning, ere the cares of day begin,
Ere the heart's wide door is open for the world to enter in;
Ah, then alone with Jesus in the silence of the morn,
In heavenly sweet communion let your duty day be born.
In the quietude that blesses, in the prelude of repose,
Let your soul be soothed and softened, as the dew revives the rose.

A moment in the morning, take your Bible in your hand,
And catch a glimpse of glory from the peaceful promised land;
It will linger still before you when you seek the busy mart,
And like flowers of hope will blossom into beauty in your heart;
The precious words like jewels will glisten all the day,
With a rare, effulgent beauty that will brighten all the way.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART V. CHAPTER 7.

HERE is a portion of Holy Scripture that we are sorely tempted to skip over, both in general reading and detailed studying. Twelve times certain details are set forth, and at first sight the constant repetition is apt to look wearisome. But like some of those chapters that consist solely of a list of names, the purpose for inclusion in the Scriptures becomes manifest upon fuller consideration. The reason for such a section as Ezra 2 is undoubtedly that every individual who responded to the call of God in that day was precious to Him, and He would have his name enshrined in His Wonderful Word. So it is here. Twelve representative men, one for each of the tribes, made certain similar offerings to Jehovah for the service of His House. But as the writer of the Gospel story is careful to tell us that the Lord Jesus loved "Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," giving each the due place, so here the Lord received and individually appreciated the several gifts of these princes of Israel, and would have the full particulars of each one's offering set out. The offerings were twofold. First the princes supplied the waggons and oxen whereby the heavier portions of the Tabernacle might be carried through the waste wilderness, and secondly, the vessels required for the service of the newly dedicated altar were provided by them.

This clearly has a word to us to-day. Not only are we in the enjoyment of the Divine Presence when we are met together in the Assembly, but we have both the privilege and responsibility of providing means whereby that presence may be manifested in this wilderness world. Then as regards that true spiritual worship, of which the Golden altar is a figure, it is not enough for the possibility of such worship to exist, we must see to it that worship shall actually ascend to God whose due it is.

"By Him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name.
(Heb. 13. 15).

Here is the list of the offerings that each of the twelve princes brought:

- 1 Silver charger of 130 shekels,
- 1 Silver bowl of 70 shekels—both filled with flour,
- 1 Gold spoon of 10 shekels—filled with incense,

- 1 Bullock,
- 1 Ram,
- 1 Lamb of the first year } these 3 for the burnt offering,
- 1 Kid of the goats—this for the sin offering,
- 2 Oxen,
- 5 Rams,
- 5 He goats,
- 5 Lambs of the first year—these for the peace offering.

Note that provision is made here for the whole range of offerings according to the first chapters of Leviticus, with the exception of the Trespass Offering. When it is remembered that the Trespass Offering is needed particularly for definite offences its absence here can be understood. (See note in reference to renewal of the Nazarite's vow in the previous article).

These offerings were brought on the day in which Moses set up the Tabernacle itself (Ex. 40. 17), and provided the appropriate means for each tribe to be brought into ceremonial suitability with the presence of their God.

Whether or not the unity of offering here manifest was the result of individual instructions or general agreement we are not told, but we do know that in the Antitype at Pentecost, every one of the gathered company were filled with the same glorious appreciation of the worth of the Risen Christ, and with one voice they joined in grateful worship to Him.

The closing verse of this long chapter is particularly noteworthy:

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubins: and He spake unto him."

Here is the result of accepted sacrifice. This is no longer the thunderous Voice that so terrified Israel as they first gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai, rather the words of One who now graciously directs and cares for His redeemed people all along their way. It well prepares us for the instruction that follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8.

Although there is a strong resemblance between this section and chapter 8 of Leviticus, the differences are of considerable importance, and well illustrate the respective settings of the two books. Leviticus is essentially the *Priests'* instruction book; Numbers is for the *Levites*.

Before turning to the particularly interesting details, note that the first few verses of the chapter are concerned with the provision of *light* in the sanctuary. Illumination, and that of a divine order must be available before there can be activity for God in His House. It is worth comparing Ex. 27. 20 on to the end of chapter 29 with our portion in Numbers in the light of this.

The fact that the Levites form a kind of liason between Jehovah and the people in general has already been noted in these articles, and the principle comes out very clearly here. In verse 10 the children of Israel are commanded to lay their hands upon the Levites. This symbolic action always speaks of *identification*, and in this way the link was formed between the people in general and this one tribe in particular. But further down in verse 12, the Levites in their turn are to lay their hands upon the head of the chosen victim that is to be shortly slain for them. Here the further link goes on to Jehovah Himself.

By way of preparation for their holy service, the Levites are first sprinkled, then completely shaved, and finally they had to wash their clothes. This was done in order to render them ceremonially clean. Note they are *sprinkled* as servants, not wholly *bathed* as were the priests. The washing of clothes suggests a dealing with all circumstances and associations; the shaving of the flesh, the refusal of the growths of nature that might be all very well for the common warrior, but which would not do for those in close connection with the sanctuary.

From verse 14 onwards the very interesting substitutionary role of the Levites which was set forth in chapter 3, is again stressed; they are Jehovah's peculiar possession in lieu of the first-born of the ordinary families of the tribes.

In contrast to the relationship of the Levites to the people we have just noticed, verses. 13, 19, 22 show that they are very closely associated with the priests in the discharge of their office in the Tabernacle. This is important, for it shows the vital function of this chosen tribe in the divine arrangements. Their work is not strictly concerned with worship, but worship cannot readily proceed without their co-operation.

A study of the remarkable revival in the days of Hezekiah is very illuminating in view of the respective work of priests and Levites. In 2. Chron. 29.34 the priests, by reason of lassitude, were found too few in number for the great work assigned to them. Then it is that the Levites make up that lack, and give their help until the sacrificial work is ended.

Note in verse 19 of Numbers 8, that this divine appointment of the Levitical order is that "there be no plague upon the children of Israel." Time and again it happened in later history that this provision was ignored, and just as surely disaster came upon the scene.

Compare 1 Chron. 15. 2 and Ezra 9. 15 in the light of this.

A comparison between the ritual here, and that for the priest in Lev. 9 and the leper in Lev. 14 is most instructive. The consecration service of the Levites lacks the trespass offering of the latter and the peace offering of the former. For there was no question of cleansing from special sin as with the leper, nor of intimate communion as with the priest—their's was the place of *service*.

The separation of the Levitical family from the rest of the nation was a very real thing while Israel were walking orderly. This is evidenced in Josh. 14. 4, 18. 7. Note too, that they were dependent upon the other tribes for their material support, but that in days of declension this was forgotten (Neh. 13. 10). Hence the whole system of approach to God broke down. On the other hand in a day of revival, this matter of the offerings to the Levites was of a primary concern—see 2 Chron. 31. 4.

The full age of service for the Levites was from 30 years of age to 50, but it is evident from Num. 8. 24 that a kind of five years apprenticeship was served in the courts of the Lord, by way of preparation for their wonderful work.



The GREATEST PERSON in the UNIVERSE

* Christ is the Fact of facts, the Bible's Theme, *
 * Who stands alone, august, unique, supreme; *
 * The Bread of Life, who meets the need of men, *
 * Who comes to all, o'er field, and moor, and fen; *
 * The Man of Pain, who feels all human pain, *
 * And slakes the thirst, and turns all loss to gain; *
 * He is the God, all light from Him doth gleam, *
 * He is the Man of men, beyond all dream; *
 * He is the God of Love, all love divine, *
 * He is the hand of power, all strength sublime; *
 * From Him all things come forth, in Him consist, *
 * To Him all tend, and all by Him subsist. *
 * The Book, it speaks of Him, the Christ reveals, *
 * The eyes that close to Him all truth conceal; *
 * He is the Gospel's Theme—He died for all, *
 * His death alone can free from sin's enthrall; *
 * His Resurrection life, the might of might; *
 * His reign within the soul, the life of right; *
 * His peace within the heart, the calm of love; *
 * His joy untold, the thrill from realms above; *
 * His love, the fire that burns within the flame; *
 * His promises, the word's refreshing rain; *
 * The Spirit came, the outcome of His death; *
 * The power of God, His grace and living breath; *
 * He's All! the Visibility of God, *
 * And so I sing of Him and onward plod. *
 * * * * *

“BIBLE DIALOGUES”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and W. E. Powell.

No. 5.—PEACE WITH GOD.

IT is the happy privilege of every true believer in Christ to enjoy peace with God. Not that every believer does enjoy it; but it is possible for each one of us to have solid, settled peace with God as to our sins. Is not the thought of it enough to make every heart burn with ardent desire to possess and enjoy this great blessing? May the Lord help us in our consideration of the subject.

We sometimes hear of “true peace” and “false peace.” What do these terms mean?

It is to be feared that a large number of people in this city are spending their lives in *false peace*, that is, a peace which is born of indifference. They dwell in a fool’s paradise, and pass on heedless of their souls and ignorant of their awful danger. Lulled to sleep by the devil’s opiates, they dream their days away, absorbed with their business, their duties, their pleasures, their friends, their cares, and their sins.

True peace, divine peace, peace with God is a very different thing. It is the result, not of ignorance or indifference, but of *knowing that one is beyond the reach of danger*. The one who has peace with God has faced his own condition in God’s presence. He has seen the enormity of his sins, and owned himself a guilty, hell-deserving rebel. He has believed the glad tidings which tell of Christ dying for sinners, and being raised from the dead for their justification.

If you ask him where his sins are, he can reply, “They are gone. They were all laid upon Christ, and He made expiation for them by His blood. To-day He is in glory. The One who had my sins on Him has them on Him no longer. He is free from the load He bore at Calvary, and because He is free, I am free also!”

Are you able to speak like that? It is the language of one who has *true peace*.

Is it possible to have peace with regard to some things and not as to others?

I believe it is. I was visiting a poor man the other day who, through an accident, had lost his situation. He was in great poverty, and hardly knew where the next meal was to come from. But his confidence in God’s goodness was un-

shaken. “I do not worry,” said he, “I leave my troubles to God. He will bring me through.” The man could in that way rest in peace as to his cares and his needs.

A little further conversation, however, revealed the fact that he was not at peace with regard to his sins and his state before God. While acknowledging *God’s* goodness, he mourned over his own lack of goodness, and sometimes feared that he would never get to heaven. He did not understand that his acceptance with God depended not on the state of his heart, important as that is in its place, but upon the work which Christ did. Hence he was a stranger to real *peace with God*. As to his troubles and cares, he could be calm and peaceful, looking to God to keep him; but as to his *sins* and his state before God, he was full of unrest.

This man’s case is by no means uncommon. There are many who can pass through the storms of life in peace, with a sense of God’s goodness in their hearts, who have never yet learned the secret of *peace with God*, through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Is “peace with God” the same as assurance of Salvation?

Hardly. The fact is, there is not very much said in the Bible as to “assurance of salvation,” for the very simple reason that in the days of the apostles, when the gospel was preached in its unadulterated simplicity, those who received it, and believed in Christ, were saved and, as a matter of course, *knew it*. But in our days a very different state of things exists. Owing to the distorted way in which the gospel is often presented, mixed with law and Jewish principles, thousands are found who in a measure trust in Christ and build all their hopes upon His precious blood, but who cannot speak with *certainty* of their salvation. Hence the need nowadays of pressing *assurance*, and of showing how it comes, through simply taking God at His word. Take, for example, that well-known verse—Acts 13. 39, “By Him all that believe are justified from all things.” What an efficient weapon such a Scripture is for putting doubts and fears to flight!

But peace with God goes further than keeping doubts and fears at bay by the help of some precious passage of Scripture. It is the result of knowing

what has been accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection for the believer. Through that work all our sins have been put away; we have been justified from every charge. In other words *the disturbing element has been removed*, and peace with God is the blessed consequence.

Let me make my meaning clear. Some months ago I was living in a house surrounded by pastures in which a large number of cattle were kept. The path from the house to the neighbouring village led through these pastures. There was no other way of getting there.

One afternoon I was walking to the village with a lady who was very much afraid of cows. When she saw that our path led right through a herd of these animals she became extremely nervous, and wished to turn back. I did my best to assure her. I told her that I had passed that way numbers of times, and had never observed any signs of ferocity in the cows; that they were perfectly harmless, and would be more likely to run away from her than run after her. At length my friend gained confidence and proceeded on her way, at first not without some misgivings, but with increasing boldness. She believed my word when I assured her that there was no danger, and banished her fears when she found that there really was no cause for alarm. In this way she got *assurance*.

On returning from the village, later in the evening, we found that all the cows had been driven into another section of the estate. Not a hoof nor a horn remained.

My companion's face broke into a smile as she exclaimed, "Why, the cows are all gone!"

"Yes," I replied, "but you would not be afraid to pass near them again, would you?"

"No," said the lady; "I know they would not hurt me and that my fears are foolish and groundless, but I am glad that they are gone, for all that."

Now I think this illustrates the difference between assurance of salvation and peace. Emboldened and assured by God's own Word, we may proceed on our way knowing that fears are foolish and groundless. But when we see that all that we feared is gone, that our sins have been put away, the judgment that was due to us endured, the claims of divine justice fully satisfied—then it is that we have peace indeed. The *source* of our fear has been removed. And this is just what the work of Christ has accomplished for us.

Why are not all believers in the enjoyment of peace with God?

Multitudes lack settled peace because they are *unbelieving believers*. When the Lord Jesus joined the two wanderers on the road to Emmaus, He found them, true disciples though they were, full of unbelief. "O fools," He said to them, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Many to-day are in just the same condition. They trust in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and build all their hopes of future bliss upon His precious blood, but they are slow to believe what the gospel assures them is the result of His death and resurrection. They do not see that as a consequence of His work all their sins have been eternally put away, and that they are righteously cleared by God Himself from every charge.

Most of us are familiar with the story of David's conquest of Goliath. An Israelite, seeing the fearless youth advance towards the haughty giant, might exclaim, "I trust in that young man. I know him to be a man of God, and I have every confidence that by his means God will give deliverance to Israel this day."

The man who speaks thus is manifestly a believer in David. He builds his hopes of deliverance upon his ability to overcome Goliath.

But by-and-by, when shouts of triumph rend the air, and David returns to the camp with the giant's head in his hands, that selfsame man is sitting in his tent with an anxious look upon his face. Why does he not share in the joy, and help to swell the song of gratitude? Because he does not know the significance of those shouts. He does not realise that the giant is slain. The moment he comprehends, not only that David is a trustworthy deliverer, but that he has actually accomplished the work of deliverance, and that the foe is gone, peace and joy will be his.

It is thus that many are kept from the enjoyment of peace. They have faith in Christ as a trustworthy Deliverer, but do not comprehend the full result of the work that He has accomplished. Perhaps it has never been set before them. As soon as it dawns upon them *peace* will be the blessed result.

Self-occupation is another cause of unrest. Worldly-mindedness, too, is a great hindrance to the enjoyment of peace.

Is it ever too late for a sinner to begin to make his peace with God?

In every case it is too late—nineteen centuries too late. In fact, it is an utter impossibility for a sinner to set matters right between himself and God. Nor need he despair on that account, for Christ has done the necessary work, and peace is to be obtained, not by the sinner doing anything, but by his enjoying the results of Christ's work.

Christ has made peace, once for all, by the blood of His cross (Col. 1. 20). He has laid the broad foundations of our blessing. We have neither part nor lot in the doing of the work.

To get "peace with God," then, let the sinner cease from trying to make it, and let him, through faith in Christ, appropriate the results of His death and resurrection. It is never too late, while life remains, for that.

We read in Psalm 119. 165.: "Great peace have they which love Thy law." What does that mean?

It is not exactly "peace with God" that is referred to there. The "law" in this passage is a much wider thing than the Ten Commandments. It was the revelation of God's ways (so far as He saw fit to make them known in those days), and indicated the way of wisdom, righteousness, and peace for man. Those whose hearts were influenced by it enjoyed the blessing inseparable from the knowledge of God and His ways, however partial that knowledge necessarily was.

In our day, the starlight of Old Testament times has given place to the glorious sunlight of the full revelation of God. God has made *Himself* known, and has given His Holy Spirit to lead our hearts along the line of His revelation. If we are subject to that blessed Holy Spirit, and allow Him to direct our hearts into what God has revealed for our blessing, *great peace* will assuredly be our portion, just as it was the portion of the saints, in David's day, who loved the things of God.

And therefore we read, in Romans 8. 6, that "*the minding of the Spirit* is life and PEACE" (see margin).

But such peace must not be confounded with the peace of Romans 5. 1, which is the result of our being justified. It is a peace which is the opposite of that morbid state of self-dissatisfaction which is often the fruit of brooding over our own coldness and sinfulness.

What does "peace with God" depend upon?

If you will turn to Romans 4. 25, and connect it with the first verse of the following chapter, you will have an answer in the very words of Scripture. "Jesus our Lord," we read, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. *Therefore* being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Peace with God immediately flows from the fact of our being justified, and that depends, as we were seeing on the last occasion, upon the death and resurrection of Christ. In this way the claims of divine justice have all been met, and peace is ours in consequence.

What is the difference between "peace with God" and the "peace of God," of which we read in Philippians 4?

"Peace with God" has reference to our sins and our state of guilt before Him, and is the result of what *He makes known to us*.

The "peace of God" has reference to the circumstances of life, circumstances of difficulty and trial, and is the result of *our making known to Him* our requests.

Care is a thing that grinds the brightness out of many a Christian's life. Peace with God, as to his sins, he has; but in order to pass through this world of trial and sorrow, he needs to cultivate the habit of taking everything to God in prayer.

The result will be that his heart and mind will be kept in peace. God's own peace, which passeth all understanding, will reign within. He will accept every circumstance as ordered by the One that makes all things work together for our good and instead of worrying and murmuring, he will be kept in calm confidence and peace.

That is what the passage in Philippians 4. means.

What did the Lord Jesus mean by saying that He left His peace with His disciples in John 14. 27?

The thought is very much akin to that of which we have just spoken. But the trials and troubles of life are common to *all*—the unconverted as well as the children of God, though only the latter have the "Peace of God" to keep their hearts in the midst of them.

But there are certain things which *only Christians* have to contend with, such as persecution for Christ's sake and the suffering of loss through faithfulness to Him. These things, the result of Christ's rejection here and absence from us, were foreseen by Him, and He warned "His own," whom He was leaving behind, that they must expect to be opposed, reviled, persecuted, and evil spoken of. But in the midst of all that they should suffer for His name's sake, they should taste the sweetness of heavenly peace, His own peace. If earth was to be a place of rejection and sorrow for them, a place in the "many mansions" above would be prepared for them. If He was leaving them a legacy of suffering, a precious legacy of peace accompanied it. It was a peace that the world could never give, and a peace that the world could never take away.

We have spoken of *four* different kinds of peace.

1. *Peace with God*, as to our sins and guilty state, the result of our being justified on account of Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 5. 1).

2. *Peace inwardly*, in contrast to morbid self-disappointment, the result of the "minding of the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 6). It is a peace that depends not so much upon our *faith* in Christ as upon our daily *occupation* with Christ, through the Holy Ghost.

3. *The peace of God*, which keeps the hearts and minds of those who cast their cares upon Him amid the ordinary burdens and perplexities of life (Phil. 4. 7).

4. *The peace of Christ*, the precious portion of those who are left here to represent Him in His absence, and who often have to bear reproach and persecution for His name's sake.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

AS PRESENTED BY
MARK

Mark brings forward a twofold prophecy when introducing John. First from Mal. 3. v. 1, where he is "the messenger"; then from Isaiah where he is "the voice." The Isaiah prophecy seems to suggest the starting point,—he begins in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. Malachi indicates the place to which he is preparing the way, for the prophecy is followed by the words, "And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple." Service has always been closely associated with the temple, and Mark presents our Lord as God's perfect Servant. It is Malachi who puts on record the complete breakdown of the Levitical service. Ch. 2. v. 7, tells us what Jehovah's intention for Levi had been,— "for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts," but v. 8 shows "Levi has departed," so the following chapter opens with the words, "Behold I send My Messenger," and Mark ch. 1 announces his arrival at Jordan.

Here he preaches the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. In the remission of sins sacrifice is implied, and the thought of sacrifice suggests to us God's holiness. In Mal. 1 v. 6 Jehovah brings against the priests this accusation, that they despised His name. His name speaks of His character, and His character is holiness. So, because they thought lightly of God's character they dared such effrontery to the perfection of the Person and work of Christ, as to offer bread that was polluted, and for sacrifice the blind and lame and sick. But the messenger of Mark ch. 1 had no light thoughts of God's character, and he esteemed the intrinsic worth of this One Who was coming after him.

As a messenger it is not essential we should know anything of John's parentage, all we require to know is that he is an authorised messenger, so Mark confirms this in his prophetic introduction. Again a messenger simply delivers the message entrusted to him, then departs, so the record of the ministry of John in Mark's gospel is short and terse, and in v. 14 of ch. 1 he passes out.

But the Spirit of God would have us know the kind of man God can use as a messenger, so through Mark He tells us of the manner and habits of this man's life. First, he was clothed with camels' hair. The camel is essentially a beast of the desert, patiently carrying heavy burdens over long wearying journeys, so the clothing of camels' hair would seem to suggest to us the patient endurance

of this messenger. Then he found his food in the desert, locusts and wild honey. In speaking of him our Lord says that they that live delicately are in kings' houses. These are entirely unfitted for the rigour and hardship of the wilderness, the place where Jehovah's messenger is found. But not only did he find his clothing and food from the wilderness, it provided the atmosphere suited for his development. There is no attraction for the eye or distraction for the ear there, and God must have both, ere we can be fitted as messengers. We must have enlightened vision, and sanctified hearing. Of Jehovah's perfect Servant it is said in Isa. 42. v.20, "Seeing many things but thou observest not, opening the ears but he heareth not. Our Lord's eye and ear were alone for the Father, and how often we read—"And Jesus lifted up His eyes," and again speaking to the Pharisees in John ch. 8 He says, "As the Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." A. W. B.

□□□□□□□□

"What Hath God Wrought."—(cont. from page 63).

that three months previous came to our knowledge through one of the young converts asking if she had yet trusted the Saviour. "Of course I have," she said, "before Christmas."

That "little child" was "Pat" for whom much prayer had been offered. Thus we have the joy of knowing (1) that "Pat," who cried for a Sunday School, has been saved and her parents keenly interested. (2) At least 20 Orphans have been brought to the Saviour. (3) Over forty elder scholars and several parents soundly converted. (4) A New Hall seating 500 built as a result of Pat's tears, and finally over 200 local people coming to the Fairlop Gospel Hall, and all within twelve months. Dare we ask if it were worth while paying heed to a little child's request as we thus see what God hath indeed wrought?

May we finally ask a place in your prayers? The harvest truly is plenteous. Please pray without ceasing for this fruitful sphere of service, and should there be any of the Lord's Stewards who would like to share practically in this great work we shall gladly welcome and value any gifts sent along towards the cost of our Hall or the General Expenses in connection therewith. About £1,050 is yet required to clear our debt. Our trust is in our God whom we know is able, and whom we believe will supply our every need. We feel sure many of our readers will gladly help forward such a work of grace. But above all else please pray for Fairlop Gospel Hall daily.

Editor.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXVIII.

"And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a nap in :
For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and repeast that thou didst not sow." (Luke 19. 20-21).

THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT. (Cont.)

The first reason therefore, why we believe a false professor to be set forth here is that *he did not know his Master.*

"Yes," you say, "but notice that in each case the servant addresses his Master as 'Lord.' Surely, therefore, he must have been a sincere and real servant." By no means. Do you not remember the words of the Lord Jesus : "Not everyone that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name ? and in Thy name have cast out devils ? and in Thy name done many wonderful works ?" Matt. 7. 22.

Confession with the lip must be accompanied by faith in the heart. Romans 10. 9.

But thirdly, and this is perhaps the strongest reason of all, we observe in each case that *the gift was unappropriated*, and here lies the basic difference between the true and the false. God provides—man either appropriates or neglects. To appropriate means life, joy and blessing ; to neglect means death, misery and loss.

The other servants took their gifts and traded with them—they appropriated them—but the unprofitable servant hid his talent, and wrapt his pound in a napkin. Notice they each left their Master's gift *external*, whilst the other Servants laid hold of them, possessed them, and made them their very own. What a difference—What a contrast.

When Moses "Laid hold" of the serpent in Ex. 3, it became a rod in his grasp.

This "Laying hold," this "appropriating," is merely another name for "Faith" which is *the substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen. That by which the human element in us, is linked with God Himself. That by which the unseen becomes the real. The gripping hand of faith makes me a "Possessor." This the unprofitable servant lacked.

"But," says my reader, "After all, this person was called a 'Servant' and had the gift 'delivered' to him." True, but many are called God's servants here upon earth who will not be with Him in Heaven. For are not this world's rulers regarded as God's servants, yet who would say they were all spiritual men ? 1 Peter 2. 14. He often uses unlikely means to accomplish His purposes. Further we must bear in mind that all men are God's servants for He is their Creator, and has *purchased* the whole world in order to possess the treasure which was in it. Do we not read of some who denied *the Lord* that *bought* them ? If He is their Lord, then they must be His servants, even though they deny Him and are unprofitable servants. Only those who take advantage of the sacrificial work of Christ are *redeemed* but all are *bought* by its worth. We read of others having "a form of godliness but denying the power thereof."

Were not the Five Foolish Virgins, just as much Virgins as the Five Wise, but yet they were shut out from the Marriage Feast, and in this connection never forget that they *all* slumbered and slept ; they *all* arose and trimmed their lamps. Indeed all had *lights*, for in Matthew 25. 8 we read concerning the foolish virgins, "Our lights are gone out." Showing that therefore they must have been first alight. With some there was a *profession* but no possession, for whilst they took their lamps, they took *no oil* in them, and therein was the *vital* difference. They lacked that which typified the Holy Spirit. That which was known to God but unseen by man.

Friend, the vital difference between the real possessor and the false professor—between the profitable and unprofitable servant, is this possession, or lack, of the Holy Spirit of God.

"Yes," you say, "But did we not notice in chapter xxiii that the pound represented, among other things, Eternal Life—and even the Holy Spirit Himself. How then can the unprofitable

servant be regarded as a false professor if he had that which speaks of Eternal Life and the Holy Spirit delivered unto Him ?

If we bear in mind that that which was "delivered" to him was *unappropriated*—not laid hold of—but rather laid aside and hidden away, we immediately see that the Holy Spirit did not become part and parcel of his life, nor did *He* influence him in his daily business. He, the great divine gift, was neglected, despised and treated as of no account. What saith the scripture concerning those who *neglect* so great salvation? Opportunities at their very door as it were, and neglected; Salvation almost within their grasp,—but lost. God's Holy Spirit so near them that they have heard that still small voice, time and time again; so near that the atmosphere of Christian influence has been their enjoyed portion, so near that on many an occasion they have realised God's presence in the midst of His people and yet their heart has remained barred and bolted. He has been kept without. So near, in fact, that in order to please others and avoid an awkward situation or, sad to say, in order to gain some material advantage they have even made a profession of faith in Christ. Such have not the Spirit of Christ, and are therefore none of His. Such are not "*Possessors*" of that Divine life which comes as a result of being born again of the Spirit of God, and therefore grow not in spiritual things. Such have no works to show outwardly because Faith is missing inwardly. Wherever Life is, there is growth; wherever Faith is, there are works. Thus we come back to our first conclusion that the unprofitable servant who has no return to show his Master, cannot be a real child of God but only a false professor:—

Shall we now quietly read together two scriptures concerning those who are "*professors*" but not "*possessors*."

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

II Peter 2. 20-22.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Heb. 6. 4-6.

Note the change in Heb. 6. from "us" and "we" in verses 1 and 3, to "Those" and "They" in verses 4 and 6 and then the change again to "we" and "you" in v. 9, clearly showing two classes represented.

And with them call to mind such persons as Judas Iscariot with all his privileges and opportunities; Ananias and Saphira with their false devotion; Balaam of the Old Testament and other similar characters and then finally the Parable of the Tares and Wheat. The false and the true shall grow together until the Lord come when the one shall be taken and the other left. Until that time shall come we leave the deciding of these issues in His all-wise hands and seek ourselves to redeem the time for the days are indeed evil. May you and I both heed *our* Lord's divine injunction prior to His departure to a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom *and to return—OCCUPY TILL I COME.*

"Till Thou shall come Lord Jesus
And call us hence away."

G.F.V.

An Outlined Address.

"The Young Egyptian."

Art not thou that Egyptian: Acts 21. 38;

I Sam. 30. 1-20.

Who was He. A young man of Egypt.—By Nature.

What was He. Servant to an Amalekite.—By Practice.

Where was He. In a field.—Helpless; half-dead.

Why was He there. Because he had fallen sick and his Master had left him.

What happened. He was found by David's servants.

What did he do. NOTHING. He was led to David.

What a surprise! Was he kicked, tormented, tortured?—No. David gave him *Bread* and made him drink *water*. Jno. 6. 35. "He that cometh, to Me shall never hunger and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

Figs and Raisins from David's store. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

David gave what he had, for his enemy.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus.

3rd Day: Resurrection. He revived:

No mention of Judgment BUT A LASTING SALVATION: Assured that his old Master would never have him again.

Once saved always saved. If David's greater Son takes us in hand we are safe and secure.

Others were destroyed. Only the sick that need a Physician. He would have died but for David.

Via Besor. Glad tidings. Sinners Jesus came to save. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

Will you *come* — NOW.

HOW — *Why just come.* G.F.V.

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and E. D. Kinkead.

No. 6.—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

IN order to introduce the subject I will read a verse of Scripture: “ In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ” (Eph. i. 7).

This passage shows very clearly that there were some who could say, and who were encouraged by the apostle Paul to say, “ *We have the forgiveness of our sins.* ”

No doubt a good many are accustomed to repeat, Sunday after Sunday, the words, “ I believe in the forgiveness of sins. ” By the grace of God some of us can go further and say, “ I believe in the forgiveness of *my own sins.* ” Can you say that? If not, I beg your earnest attention to the matter we are about to consider.

Must a sinner lay ALL his sins upon Jesus before he can be forgiven ?

Not one of us could remember *all* our sins. As we scan the coast-line of our past lives no doubt there are some sins that stand out like promontories, the memory of which will abide with us to our last hour on earth. But multitudes of our sins, *little sins* as men would style them, have been forgotten. Yet each one of them calls for expiation, each one must be answered for. Christ’s work is sufficient to answer for them *all*, but if, before we could get the benefit of that work, we had to bring our sins and lay them upon Jesus, we should be in a sorry plight indeed. The thought of the forgotten sins would be for ever haunting us. “ What shall we do about *them* ? ” would be the question that would rob us of our peace.

But there is another reason why we could never lay all our sins upon Jesus, and that is because *Jesus is in glory to-day.* Do you think He can take sins upon Him where He is? Naught that defileth shall ever enter there. How, then, can a sinner cast his polluting sins upon Jesus, the exalted and glory-crowned Lord? Impossible!

The time for sin-bearing was when He was upon the cross. And mark this: If your sins were not laid upon Jesus *then*, they never will be. Now it is certain that *you* could not have laid your sins upon Him at Calvary. You had no existence then. The truth is, that *God* laid the sins of all who believe upon Jesus. “ The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. ”

What must a sinner do to show that he is worthy to be forgiven ?

A sinner could never do anything to show himself worthy of forgiveness. The ground on which God forgives sinners is not their worthiness, or anything that they can do or be. It is altogether *for Christ’s sake*, and on account of what He has done. You will see this very clearly stated in Ephesians iv. 32: “ *God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.* ” So also in 1 John ii. 12: “ *Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.* ”

Suppose that a poor man is presented with a cheque by some kindly disposed person, and told to present it for payment at the Bank. As he wends his way in that direction he begins to have certain misgivings as to whether he will receive the money or not. His clothes are so threadbare, his poverty so evident, his name so unknown! Summoning up courage, however, he steps up to the counter and hands in the cheque. The clerk takes it and looks at—what? The man’s ragged appearance? No, he looks at the *name on the cheque.* It is that of one of the bank’s best customers. *Because of that name* the clerk hands the money without a question to the bearer.

So with the sinner when he approaches God through the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not take the sinner’s worthiness or unworthiness into account. It makes no difference whether the applicant for blessing bear a good character for honesty and respectability, or whether he be known as a depraved outcast. He may have his name inscribed upon the membership roll of a fashionable church, or it may be written upon the conviction list of the police court. God does not make any difference in His treatment of the returning sinner because of things of that sort. What He looks at is the name which the sinner brings as his only plea. If that name be the precious name of *Jesus*, there is no blessing too great for God to bestow upon the one who seeks it. He will instantly forgive the sins of a lifetime *for the sake of that Name.*

When a sinner trusts in Christ, are ALL his sins forgiven, or only his past sins ?

I suppose it is only natural for people to divide their sins into past, present, and future, but it is certain that God does not so divide them. He sees our life, from its earliest moment to our last

hour on earth, spread out before Him. Our sins, too—those forgotten long ago and those not yet committed—He sees as one whole a series of black deeds and words and thoughts.

More: He not only *sees* our sins thus, as one whole, but He *saw* them thus nineteen centuries ago. All our sins were future then, but God saw them all, and laid them upon Christ. If there is a single sin that you have ever committed, or may yet commit, which was not laid upon Christ, that sin must remain for ever un-atoned for, and there can be no heaven for you. Thank God, the believer has reason to know that every sin of his life was borne by his Saviour at Calvary, and that as a necessary consequence *every sin of his life, from cradle to coffin, was blotted out from God's remembrance when he trusted in Christ.* As a child of God he may sin, and will need forgiveness as such from his Father. But never again will he have to approach God as one who needs forgiveness as a guilty criminal under the sentence of eternal doom.

Is it right for anyone to pray for the forgiveness of his sins?

I understand your question to be, not *was* it ever right, but *is* it right now for anyone to pray for forgiveness?

Someone has said that Scripture is as eloquent in what it omits as in what it reveals. We certainly must number amongst its omissions any direction to pray for forgiveness since Christ's work of atonement was accomplished. We find many references which show that the forgiveness of sins was enjoyed as a known thing by the early Christians, and that provision was made in the case of Christians who sinned, but we search in vain for any exhortation to pray for this great blessing.

How can we pray for a thing that we already have? Would not such a prayer be the prayer of unbelief? If we as Christians sin, forgiveness is assured to us if we *confess* our sins; not if we pray for forgiveness. There is a great difference between confessing our sins and praying for forgiveness, and of this we shall have more to say presently.

With regard to unsaved sinners the case is, of course, different. But even such are never told to pray for forgiveness. God is revealed as the One who offers it to all freely through Christ (Acts xiii. 38), and sinners are exhorted to receive it.

In saying that none are bidden to pray for forgiveness, I do not forget that the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray "Forgive us our trespasses"; but that was before the work of atonement was accomplished. Those to whom that prayer was taught were not in the position into which we, who live since that mighty work was done, have been brought. Though privileged to be the companions of the Lord Jesus on earth,

they were in the position of Old Testament believers until He died, and rose again, and the Holy Ghost came down to take up His abode here. *Since* that time, none are taught to pray in the way that was right and proper *before*.

Do we need to be forgiven more than once?

By "we" I suppose you mean believers. Yes, we do need forgiveness, as often as we sin. We have already seen that the forgiveness of sins which accompanies salvation (see Luke i. 77) is received once for all. It is a blessing which is always ours. But if we, the children of God, sin, our communion with Him is interrupted, and forgiveness, leading to the restoration of that communion, is needed. And God, our Father, is so ready to grant that forgiveness! If *we* are exhorted to forgive an offending brother until seventy times seven, we may be sure that *He* will never tire of forgiving us unto seventy thousand times seven.

Will not the fact of God being so ready to forgive encourage carelessness as to sin?

Rightly understood, it should have the very opposite effect. A verse in Psalm cxxx. supplies an answer to this question: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." Mark those words: "*that Thou mayest be feared.*" The forgiving grace with which the contrite confession of the erring one is always met, produces in the soul of the forgiven one such a sense of God's goodness, and withal such a sense of the seriousness of sin, that he *fears* again to grieve such a loving patient, gracious One. Such fear is not the fear that hath torment. It is a godly, wholesome fear of sin. No doubt a fear of *punishment* often acts as a restraint upon men. But how much better when a fear of *sin* is produced! And this is the result of the forgiving grace of our God. It makes one delight to walk in His fear and seek to please Him in word and work.

What should Christians do when they sin?

That question can be answered in the very words of Scripture: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

Notice, it does not say, "If we ask for forgiveness." It is easy to say, "O God, pray forgive me for Jesus' sake," but to confess one's sin is a far deeper thing. It means that we are to pour out the story of our sin in God's ear; to say, "O my God and Father, I have dishonoured Thee by telling a lie," or "O my God and Father, I have given way to my wicked temper again." Whatever the particular sin may be, we have to confess it in true self-judgment. Following upon this we receive God's free forgiveness.

And here let me give a word of counsel to my dear young fellow-believers. *Keep short accounts with God.* Do not leave the sins of the day to be included in a general confession at night, but as soon as ever you find yourself overtaken with a

fault, confess it. If you are in a place where you cannot get alone and kneel down, just lift up your heart and say silently, "Father, I have sinned; I have done such and such a thing." Forgiveness is the assured result.

What does our forgiveness, as children of God, depend upon?

Upon the advocacy of the Lord Jesus. Of course, His atoning work upon the cross is the basis of all our blessing, and is the ground upon which our eternal forgiveness is secured. But He who died there, is alive again. No longer as the Sin-bearer but as the Advocate for His people, He lives in glory.

This is what we learn from 1 John ii. 1: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

As soon as a believer sins he becomes an object of special concern to his blessed Advocate. As a result he is led to judge himself for his sin, and go to his Father in humble confession. As a further result forgiveness is granted, and he is cleansed from all unrighteousness.

How full of gratitude should we be for the services of our Advocate! He is as much for us in glory to-day as He was when suffering as our Substitute at Calvary, and He maintains us in all the abiding efficacy of His wonderful work of atonement. In *Him* there is ever present to the eye of the Father a ground upon which He can forgive us, and when we confess our sins He is faithful and just *towards Christ* in forgiving them. **Is the "cleansing from all unrighteousness" the same as the forgiveness of our sins?**

I think it is a further thing. A child is told by his father not to go out and play in the yard. In spite of the prohibition he does go out, and falls down in the mud, covering himself and his clothes with dirt. That child now stands in need of two things. He needs *forgiveness* because he is disobedient, and he needs *cleansing* because he is dirty.

If he is truly sorry for his disobedience, and confesses it, his father forgives him at once. But the cleansing process takes longer. It needs the application of soap and water.

Now, it is just the same with the believer. When he sins he is not only disobedient, but defiled. On confession he is at once forgiven, but before his communion with God can be fully restored he must be cleansed from the defilement he has contracted. This, too, is a result of the advocacy of Christ.

How is this cleansing brought about?

I think we may gather from Psalm cxix. 9, what the means are which God uses.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto *according to Thy Word.*" The Word of God is that which has cleansing power for the believer. Bear in mind

that we are not now speaking of that cleansing which, as guilty sinners, we get when we come to Christ. At that time we were cleansed in a very different way, even by the precious blood of Christ. But as believers we need the continuous washing, not of blood, but of "water by the word" (Eph. v. 26).

Some precious portion of God's Word is applied in power to the soul, and once again we can look up with joy into the face of our Father. It is not that we doubted Him; we knew all the while that He is our Father, and that in confessing our sin we had received His forgiveness. But, still, there was an uneasy feeling—a feeling of distance. The application of the Word removes that, and communion is fully restored.

How is it that so many of God's dear people live without the assurance of their being forgiven for ever?

I suppose it is because they do not see that all their sins were laid upon Jesus, and that God is too righteous ever to charge *them* with the sins with which He charged their Substitute. And they do not in simple faith rest upon such precious statements of God's Word as those that we have already mentioned, such as "God, for Christ's sake, *hath* forgiven you."

It seems to be ingrained into the minds of many that their forgiveness is in some way connected with their worthiness, and finding themselves full of unworthiness, they hesitate to rank themselves with the forgiven and saved. To all such the blessed words of Jesus are full of import: "Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke vii. 48, 50).

If Jesus died for ALL, and bore the sins of ALL, must it not follow that ALL must be forgiven and saved?

In saying that Jesus "died for all,"—we are using the very words of the Bible (see 2 Cor. v. 15). But if we say He bore the sins of all, we are overstepping the bounds of Scripture.

It is a blessed truth that Jesus died for *all*. He died to open the way to heaven for "whosoever will." His death has provided a platform from which God may righteously call to *all* men in grace, and offer salvation to all.

But we cannot say to just everyone we meet, "Christ bore your sins upon the cross." Those whose sins Christ bore will never have to bear them themselves. But many *will* have to bear their own sins for ever in hell.

The truth is that while Christ made propitiation for *all*, He was only the Substitute of those who believe. We can say that He "bore *our* sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24).

It is indeed a necessary result of Christ's having borne our sins that we are forgiven and saved, but this applies only to those who believe.

At and After the Coming.

By GAVIN HAMILTON.

EVERY child of God waits for the coming of the Saviour to take him into His bright glory. This is his hope. Christ has made Himself so ineffably precious to his heart that his entire being longs to be with Him evermore. It is reasonable that this should be so. From the heights of infinite glory He descended to the unutterable depths of Calvary's sufferings to snatch him as a brand from the burning, to recover him from the wreck and ruin of the fall, to link him with Himself as Man in bonds divine and eternal, and to plant in his bosom the hope of glory. For nineteen hundred years this Blessed One has officiated as the Great High Priest ministering succour to the tempted, sympathy to the weak and bereaved, and salvation to the uttermost to all who come unto God by Him. These things have endeared Him in the affections of His own and we await His coming now with keenest and deepest interest. It will be the moment of moments to us.

Confusion on the subject as to how the Lord will come and what it really means abounds on every hand. Many believe that death is the coming of the Lord, simply because they pass from a world of gloom into the world of glory. This thought however, is positively absurd and unscriptural. Death, instead of being the Lord's coming for us, is our going to be with the Lord. But then the hope of the Christian is not death. Paul distinctly states that "we shall not all sleep" (1 Cor. 15. 51); and again he speaks of those "Who are alive and remain" (1 Thes. 4. 15) at His return. Our Hope is the Glory, not the grave. "Oh; joy! Oh, delight! should we go without dying;

No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying;
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord
into glory,

When Jesus receives His own."

Others imagine all that the coming means, is His special coming to those who respond affectionately to His will. That He does come to us in this way is clearly taught in John 14. 21-23, but that is not His coming for us. He comes to us here to enhance our communion; we go to Him there to be with Him for ever. It is the consciousness of His presence with us now that really creates intense desires to see Him face to face.

How comforting to be properly instructed about this wonderful truth! It saves us from these distorted views, and imparts moral confidence to the soul. Let us meditate upon four important

thoughts which help to elucidate the grand fact that Jesus is coming again.

1. *The Promise.* To the disciples, sad at heart because their Lord was leaving them, He gave this comforting promise, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14. 1-3). He is faithful that promised. Presently His promise will be fulfilled. He will descend from heaven and fetch His own into His Father's home above.

2. *The Prayer.* Just before the peerless Saviour plunged into the waters of judgment to procure our salvation He prayed to His Father thus, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." (John 17. 24). Having procured our salvation and gone back to the Father's presence He awaits the moment when His prayer will be answered. If we long to be with Him, we but reflect the deeper longing of His heart that He might have us with Himself..

3. *The Pledge.* Jesus is not only the Passover sacrificed for our sin, He is the "Wave Sheaf"—first fruits of the glorious harvest—waved before the face of God. He has gone into Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, and to be our "Forerunner" within the vail. (Heb. 6. 19-21). His going there announces the fact that we are coming on afterwards.

4. *The Purpose.* It is the divine intention at the coming of Christ to raise sleeping saints and to change living ones. This is referred to by the Saviour in John 11. 25-26, and it is the chief topic of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. 15-57 and in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-17. While thinking about the purpose of our God it might be helpful to look a little at the things which will take place, and the places to which we will be introduced at the coming of the Lord.

There will be, first of all, the resurrection of sleeping saints. They will be the first to come under the omnipotent power of their Lord. As He rose in triumph over the power of the grave so will they. His victory will be theirs. They will participate in the first resurrection, the resurrection unto life, and will share the portion of the blessed and holy.

Corruption will give place to incorruption; dishonour will be displaced by glory; weakness will be swallowed up in power; and the natural body will be superseded by the spiritual body. What a moment of supreme triumph for the Lord's own! Well might we sing "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The living saints will then be changed. No matter where they are, when the Lord gives the shout, they will immediately respond. His voice is well known to us. The Holy Spirit, too, who indwells us, knows every movement in the glory above, will then quicken us into life (Rom. 8. 11) and perfectly conform us into the image of the Firstborn Son (v. 29). Mortality will be dropped and immortality taken on. We will be made suitable for the glory into which we are about to enter.

The rapture will come next in the divine programme. With sleeping ones raised and living ones changed we shall immediately begin our ascent to the skies to meet our wonderful Saviour and Lord. What a meeting that will be! What joy will be ours! But what joy will be His!

This grand consummation of our Hope, cannot be better described than in those beautiful lines:—

"He and I in that bright glory,
One deep joy shall share;
Mine to be for ever with Him
His, that I am there."

We may find ourselves immediately at the Judgment Seat to have our life-service examined. How solemn this is! Time, talents, opportunities, and all work done shall be tested. Some of the outstanding things to be tested are—

- (1) The deeds done in the body,
- (2) The ministry committed to our trust,
- (3) The motives that prompted all our activities,
- (4) The use we have made of the money given us.

Some will be rewarded, others will suffer loss, but thank God, every one shall receive his praise of God. It will be at the Judgment Seat that we will have apportioned to us the place we have to hold in the coming kingdom. In the measure I live for Christ here, in the same measure will I be rewarded there. Oh, for lives yielded absolutely to Him that He might be glorified thereby!

We are to be taken into the Father's house. This will be our eternal home. There we shall enjoy the Father's love, and witness the glories He has given His Son. Knowing how near the realisation of this is we ask:—

"Oh, can we be forgetful, Lord,
That Thou hast promised to return?
Forgetful of Thy parting word,
As o'er Thine own Thy heart did yearn?
Within Thy Father's house are now,
As then, those "many mansions" fair;
And "I will come again" saidst Thou,
"I will Myself receive you there."

The book of the Revelation intimates that we will be around the Throne of the Eternal in perfect serenity and absolute equanimity, during the time it vents out its judgments upon this guilty world. In Revelation 4 and 5, we see heaven preparing itself for judgment; God on His throne, and the Lamb receiving the seven sealed book. Grouped around the throne are the four and twenty crowned and enthroned elders presenting symbolically the heavenly saints in their kingly and priestly character. These are all seen at home with the Lord before the judgments fall. Instead of being terrified by the judgment proceeding from the throne, they worship and adore. They know God and they have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. In chapter 6 the judgments begin to be poured out. All this is future. It is freely admitted that there may have been some sort of analogy in events that have already taken place; but strictly speaking, all this is to come. These are judgments on the living, not the dead. First we have the seven seals broken one by one by the Lamb, and judgments falling—mostly of a providential character. Then the trumpets are blown, and further strokes descend. The vials follow, and in them is filled up (or completed) the wrath of God."

All heaven waits for the next event. It is the marriage of the Lamb. His heavenly bride, chosen in the eternal past, redeemed by precious blood, led through the desert world under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, changed into her Bridegroom's image, has now to become His wife. The Old Testament Saints are undoubtedly those who are called to witness the marriage celebration and to rejoice with the Bridegroom and Bride at the supper. Thus the New Testament Eve taken from and made for the last Adam will be abundantly satisfied. In that day

"The bride eyes not her garment
But her dear Bridegroom's face,
She will not gaze at glory,
But on the King of Grace.
Not at the crown He giveth
But on His pierced Hands
The Lamb is all the glory
In Immanuel's Land."

Presently the heavens will open and there will come into prominence and publicity the King of Kings and all His militant hosts. He comes to judge the living nations. He comes to clear the earth of all offenders. He comes to reinstate Israel in the place of power and supremacy and to subjugate all nations under His sway. What a moment for this sin-stricken world! The devil and his satellite hosts will be banished to the bottomless pit, creation will be delivered from its groaning and travail, and Christ will be worshipped and adored universally. Praise God!

The disturbance and rebellion at the close of the millennial days will be quickly followed by the dissolution of all things; the Great White Throne judgment, and the bringing in of a new heaven and a new earth wherein will dwell righteousness eternally. In this fair scene, never to be marred by the presence of sin or Satan, God will be all in all. Eternity will be ahead of us in which to be in the company of our wonderful Saviour and to learn the wonders of His matchless love, to discover the illimitable inheritance which is His and ours, and to worship and adore Him in a perfect, undisturbed manner.

In view of all these things ahead we should purify ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, we should find comfort in days of darkness and sorrow, we should encourage ourselves in the service of God, and we should rejoice in the Lord always. May it be so.

With such a blessed Hope in view,
We should more Holy be,
More like our Risen, Glorious Lord,
Whose face we soon shall see.

This article is a chapter from Mr. Gavin Hamilton's new Treasury Volume, shortly to be published, entitled "At and After the Coming."

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SPURGEON'S SERMONS

AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

AS CORN IS SIFTED

A GAIN it is Sunday morning, and I am privileged to hear C.H.S., and to take notes: the reading has been Amos 9, and the text, verse 9: "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." How powerfully God speaks! "I will command, and I will sift." This applies to Israel, and has been fulfilled: they have been sifted among all nations since the destruction of Jerusalem, and have suffered greatly: their riches have been dragged from them by tyrannising kings and violent mobs. It is a gross wrong to take a text from its connection: but having stated this, I shall apply the words, as I believe is intended, to spiritual Israel.

Chaff is mixed with the wheat, and to separate it God puts it into the sieve. This is true of the church at large. *Persecution* is one of God's sieves. Soon after the church arose, Herod began

to persecute: then the Pagan emperors, and afterward the Papal authorities. The number of martyrs who thus died can hardly be computed. Another sieve is Heresy, which soon makes a division in the cause, and separates the chaff from the wheat. Another sieve is *Infidelity*. Very useful sieves are the commotions and changes that take place in some churches and chapels. It would be the greatest blessing that could happen to some to have them burnt down. They want something to move them. This sifting is true of individuals. The church is like a crystal, which if broken into small pieces, each piece is the same as the whole: therefore what is true of the church is true of each member. Here are some of God's sieves. *Temptation* is one. Others are the *trials* of life in prosperity and adversity, also inward *conflicts*, God sifts every part. Your *faith* is sifted, and diminishes, until you seem not to have any. Your *experience* is sifted, until you fear all was a mistake. Your *good resolutions* are sifted. Your past sins rise up and your present imperfections, then Satan comes in and tells you God has forsaken you, and you feel you never have been saved. You are sifted till you have nothing left but—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all:
But Jesus Christ, is my all in all."

Death is a solemn sieve, and last of all the day of judgment.

It is very unpleasant for the corn to be sifted. I think I see it, as up and down it goes, and has no rest. So it is with us, we are tossed about, and shall be unto the end. There is not anger in it: it is not that he dislikes the wheat that the farmer sifts it; but the reverse. So with God: you think He is angry; but He is not. He only wants to purify you. If you are being shaken in the sieve it is because you are wheat. The farmer has no purpose to destroy the grain when he puts it into the sieve. If he meant to burn it, he would not take so much trouble. So with you. There shall not one grain fall to the earth; not even that little shrivelled one. Why? The Holy Spirit acts as a weight to keep them in the sieve. Because He who holds the sieve keeps His eye upon them and knows each grain.

The Grace of the Lord.

When Cæsar gave one a great reward, "This," said he, "is too great a gift for me to receive." But Cæsar replied, "It is not too great a gift for me to give." So we may feel with regard to the gifts of grace, even the smallest of them, these are too much for us to receive, yet the greatest gifts are not too great for Christ to give.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART VI. CHAPTER 9.

IT was mentioned in one of the previous articles of this series that, according to date order, the ninth chapter that we are now to consider, comes before the first chapter.

Here the celebration of the most important feast in the whole of Israel's ceremonial year is introduced—the Passover. The offerings detailed in chapter 1 of Leviticus are essential to the spiritual well-being of the people, but every one of them have primary reference to the sin or approach of individuals. But the Passover looks back to that original redemption of the whole nation from the bondage and judgment of Egypt.

Strictly speaking it is almost the sole *gospel* type of the Old Testament; hence its importance in the subsequent history of the nation. Every revival of national and religious spirit that follows is signalled by an outstanding celebration of the Passover. Read the histories of Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra in the light of this.

The original date for the Passover was the fourteenth day of the first month of the year—in accord with the new beginning made in Ex. 12. But here in Numbers 9, a difficulty is found in the case of certain men. They have been compelled to assist in the burial of a man who had recently died, and hence they are ceremonially defiled, and so debarred from eating the Passover. But not to eat of that feast at all would be to court judgment. What was to be done?

A careful comparison of scripture with scripture rather suggests that the men in question were the uncles of Aaron, Mishael and Elzaphan, who were commanded to carry to their burial Aaron's two rebel sons—Nadab and Abihu.

Moses, having no instructions for such a contingency, turns to Jehovah about it, and from Him receives a gracious provision to meet the need.

Verses 10 to 14 record the amendment to the original ordinance. Two or three points call for notice here. First, although grace permits those who are genuinely prevented from participating in the first month, to celebrate the feast in the second, there is no relaxation of the details that accompany. The bitter herbs, the unleavened bread must all be there as much as when the feast is kept in its original freshness.

Note, however, that this provision can by no means be used to condone laziness—for “the man that is clean, and is not on a journey, and forbearth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among the people.” Surely this applies in principle to things to-day. We may be legitimately prevented from gathering around the Table of the Lord on the first day of the week. Well, God takes knowledge of the circumstances, and makes it up to us accordingly. But if indolence be the reason for our absence, then we shall be “cut off”, in the sense that our enjoyment of the things of God will be dimmed or lost.

There is, too, special mention of the stranger in connection with this extended celebration of the Passover, for dispensationally it is probable that this provision looked forward to the day when Israel became defiled among the Gentiles and dispersed over the whole world. To-day they are indeed “on a journey”, and so cannot remember their redemption in the way appointed. They, the chosen ones, are in the place of strangers—but even so God would yet think of them.

The latter half of this ninth chapter of Numbers has reference to Israel's subsequent journeyings through the wilderness on their way to the promised land.

The absolute sovereignty of Jehovah was the rule of their movements. When the cloud stayed, then they encamped, be it for a day, a month or a even year. When the cloud moved forward, then all was movement in the camp, tents were folded, the Tabernacle was taken down, and all marched forth until once again Jehovah saw fit for them to stay by the way.

Note the constant iteration of the words “they journeyed” throughout these verses. All must keep up with the main camp or else they would quickly fall into the hands of such desert marauders as the fierce sons of Amalek.

CHAPTER 10.

Guidance for the eye of Israel was described in the latter half of the previous chapter; now they are to have guidance for the ear, too. How appropriate that a redeemed assembly should be called and directed by trumpets of silver.

Note that it is the duty of the priests to blow these trumpets, and moreover, that a definite code of signals was arranged so that all might know what was required at a particular moment. There was the single note for the calling together of the princes, another note for the calling together of the whole assembly, the first and second alarm for the setting forward of the camp for their journeys. Only the trained ear could interpret these differing blasts and act in accord with their instructions.

Two things were needed that the camp might be rightly ordered in accordance with this arrangement: first that the trumpets themselves shall be sounded clearly, secondly that the ears of the people shall be attuned to their sounds. As to the former, Paul well writes in 1 Cor. 14. 8: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" What a responsibility upon those who take a place of leadership, under the hand of the Lord to-day, in the Church that they should sound out clearly such guidance to the flock as may be best suited to the needs of the moment.

Verse 11 of Numbers 10, brings us to a moment that must have been greatly longed for throughout the vast host of Israel. For a full year they had camped at the foot of the mighty mount of Sinai; there they had received a divine code without parallel in the world; there, too, they had laboured together in making that wonderful Tabernacle as a dwelling place for their God, and about seven weeks previously they had seen that marvellous Tent dedicated and accepted of Him who had promised to lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey—and now the moment had come to start.

The very failings and shortcomings of Israel at so many times, do but serve to set forth in brighter light those occasions upon which they fully obeyed the Word of their God.

This is one such occasion. In serried ranks, and divine order of tribes, the great camp broke up and set forth, company by company each with its prince at its head, guarding jealously in the centre the precious vessels of the Sanctuary.

It is the more regrettable that the latter section of this wonderful chapter is somewhat marred by a suggestion of failure even on the part of Moses himself. His brother-in-law Hobab appears on the scene (v. 20) and Moses sensing the value of keen desert-trained eyes to a marching multitude, asks that he will act as scout for them. It is remarkable that the man himself has wit enough to refuse such a task of guiding the people of God, but the more stinging rebuke comes from Jehovah, v. 33: "The ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them."

The appreciation of faith in the closing verses of the chapter is very beautiful, so clearly indicating that their starting and their stopping were all of divine intent.

CHAPTER 11.

How long it was that Adam and Eve freely ranged the Garden of Eden ere sin broke in and marred their communion and blighted God's fair arrangements cannot certainly be said. Probably the fall came all too soon upon their installation there.

But as to the course of Israel there is no doubt. It would appear that scarce had the Tabernacle ritual been completed than Nadab and Abihu brought in that strange fire that resulted in their sudden death before Jehovah. And so it is here in this very chapter. The very first incident we read of after the divine command to go forward upon the march, is an outbreak of murmuring discontent among God's chosen people.

Two points call for notice. First see that although God had so graciously borne with the people in the earlier stages of their journey; had met their every want and lament with instant supplies of grace, He now comes down with heavy judgment upon their complaining on the way. Why this change? It is undoubtedly due to the legal position that the people had so foolishly taken up when they first came to Sinai (Ex. 19) a position that we considered at some length in an earlier article.

Fire came down upon the complainers. The Fire of Jehovah is ever a symbol of the divine presence—whether in acceptance when a suitable sacrifice is offered, or in judgment upon sins for which there is no atonement.

The Book of Numbers contains frequent testimonies to the utter hardness of the human heart, and here in verse 4 is an evidence. Scarce had the fire of Taberah died away, than fresh rebellion broke out.

The trouble commenced with the mixed multitude, camp followers who had no root in themselves, but had come forth from Egypt with the rest. These not only had no taste for the journey and its goal themselves, but unhappily they infected the Israelites also with their discontent.

When in Egypt Israel wailed because of the taskmaster's whip, but now its sting was forgotten they yearned for the few poor pleasures of that place. That they should desire SIX things is in itself significant, but that the first of those things should be the fish of the Nile, the river god against whom Jehovah had executed Judgment, is still more indicative of the people's state of mind.

Still more serious is their contempt for the "Bread of God", that angel's food, that was so constantly rained down from heaven upon them for sustenance—the manna.

This is a searching matter for us to-day. If we are hankering after things that we once enjoyed in an unconverted state, it is morally certain that we are tiring of the Person of Christ upon whom our souls should feed.

May the Lord Himself preserve us from such lusting, and so keep us looking unto Himself through this our wilderness journey.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

AS PRESENTED BY

LUKE

By A. W. B.

Luke tells us more of John than any of the other writers of the gospels. Not only does he tell us of his birth, hinting briefly at his early life, but he gives some idea of the greatness of the man. In Luke our Lord is presented as God's perfect standard of manhood, so the man who will herald Him in, must be no ordinary man. We have God's estimate of John in ch. 1. v. 15, "He shall be great before the Lord." Of our Lord it was said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest." Later it is said of John "Thou shalt be called the prophet of the Highest."

Again the prophetic introduction is taken from Isaiah 40, v. 3, but the scope of it broadens now, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." Every valley shall be filled—a valley suggests to us a dark shadowy place, and Luke had already told us that some sat in darkness and the shadow of death,—so God will level things up that men may see His salvation. The mountains and hills shall be brought low,—no insurmountable obstacle shall obscure His salvation. The crooked shall be made straight,—nothing perverse shall prevent men finding God's centre, and last of all, the rough shall be made smooth,—God makes the approach easy for men.

It is to the multitude he directs his message in Luke, but the substance is the same as in Matthew, for God has but one message for men. In Matthew there was no response to his appeal "bring forth fruits," but here three classes ask, "what shall we do." The people come first. These would seem to belong to the more humble classes, for John assumes their ability to give will be restricted to the necessities of life,—food and clothing. The principle suggested in v. 11 is that they show mercy. As God has dealt with them so must they deal with their fellows. This is illustrated in Luke 10, when our Lord asked the lawyer, "who was neighbour to him that fell among thieves," and he was compelled to reply, "He that shewed mercy." To the publicans who come next, He says, "exact no more than is appointed you." They must not only show mercy they must do justly. Last of all, to the soldiers, His answer is, "do not oppress, do not accuse falsely," ch. 3. v. 14 N.T. An oppressed people never achieve great things, so there is the danger that he who oppresses another may disqualify himself for the sphere in life for which God intended him. But there is another way of

qualifying oneself for it, that is, by destroying his reputation, so he adds, "do not accuse falsely." The progress and reputation of another must be held in honour. Then He deals with their attitude towards themselves, "be content with your wages." His exhortation is summed up in the words of Micah 6. v. 8, "and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." But his ministry had ever one objective, to direct men's thoughts away from himself to Christ. They must never confuse him or compare him with our Lord, so in ch. 3. v. 16 he answers them ALL by directing their hearts to the One coming after him.

His ministry now closes, but Luke lifts the curtain and once more we see John. For our encouragement the Spirit of God will record John's discouragement, that we shall know how the Lord deals with His discouraged servants. No doubt John had looked for our Lord setting up His kingdom. He was sure this One was the Messiah, and he believed himself to be His herald, but instead of the kingdom there was the prison of Herod. His ministry was seemingly cut short by this ungodly king,—the Herods still had power. So he becomes perplexed, and as the rumour of all the wonderful miracles of our Lord reaches John, (and of him it is said in John's gospel, "John did no miracle,") he calls two of his disciples and sends them to Jesus with the question "art thou He that should come or look we for another." It may be he had looked for deliverance, but there is no indication that the Lord sent him, up to this time, even any message of encouragement, and how very discouraged and perplexed he was is evident. But how graciously the Lord deals with him. He does not reprove his lack of faith, nor does he remind him of the opened heavens that day by the Jordan. He quietly goes on with the work He came to do. He would suggest, to John, by His action, that the Kingdom is first moral,—righteousness, peace and love in the Holy Ghost, and how could He set up a Kingdom in the midst of such confusion and sin and disease. He must deal with the individual needs of men. Sin and its fruits can have no place in His Kingdom. He must deal with these ere there can be a Kingdom in manifestation. Then by His disciples He sends to John this message,—"Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." He invites the trust of His servant, that behind all which seemed contrary to his expectation, the purposes of God were being worked out according to His good pleasure. And as the discouragements and perplexities of life roll upon His oft-times troubled people, He would say yet again, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." In other words He asks us to trust His heart and bow ourselves to His will.

But the Lord had not yet finished, He had also a message for the multitude. They had followed

John to the wilderness, and our Lord puts to them this question, "what went ye out for to see," "A reed shaken with the wind?" He will never betray the discouragements of His servants, He reminds the multitude of the John of the wilderness, patient, enduring, strong, and confident. The John of the prison is known to the Lord alone. Again He asks this question, did they think to see John a prophet, and adds, "Yea I say unto you and much more than a prophet." He was One of whom prophets had spoken. It was said in Isa. 42, of Jehovah's elect Servant, "He shall not fail or be discouraged," not that discouragement was not His lot, for who, of all who have trod this earth, has encountered discouragements such as our blessed Lord, yet He covered from the idle gaze of the multitude and the cynical sneer of the Pharisees the waverings of His perplexed servant, for, that same prophecy had also said, "the bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench."

The Chief Apostle.

BY
ERNEST BARKER.

THE Lord Jesus was inexpressibly real to the Apostle Paul, and herein lies the secret of that wonderful life of devotion, the wideness of which we are able to gather from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles.

Paul enjoyed certain natural advantages and privileges which were his by reason of his birth and early training—privileges in which the ordinary Jew delighted to boast—but all of these he willingly esteemed *loss* for Christ. Not only so, but he was quite prepared to go further by esteeming *all things* but *loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He thus followed the noble example of Moses who esteemed *the reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures of the Egyptian court.

It would scarcely appear possible that God's servant could travel farther along

The path of unreserved devotion,

and yet he tells us that he was not only willing to suffer the loss of all things, *but that he had actually experienced that loss*. In fact, he esteemed all earthly things as refuse in order that Christ might become everything to him, or rather, because Christ *was* everything to him. (The word "*refuse*" implies that which was thrown to the dogs in their wild state).

All this shows how transcendently real the Lord Jesus Christ must have been to His imprisoned Apostle. It was because of this that Paul was able and willing to suffer well-nigh incredible persecution. It mattered little to him if he were misunderstood, maligned, beaten, buffeted, reviled, defamed,

and treated as the off-scouring of all things, so long as he could enjoy the conscious and abiding presence of his precious Lord.

It was also this

Reality of the Person of Christ

to his soul that enabled Paul to live a life of Christlike unselfishness: a life which formed a pattern for those who followed him: a life in which were seen so many of those outstanding characteristics so perfectly displayed in Him Who ever delighted to please, not Himself, but the Father Who sent Him.

Not that Paul lived a perfect life. There were indeed occasions when he failed, though the number of mistakes recorded is singularly few: the fewness of his failures indicating how closely he followed his Lord.

Little wonder that he was able to express so eloquently

The Greatest Object in Life,

"That I may know Him" (Phil. 3. 10). Little wonder also that he was able to voice the burning desire of his heart—a desire which is so closely allied to life's greatest objective—"If that I may lay hold of that for which also I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 12). Little wonder, too, that he was able so readily to forget the things behind, and to "stretch out" unto the things before, thus constantly pursuing the upward, homeward, heavenly course, ever having his spiritual vision fastened upon the final goal, "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 14).

Certain heart-searching questions automatically arise in one's mind: *What is Christ to me?* How real is He? What am I prepared to suffer for Him? How much of this world's pomp, vanity, and pleasure have I esteemed loss for Him? One thing is certain. If the Lord Jesus Christ were to us what He should be, and what He *longs* to be, there would be a spontaneous willingness on our part to *be* anything, to *do* anything, and to *go anywhere* for His sake.

I remember Bishop Taylor Smith giving us a lesson in grammar at Cambridge. We had always learnt to say, First Person, I; Second Person, Thou; Third Person, He.

But the Bishop told us that that was wrong—so wrong indeed that to put it right one had to turn it quite upside down. The *Christian's Grammar* is, First Person, HE; Second Person, Thou; Third Person, I.

And "HE" means God, the First Person, in the First Place.

And "Thou" means my fellow-man, my father, my mother, my sister, my brother, my friend, my school-fellow. They come next.

And "I," myself, come last.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XIX.

"If God be for us," Rom. 8. 31.

"It is Christ who maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8. 34.

"The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8. 26.

A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN.

WHEN the children of Israel came out of Egypt on that memorable night of the Passover their troubles were by no means at an end, for they found that their hard taskmasters of the day before, were by no means their friends on the day following, and it was not long before they learned that although they were delivered from judgment by the Blood, they were not immune from the enemy's attack, and in the 13th chapter of Exodus we find them with the Red Sea before, the Egyptians behind, and on either side walls of rock hedging them in. It appeared to them that their present circumstances were even worse than those from which they had been delivered, but in reality they had been spared an awful judgment, and did they but know, the God who had delivered them from THAT, was well able to deliver them from THIS, if only they could put their trust in Him.

But alas, human nature was the same in those days as it is to-day. Through our lack of trust do we not oftentimes find OURSELVES, when in similar circumstances, doubting the Hand that guides, and the Love that controls. There was something, however, about the present circumstances of these people in their hedged-in condition, which calls for special notice. They had above them the manifestation of God's presence, in the Pillar of Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night. And with this token of Divine favour we wonder at their murmurings, but are we, of this dispensation not favoured to a greater degree, in-as-much as we have the SPIRIT OF GOD *with us in very person*. What can we say then, concerning our own hearts of unbelief and murmurings, in the light of our greater privileges? The Pillar of Cloud to the

Children of Israel was an indication that God was with them, and that He was watching over them. But had He not been watching over them all the years that were passed? Was it only NOW that He was really with them, leading and guiding? They may have thought so, but in reality it was far otherwise, for Jehovah had been with His people, and watching over them, all the while they were in captivity.

In the opening chapters of Exodus God said to Moses, "I have surely *seen* the affliction of My people which are in captivity, and have *heard* their cry, by reason of their taskmasters, for I *know* their

sorrows, and am come down to deliver them." God was thus working *FOR* them all the time, although they were quite unconscious of the fact, until they now find themselves under the protecting hand of His Pillar.

In like manner we might well ask ourselves a similar question. We believe, now that we are God's children that He cares for us with a Father's love, and that He watches over our daily path, but what of the years that are past in our experience? Was He not watching over us in our un-converted days, and did He not lead and guide our steps right up to the time of our conversion, as well as since that date? Surely goodness and mercy have followed us *ALL* the days of our life, and He who knoweth our frame and has promised that we shall not be tested above that we are able has also promised to work all things together for our good, and to lead us by the right way.

Our attention is now drawn however to a very striking manifestation of God's power, and of His working on behalf of His people.

It appears that almost immediately after

Along life's road I'll fear no ill,
For Christ my Lord is with me still,
He never failed! He never will!
He faileth not.
E. R. Miles.

Pharoah had let the people go, he regretted it, and resolved on a final effort to re-capture them. Said he "I will pursue, I will overtake." (Exodus 15. 9.) The former he might do, the latter, never, for it was not now a question of Pharoah versus Israel, but of Pharoah versus Almighty God. The enemy may *pursue*, but ere they can overtake, the cloud of God's presence comes, giving light to His people, but darkness to the enemy. God places Himself between His people and their foes, and with such a protection what matters it who oppose? For if God be for us, who can be against us?

In this we have a beautiful illustration of the security of the believer, and the care which God manifests on behalf of His own.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written. For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans. 8-33-39.)

Whilst we rejoice in the security and confidence which is ours in Christ Jesus, may we never forget that the basis of it, the foundation of all our hope, is laid in the Cross of Christ, and the fact that the enemy has no power against us, is solely and only because God is *FOR* us, which forms the first strand of our threefold cord, "GOD FOR US." This is in itself, a threefold cord. For we find that the triune God three in one, is *FOR* the believer.

"What shall we then say of these things, for if

God be *FOR US*, who can be against us? (Roman 8. 31.)

"It is *Christ* who maketh intercession *FOR US*, at the right hand of God" (V. 34.)

It is the *Spirit* Himself, who also helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercession *FOR US* with groanings which cannot be uttered." (V.26)

Thus Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all arrayed on the side of the believer, and as One with God is in the majority, we can say with true confidence "If God be *FOR* us, who CAN be against us? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." (Romans 8. 32.)

(To be continued)



He Careth for You.

In my study hangs a motto;—

It has been there many years;—
And it cheers me on life's journey,
Drives away my cares and fears;
For it reads:—"He careth for you",
Simple words and but a few,
But they shed on me a radiance—
'Tis the word of God, and true.

Yes! He careth! Careth for me!
How it strengthens all my days!
For He knows of all my troubles,
Understandeth all my ways,
And it fills my heart with gladness,
It assures all needs supplied,
Need of Spirit, Soul and Body
Through my Lord once crucified.

Yes! He careth! Careth for me,
Cares for all who are His own,
For the tempest tossed, and troubled,
For the weary, sad, and lone.
Oh! He cares for them, and loves them,
On the Cross His Blood was shed,
Yea! for all the world he suffered,
Dying in man's room and stead.

Ah! He cares! and soon He's coming,
All His own to take away,
From this world of sin and sorrow
To the land of endless day.
Then, to be with Jesus yonder—
Then, with faith all lost in sight,
We shall see *how much* He careth
In that home of pure delight.

EDWIN R. MILES.

The brow of the Pilgrim is furrowed by care
The traces of age and of sorrow are there;
But he's nearing the land where all things are fair,
And the wrinkles are smoothing away.

He's nearing the land where they suffer no more,
Where the fever and fretting of earth shall be o'er
And now, as he almost is touching the shore,
The wrinkles are smoothed away.

Yes forever they're smoothed, for no shadow of
care,
Can enter the land of the bright and the fair,
In the presence of Jesus a Crown he shall wear,
When the wrinkles are all smoothed away.

P. T. GUTHRIE

PROPHECIES THAT ARE BEING FULFILLED IN OUR DAY

An Address given 19th October, 1932, by F. C. JENNINGS.

THE Bible is the only revelation of the heart and mind of God to a sinful and rebellious race. Neither providence with all its varied vicissitudes, nor history, with all its contradictory tongues, nor nature, with its ever-varied testimony can give one ray of clear light on the disposition of God to poor erring mankind. But of this, our Bible gives the sweetest, clearest light, and we do well to show its divine authorship against all the attacks that modern heresies raise against it. My part, this evening is to point to its prophecies that are actually fulfilled, or being fulfilled, in our own day, as the clear evidence of that authorship.

Nor do I lack an abundance of material for this. I might simply say, Look at every Jew you meet, and there is no land in which you will not find him, and you have a clear fulfilment of prophecy before your very eyes, for that scattering was foretold in a vast number of Scriptures. But we have another in 2 Tim. 3, where we are told that in the last days, men—*Christian* men by profession and so taking the place of being "strangers and pilgrims" on earth, shall be "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." Can anyone deny that that is fulfilled before our very eyes?

But I go a little deeper. I take it that you are all aware of the prophetic character of the seven letters that the living Lord caused to be written to the seven selected Churches in Asia (nor does that word in its self, lack a very striking prophetic force since it means "mire" or "mud". Is not the moral world we are in just that?) The last four of these Churches were to go down side by side to the end of this day. Do we not see that fulfilled? Is not Jezebel still living, in that harlot, Roman-Catholicism, ever committing fornication with the governments of earth? Has not dead Sardis still its correspondence in lifeless Protestant profession, with, in every denomination, a "few who have not defiled their garments," and are true? Are there not some, even in this day who answer to that lovely letter to the Church so well-named, of Philadelphia, because of their "brotherly-love," and cleaving for all their hope Godward to the NAME? And who of us, alas, and again alas, have not seen the complete, quick, and sickening failure of that divine movement in the repetition of the sects of Protestantism in a constantly increasing number of fragments that tell of shattered hopes? The very name of Laodicea is a prophecy of final conditions. If we wanted one English word that would correspond with it, we should find it in our common word, "Democracy,"

that is, "the people in power": and who will be bold enough to deny that that world-wide principle of civic government has not invaded that Church which is in such close union with the world, that it is difficult to define their respective bounds? But in this very fact is not this prophecy fulfilled before our eyes: "They shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" 2 Tim. 4. 3. Every item in that last solemn letter to Laodicea could be evidenced as being fulfilled before our eyes to-day; but it is too familiar to need pressing here, although we can never take it too much to heart.

But I must now ask your careful attention to something rather more difficult because less familiar. I speak to reasonable people, and I ask you, Have you any question, or have you ever heard any man of sound mind question, that those seven Churches were literal historic Churches, and in precisely the conditions predicated of them in the letters? I must beg you to consider carefully, for it is the basis of all that follows.

The whole book of Revelation is divinely divided for us in the commission given to John to write: "*The things that thou hast seen—the things that are—and the things that shall be after these things*" chapter 1. 19. If what John had "seen" is written in his first chapter, then "the things that are" would be the seven Churches in their literal, historical existence at that time, and as soon as their conditions altered, to say nothing of their ceasing to exist altogether,—they could no longer be the "things that are" for they "*are*" no longer!

But the movements of the prophecy go on without any reported break, and therefore we have *inevitably* in what follows, the "things that shall be after these things," at least in the historical point of view, and we become pledged to see these things in the critical events that have occurred in the sphere of prophecy during the intervening centuries. But I would here, with all the emphasis at my command, disavow all thought that this is the final purpose of the Spirit of God. These events can but give a kind of foreshadowing of the final fulfilment, which must be looked for in the future. This, however, by no means makes valueless this foreshadowing: it is of the greatest value, and I am assured has been given us by the goodness of God that our Hope might be vivified by discerning how near we now are to the approaching "Day"; so that we may still cleave to the "*We* who are alive and remain" of 1 Thess. 4. 17.

To adhere to my own specific purpose, I need only show you the roots of the tree that has its full fruitage in this our day. The historic Churches must have closed their historic testimony at about the close of the first century. The "Seals" foretell the complete break-up of the heathen world-power, and the sixth ends that series in the overthrow of that power in the fourth century. The first four trumpets foretell the break-up of the so-called "Christian Empire" under the repeated blows of Goths, Huns and Vandals led by Alaric, Genseric, Attila and Odoacer, "by the last of whom the name and office of the Roman Emperor was abolished," and thus, of the Imperial Roman Empire that "third part which appertained to its western division shone no more." This takes us down the stream of time to the close of the fifth century. The fifth trumpet foretells the inroads of the Saracens from the seventh to tenth centuries, whilst the sixth is, with practical unanimity, referred to the Turkish "flooding" of eastern Europe, beginning in the eleventh century to almost our own day.

The earlier vials foretell the outbreak of atheistic democracy that began in France in 1789, and of which we have seen an equal, if not an exceeding blasphemous exhibition in Russia. Nor can I pass without noticing how fitting is the word rendered "sore," in Rev. 16. 2, the very word used for the plague of leprosy—in its application to the twin forms of wickedness that manifested themselves in France at this time: that sober historian, Allison, computing that over one million persons were assassinated, and a prostitute was worshipped as the goddess of reason! Was that not leprosy?

The sixth vial corresponds with the sixth trumpet only in a contrasted way: *that* told of the river Euphrates in flood; *this* of the same river in ebb. And surely if the Turk is to be seen in the trumpet under the symbol of that river, then the same nation must be seen in the vial, only now it is no longer the divine agent of the infliction, but it is the *object* of it—the vial is poured *on* the Euphrates. But we must be far more sure of our ground here than is possible by human historians—we need divine certainty; nor do we lack it, for a reference to Isaiah 8. 7 supplies it fully. There the "river" (ever the Euphrates when not otherwise named) is interpreted as being "the king of Assyria and all his glory," and am I speaking too strongly when I say that I know, beyond reasonable question that, as in Isaiah's day the Assyrian was symbolized by the Euphrates, as coming from it, so the Turk takes the same name with the same place in this day. The Turk, as coming from the Euphrates, is to be seen under that symbol. It is then not merely a human but a divine interpretation—it is *certain!* He was in flood in the 11th century, he has steadily ebbed since 1821, the date of Ali Pasha's rebellion. You may term it a coincidence if you wish, but the coincidences will become too numerous, and you

may as well admit divine design first as last, for ordinary candour and honesty will compel you eventually so to do.

But what is the purpose of this drying up of the river? It is "*That the way of the kings of the rising of the sun may be prepared.*" The word "sun" that is omitted entirely in our A. V. is the one key to the interpretation. The Holy Ghost did not write "east," but "the rising of the sun." This term occurs only at one other place, chapter 7, and there in such direct relation to the twelve tribes of Israel as compels us to see the same people here. For, my own part, I fail to see the slightest reason for "moon" and "stars" being used as symbols, as they admittedly are, and the sun, pre-eminent as it is amid the heavenly bodies, not to be so used. Nor, in the light of Mal. 4. 2, have we the slightest hesitation in applying it to our Lord Jesus, Who is ever "the Sun of righteousness" with healing in His wings. But I ask, for what people does He thus arise as that "Sun"? To what people does He bring that "healing"? Is it the Church? Most surely not; for *her* blessing, He comes as Pre-cursor to the Sun, even the "Bright and Morning Star." Is it then for the blessing of the Gentiles? No, for these He comes to judge for their treatment of His brethren as Matt. 25. 31-46 tells us. But for Israel His coming in manifested glory will be the day of their redemption, and we must find then "the kings of the rising of the sun" in them, i.e. the Jews—and nowhere else! Now there can be no question that that royal place for Israel, when they shall be "the head and not the tail" (Deut. 28. 13) lies in the future; but have we no foreshadowing of it? Do we not see with our own eyes that as the Turk has receded, Palestine has become gradually opened to its own people, till to-day, and since General Allenby entered Jerusalem, Turkey offers no obstruction whatever to the return of the Jews, and so is, as far as that goes, "dried up"; and in consequence of that drying up, we see the Jews returning, but not yet as "kings" it is true—that remains for the future.

It is my limitation of time alone that compels me to go past those three unclean spirits, that it would not be difficult, I think, to find to-day respectively in the apostate pulpits of Protestant Churches—in the vile apostasies of civic powers as for instance in Moscow, and in the no less vile abominations of the Papacy, but I must go to what is called "Armageddon," and we must always bear in mind that we are dealing with the shadow, and not the substance of all these prophecies—with the *historical*, and not the *final*. But if God foresaw and foretold of the chastening that He would send on His unfaithful witness "Christendom" in Saracen and Turk, do you think that it would be unreasonable to expect that He will not ignore a more severe chastening in a fratricidal conflict that convulsed and shattered the prosperity of that same unfaithful witness in the

death of the flower of its youth? And in this terrific calamity the humble believer sees once more, and himself shares in the suffering from, the "severity of God." I find it impossible not to believe that what by every channel of the communication of ideas—by pulpit and platform; by newspaper and magazine, by periodicals, books and all forms of literature—has been called (falsely called, I admit) "Armageddon" is that, *in this foreshadowing sense*, and in this, prophecy is fulfilled before our very eyes.

Thus we stand to-day at the very end of the sixth vial; although with a continuation of suspicion and latent hostility amid the nations, it may perhaps be justly questioned whether "Armageddon" has come to its full end, and that may account for our still being in the place of witnessing on the earth. Nor am I going beyond my province in glancing at the pouring out of the seventh vial, in so far as to see its near approaching fulfilment in the present prominence of that on which it is to be poured—the Air. Our own poet Tennyson had a most striking pre-vision of it when he wrote nearly 100 years ago:

"For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and the wonders that should be.
Saw the heavens filled with commerce argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales.
Heard the heavens filled with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew,
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue."

He foresaw the fulfilment of prophecy.

The very prominence of the "Air" is suggestive of the near approach of the pouring out of the last vial of the wrath of God upon it, when the solemn "*It is done!*" shall speak of the end of this day of grace!

For I feel as sure that the "Air" is a symbol, as that Water and Land are. These three elements compose man's habitation: Water, Land and Air. Compare with this trinity the three-fold division of mankind in 1 Cor. 10. 32: "Giving none offence, neither to the *Jews*, nor to the *Gentiles*, nor to the *Church of God*." "Water" is clearly said to symbolize "peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues" in one word, *Gentiles*. (Rev. 17. 15). The Land that came up from the waters has ever been seen as a symbol of the Jew who came out from the *Gentiles*: thus the beast from the land in chapter 13, is as surely taken to be a Jew, as the beast from the Sea to be the future *Gentile* civil Governor. But that leaves the remaining element, Air as a symbol of the remaining constituent of mankind, "*the Church of God!*" I have no doubt but that to many this would seem self-confuting. Rome would quote: "On this rock I will build my Church and the gates

of hell shall not prevail against it," and against *that* Church, of which Christ then spoke, and which He builds upon Himself as the "Living Stone," as Peter (whom Rome herself terms her first Pope) called Him, (1 Peter 2. 4), no power of Death or Hell shall prevail. But against the man-made professed representation of that Church—the end is as clearly told to be utter reprobation as we have seen in the letter to Laodicea, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." Does not that look very much like divine judgment on the Church? As each division of mankind has in its turn failed and its course ended in a cataclysm of judgment: the *Gentile*, or man at large, in the flood: the Jew in the destruction of his city and subsequent scattering, so has the last witness utterly failed, and is now awaiting the inevitable and more terrible infliction which, in the sign-language of Revelation is told in the pouring out of the last vial of wrath upon the Air.

Consider how admirably the Air fills the type of the Church: for as the Church is *heavenly* in its calling, so is the Air the *heavenly* element: as the elevation of the land *above* the water may well typify the *higher* privileges of the Jew over the *Gentile*, so does the still *higher elevation* of the Air speak of the far greater privileges that have been accorded the Church over both Jew and *Gentile*. (Comp. Matt. 11. 23). As the Air covers both water and land, so does the Church embrace both Jew and *Gentile*: finally, as judgment here falls upon the Air, so does it fall on what that unified mass of earthly religion has become, "*Babylon the Great*" which is the name divinely given to the apostate unified *Church* of the future. Can there be any possible question that in this last dread judgment of the vial poured on the air we have the correspondence to the judgment on the Church in its last Laodicean condition in being "*spewed out of his mouth?*" This may possibly be new, I admit, and will probably be met with ridicule, if considered at all, by the mass of professing Christians. The ears of these have to be soothed with false prophecies of increasing approval and prosperity, culminating in a millenium without Christ, still rejected from His own throne; but sober Christians will at least consider it; for if well-based, as I can have no question it is, then we are standing on the very verge of the Lord's calling us to be with Himself! We, even we, may be alive and remain till He come!

For not one drop of rain could fall on the earth till Noah was shut in the Ark. Not one firebrand could scorch the cities of the plain till Lot was safe in Zoar; *nor can one drop of that cup of wrath be poured upon the Air until all who are "in Christ" are caught up to be forever with Him*—and that must be thrillingly near!

Thus if the 6th Vial is poured on the Euphrates in order that God's earthly people may be unhindered in their return to their earthly homeland, the last is poured upon the Air that there may be nothing to

interpose and hinder the return of His heavenly people to *their Home—their Father's House!*

But that leads me back to the parenthetical 15th verse, and with solemn sense of its significance, I would remind myself, and would remind you, my beloved brethren, that—

1. When we see the Gentile, whose heel has been upon Palestine for centuries, expelled therefrom.—

2. When we see the Jew who 100 years ago was forbidden to own one foot of land in his own country returning there without the slightest hindrance—

3. When we see a terrific conflict that is almost universally called "Armageddon"—

4. When we see a fast-ripening apostasy of the professing Church with a strong trend to unification in that apostasy,—

then, when these fulfilments occur before our eyes, do we need to listen with the keenest attention to His voice saying, "*Behold I come as a thief* (that is, quite unexpectedly as Matt. 24. 43). *Blessed is he* (note the individuality, as in the letter to Laodicea: "If any one") *that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*" (again as in Laodicea). It would be beyond my present purpose to expound, but do you not see how greatly this confirms the

"Historical Interpretation" of the book having a very real and divinely accorded place; for if there were nothing whatever *but* the Future, and all these judgments had no foreshadowings in the present, of what possible application to us who are living in the present, would this Word of our Lord be? I appeal to you, my brethren, can we be astray in esteeming this interpretation of these last two "Vials" to be, of all that He has given us, the clearest, strongest, most assured evidence of the very near coming of our Redeemer. May His grace keep us, one and all, watching so that that day do not overtake us as a thief.

*"Look back with Thanksgiving,
Look forward with praise,
And God will supply thee
With Strength as thy days."*

DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

IN February, 1914, the district in which we are living was suffering from famine, caused through the failure of crops the previous year. There was yet another month before the wheat would be ready for harvest, and often we saw people out in the fields and on the hills seeking something to eat. Many had come to us from time to time for help in various ways, but towards the end of February we were not in a position to help them further, and one day we had to tell them that we had nothing left, but I told them that there was something we could all do.

They seemed surprised and enquired what. I told them that we could *pray*, for we have a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Their reply was: "We will come every day and join you in prayer." So each afternoon was given to prayer, and I think it was on the fourth afternoon, while we were at prayer, a man came and called me out to see what was taking place.

We all went out, and saw, away in the north, a very dark cloud coming towards us. I told the people that I thought we were in for a big storm, and we watched the cloud as it came across our district. As it passed on it rained heavily, but it was not ordinary rain; it rained little black seeds, and they fell in such abundance that the people were able to go out and shovel them up. As soon as the storm was over, almost the first question asked was "What is it?" reminding us of the children of Israel, who asked a similar question when the manna fell. They soon decided to try the seeds by beating them, and thus removing the husks. Inside was a small white seed, which they boiled, and to their joy found it was eatable. That night we had a season of praise. Not only the Christians and enquirers, but many of the people joined us in returning thanks to God for His wonderful provision and answer to prayer at this time of need.

While on furlough in 1931, during our visit to Canada, we met an old worker of the China Inland Mission who heard me relate this story at a conference and a few days later we met at a friend's house. He then related that when in the north of China, at the same time, he had witnessed the dark cloud which passed over their district, and that he had seen men after the storm dragging various pieces of furniture and wreckage of houses which were supposed to have been carried there by the storm, and he often wondered where that dark cloud had spent itself, and was delighted to hear me tell the story. We surmise that a great storm must have arisen away in Mongolia, and had caused the wreckage of places where this seed was stored (as we know that this seed, which is known as Kao-Liang, is cultivated in Mongolia) and the wind being so great all was carried away, the furniture, not being needed, was allowed to drop, but the seed was carried more than fifteen hundred miles to the district where the need was so great and prayer was being offered!

What a wonderful God is our God! Truly, we can say, there is nothing too hard for Him to do. May we be strengthened to trust Him wholly. We may add that the seed had fallen so abundantly that the people were sustained until the wheat was gathered about a month later.

R. ERNEST JONES,

Teianhsien, Kiangsi.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART VII. CHAPTER 11 (Cont.).

AFTER a long tuition at the foot of Mount Sinai, Israel marched forward once more on their journeys. That their start was a sad one we saw but too well at the close of the last article, which dealt with the early verses of Chapter XI.

In the face of repeated murmuring and rebellion even Moses becomes discouraged, and lest we should judge him hurriedly for this lapse, let us think a moment of the magnitude of the task with which he was faced. Here was a people of 600,000 fighting men, plus many other ranks and grades, a people that constantly mistrusted and complained, and so brought themselves under the displeasure of Jehovah.

"It is too heavy for me?" lamented Moses. Only those who as Paul, upon whom, in addition to his many personal difficulties, there came the

"Care of all the churches",

can appreciate what such a weight of responsibility means.

Jehovah's reply is gracious; He will have the weight to be shared. Seventy elders of the people shall be helpers of Moses in his great work. Something of this sort of thing had previously been attempted in Exodus 19—on the advice of Moses' father-in-law, Jethro—but apparently it had not worked efficiently. Now the command is of the Lord, and moreover the selection was sealed of Himself.

In the course of the ordination of these elders, a curious thing happened. Moses, it would seem had pitched the Tabernacle *outside* the camp as a gathering place, and thither the elders were to resort. But it was found that two of them—Eldad and Medad—were still staying within the camp, even though they prophesied by the spirit of Jehovah. Joshua, mighty man though he became later on, here fails to understand how that God could seemingly permit things that were out of order. Moses wonderfully rises above all petty human considerations and looks at the question from God's standpoint. Here were two who truly prophesied by the spirit of Jehovah—of that there was no question—"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets" is his response.

This should help to-day. Let us not be concerned with profession, however pretentious it may be; neither let us be deceived by wonderful things that proceed avowedly out of systems basically and inherently evil and unscriptural. On the other hand if there were found those who are on their own confession resting on nothing but the enabling of the Holy Spirit—even though they walk not "with us," let us not condemn them but desire that indeed all men might be empowered by that same spirit. Note, however, that only *two out of seventy* so acted. The second vital subject of this 11th chapter is the coming of the quails, the flesh that the murmurers had so greatly desired. So often it happens that God will give His people that for which they crave—even when their craving is contrary to His own mind for them. It is so here. Flesh they cried for; flesh they got. But even as they ate the thing they so greatly desired, judgment fell upon them, and when the people left the camping place, they left the burying places of many of the lusters too.

CHAPTER 12.

From a nation's wide disaffection in Ch. 11. the scene here narrows down to domestic unrest in the family of Moses himself. But see how this onslaught of tongues is met.

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (V,3)

It was bad enough for strangers to rise up against him, but for his own elder sister, to impugna his God-given authority must surely rouse the ire of such a proven leader of men.

But Moses neither flames up in self-justification, nor indeed is there need. Very significantly are we told at the end of Verse 2 "And the Lord heard". Here was Moses whose anger flared when he saw the oppression of his brethren back in Egypt, and slew the Egyptian, who so abundantly manifested that he was very far from being a *weak* man, yet is here content to allow the Lord to deal with this deadly insult on the part of his own kin in the matter of his divine appointment.

The extension of grace to any other nation has always angered Israel, and here the cause of the discontent is the Ethiopian woman whom Moses had married.

It is a serious thing indeed to oppose a man whom God is manifestly using at the moment. "Wherefore, then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

Such an offence must bring heavy judgment. Miriam is stricken a leper. In an article upon the Book of Leviticus last year we considered in some detail the scripture meaning of this dreadful disease and found that it signified much more than sin in general. Rather does it set forth that working of self-will on the part of those who should know better. Compare the acts of Gehazi the servant of Elisha, and Uzziah the King, in this respect (See 2. Kings 5. 1-27 and 2. Chron. 26. 19.)

In connection with the healing of Miriam, Moses becomes a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through the intercession of the one against whom the offence had been committed that God's wrath is appeased. How true this is of things to-day both with regard to the unconverted and also to the people of God.

The larger issues of the sin are dealt with in vv. 15-16. The progress of the whole camp was held up for seven days until Miriam was ceremonially cleansed from the awful visitation.

CHAPTER 13.

The opening verse calls for a careful comparison with another portion of scripture in order that its implication may be rightly understood. Taken on the surface it would appear as if the sending of the spies into the Land had been entirely of divine command. But Deut. 1. 22 gives a very different view. The initial thought was with the *people*, and it sprang from unbelief of heart.

"And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said 'We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come'."

The fact that Moses tells us there that the plan pleased *him* well, must not be taken to indicate that it was according to the mind of God. Israel had received the absolute promise of God that He would give unto them the land of Canaan. Faith would have gone forward resting on that promise, but unbelief wanted to see something beforehand of the problems and dangers ahead. Then even as was the case in Chapter 11 in reference to the flesh for which they lusted, God gave them their hearts desire, and now *commands* that the spies shall be sent forth.

In reference to these twelve who were thus sent forth, several points call for notice and examination

First consider the miracle of their *preservation* during that forty days of journeying through a land teeming with enemies who had been forewarned of Israel's approach (See Josh. 2. 9. 10).

The very *time* taken in their search is significant, for forty is ever in Scripture the number of full proving or testing. After that journey they had no excuse for not knowing the possibilities of the country promised them of God.

One thing it is of the most importance to note: not one of the twelve men denied that the land was a good one, that it "flowed with milk and honey." For why? Because the *amazing fruit* of it had been born back on their shoulders. No, there could not be any question that the land was a good one, as good indeed as God had promised. What ten out of the twelve *did* deny was the ability of God to bring His people into such a wonderful land.

Very clearly these ten men had entirely lost sight of the power of Jehovah who had dried up the Red sea, who had fought for them, who had provided their every need along the way. They weighed up the possibilities of conquering the land of Canaan in the light of their own military power, and from that point of view rightly concluded that the task was hopeless: (Num. 13. 33.)

The parallel for us today is found in the early verses of the Ephesian epistle.

Unbelief would reason thus: These are certainly wonderful things, but it is quite impossible that we should enjoy them now—we could never attain to them." True indeed it is that *WE* could not, but God blessedly enough does not ask us to do so. On the contrary He makes an absolute statement, and declares that they are here and now true of every believer. "The land which I have given" God repeatedly told Israel. They had but to put their foot upon it to possess it for ever.

So with us to-day. Faith apprehends what God has said, and so enjoys even now that wonderful bunch of divine fruits described there in Ephesians chapter 1. May we indeed do so to the full.

"TEN MEN OR TWO MEN."

Ten men who failed to see God
Saw the cities were fenced and high;
Two men "looking off" unto God
Saw God's day for those cities draw nigh.

Ten men who failed to see God
Saw the giants were great and tall;
Two men "looking off" unto God
By faith counted giants but small.

Ten men who failed to see God
Failed Him, and their brethren too;
Two men "looking off" unto God
Cried, "Our Lord will carry us through!"

Ten men who failed to see God
Discouraged their brother men;
Two men saw their God everywhere;
Are *WE* of the Two or the Ten?

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and E. C. Mais.

No. 7.—SANCTIFICATION.

THE importance of the subject we are about to consider may be gathered from the fact that so much is said about it in the Bible.

Sometimes men divide the truths of divine revelation into “ essentials ” and “ non-essentials. ” By these terms they mean truths that are essential to salvation and those that are not. But this is a very selfish way of looking at things. Surely the fact that God has made a communication to us regarding any subject shows that He considers the matter as essential to His own glory and to our blessing. We really cannot afford to be indifferent to *any* divine truth, whether or not we see its immediate bearing upon ourselves. Certainly sanctification is a subject that we cannot neglect without being great losers.

What is it to be sanctified ?

The meaning of the word is, to be separated or set apart for a purpose. There is a verse in Psalm iv. which conveys the thought : “ *The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself* ”.

It is important that we should bear this in mind, for any look on sanctification as a process of betterment by which people are gradually made holier, and fitted to dwell in heaven.

An examination of the passages of Scripture which speak of the subject will show the falsity of this idea. For example, in Deuteronomy xv. 19 we find that young bullocks and sheep were sanctified. This certainly cannot mean that they were improved and made holier ; it simply means that they were set apart for a purpose.

In Isaiah lxvi. 17 wicked men are said to have sanctified themselves to do evil. That is, they set themselves apart for the accomplishment of their wicked purpose.

In John xvii. 19 the Lord Jesus says : “ *For their sakes I sanctify myself.* ” It cannot possibly be that *He* needed to be improved and made holier, for He was ever perfect and spotlessly holy. But for the sake of “ His own ” He was about to separate Himself from earth, and the things into the midst of which He had come, and was going back to heaven. He would thus set *Himself apart*, to serve His people as their Advocate and Intercessor.

These passages clearly show the true meaning of sanctification.

Who are the people who are sanctified ?

It is clear from the New Testament that *all* true believers in Christ are sanctified. With the forgiveness of sins goes “ inheritance among them which are sanctified ” (Acts xx. 18).

Writing to the believers at Corinth, the apostle says : “ Ye are washed . . . ye are sanctified ” (1 Cor. vi. 11).

The word “ saint ” simply means a sanctified person ; and this was the usual name by which *all* God’s people in those early days were known. They were called “ disciples, ” “ brethren, ” “ Christians, ” “ friends, ” “ believers, ” but the name most commonly used was “ saints. ” And this name was not applied merely to certain holy and devoted men, but to *all* true Christians.

Nowadays the word has well-nigh dropped out of use, and if we happen to speak of having been to see some of the “ saints, ” we are stared at as if we had been holding intercourse with the spirits of the dead ! The truth is, that poor bed-ridden Elizabeth B——, in the next street, is as much a saint as St. Peter himself ; and old Thomas J——, who breaks stones by the roadside, has as much claim to the title as St. Paul the apostle.

Peter and Paul were not saints because of their zeal, and holiness, and devotion. They were saints because they were cleansed from their sins by Christ’s precious blood, and that is what has made every true believer a saint, or a “ sanctified person. ”

Are even those believers who are full of imperfections entitled to regard themselves as sanctified ?

If only those who had got rid of their imperfections were sanctified, we should have to search a long time before we found them. Even the best amongst us is full of imperfection, and those who live in closest communion with God feel their own imperfections most.

But sanctification does not depend upon what we are in ourselves. Every Christian has what Scripture calls “ the flesh ” in him ; and “ the flesh, ” whether in a saint or an unconverted sinner, is hopelessly, irremediably bad. It is evident, then, that what constitutes our sanctification is not an improvement of “ the flesh. ”

In 1 Corinthians i. 2 we see that it is *in Christ Jesus* that we are sanctified, not in ourselves. And in verse 30 of the same chapter we are told that *Christ Jesus* (not a holier or more perfect state) "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification."

Let me here explain that as Christians we must learn to think of ourselves in two entirely different ways. First as we actually are here in this world, with "the flesh" still in us, with temptations and trials around, and our bodies still bearing Adam's likeness. *As such*, our history will end when we leave this world. Secondly as we are *in Christ*, standing in all the value of His finished work, and set before God to enjoy His favour, without a spot or blemish, or imperfection. The latter is what we shall *actually* be when in heaven, but God sees us thus already *in Christ*, and faith reckons as He reckons.

As men in "the flesh," children of Adam, God cannot derive pleasure from us. He has declared that man after that order will not do for Him. His purpose of grace and blessing must be secured in Another, even in Christ, and as newly created after *Christ's* order, God can have pleasure in us. Hence it is that our sanctification (or being set apart for God's pleasure) must be *in Christ*. No imperfections in us can possibly affect our position *in Him*, nor touch what we have in Him.

It may not be easy to grasp this point all at once.

When is a believer sanctified ?

Scripture speaks of our sanctification in connection with more than one period of time.

(i.) Before the world was, in the mind and purpose of God.

(ii.) At the cross, when Jesus died, nineteen centuries ago.

(iii.) When, through the Holy Spirit, the gospel is brought home to us in power, and we receive it.

Let us use a homely illustration to show how this can be.

One Monday morning a lady is doing some shopping at one of the large stores. While making her purchases a very pretty hat catches her eye. She thinks "What a charming hat!" and is disappointed to find that she has not enough money in her purse to buy it there and then. But she makes a mental note of that hat, and determines to secure it at the earliest opportunity.

On Tuesday the lady is again at the store. She asks for the hat, pays for it, and becomes its owner. It is now her hat, to do with it as she pleases. "Lay it on one side," she says, "and I will send for it to-morrow."

On Wednesday the lady sends her servant. The maid enters the store, states her errand, mentions her mistress's name, and returns with the bag containing the hat.

Now let me ask you, *When* did the lady sanctify, or set apart, that hat for her own use ?

On Monday, so far as her mind and purpose went; on Tuesday, in securing it by payment of the price; on Wednesday, by sending her servant for it, by which means the hat was *actually* taken from the store to the lady's house.

Now this illustration will at least serve to make it clear *when* we were sanctified or set apart by God for His own purposes.

First of all, long ago in the past eternity, God predestinated us to be His sons. He said as it were, "They shall be Mine for My heart to delight in and My hand to bless." So in purpose God set us apart, or sanctified us, before the world began (see Rom. viii. 29, 30; Eph. i. 4; 2 Thess. ii 13).

Then, when Jesus died, the price of our redemption was paid. Every obstacle which sin had raised to our being God's for all eternity was removed, and the way opened for the accomplishment of His gracious purpose. We were thus set apart by the payment of the heavy price by which He bought us and made us His own (see 1 Cor. vi 20). So that besides being sanctified by God's purpose and will, "*we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*" (Heb. x. 10).

Lastly, when, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, our hearts are opened to receive the gospel, we are actually and personally brought to Him. We are separated from our sins; we are no longer a part of this world that is hurrying on to judgment. We are effectually set apart for God. This aspect of our sanctification is referred to in 2 Thessalonians ii. 13: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through *sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel.*"

Is there no such thing as a process of sanctification going on from day to day in the believer's life ?

Indeed there is: We have not yet touched upon this practical side of the subject, because I wanted everyone to be quite clear as to our being sanctified *once for all* by the purpose of God, the work of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

But the practical aspect of sanctification is also of immense importance. In 1 Thessalonians v. 23 the Apostle prays that the God of peace may wholly sanctify the believers to whom he writes. What does he mean ?

Let us revert once more to the illustration of the lady and the hat. After she had bought it, and the servant had fetched it, is that the end of its history? By no means. Now that it has actually become the lady's property, it is from day to day set apart for her own use. It is set apart for the sole use of its possessor.

Now God having purposed our blessing, and Christ having died to secure it, and the Holy Spirit

having wrought in us effectually so that we have been brought to God—is that the end of the matter? Not at all. The Holy Spirit continues His work in us, detaching us more and more from the things of this world, separating us from the lusts of the flesh, the evil ways in which we once walked, in this way promoting our *practical* sanctification.

This is not brought to pass, mark, by the sinful nature within us being gradually rooted out, or the flesh improved, but by our being led into the blessed secret of liberty from the galling yoke of sin, victory over the power of evil within, and joy in the Holy Ghost. As our hearts get more and more attached to Christ, we turn with increased loathing from all that is of self, and the result is that in our walk and ways we are "holiness to the Lord," truly separated unto Him.

What is it that God uses to promote our sanctification?

He may, and doubtless does, work by means of many things. The application of *the truth* to our souls is one of the most effectual means. When the Lord Jesus was praying for us, in John xvii., He said: "*Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.*"

I trust all those who have so lately been converted will become diligent students of God's Book. If you do not feed on the sincere milk of the Word, your souls will starve. As you read, God will bless it to you, and it will have a separating or sanctifying effect upon you. As you become more familiar with its wonderful truths, you will the better discern what is of God and what is of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Many things in which you now see no harm will be exposed to you by the truth which you will learn, and in that way you will be separated from them. You will learn that your Lord and Saviour has no place on earth, He is rejected here, and has been driven away from the world. Tell me, will not the thought of *that* separate you, heart and soul, from the scene where *He* was refused?

Another thing that God uses, is *the wrath and persecution of wicked men*. We have an instance of this in John ix. The blind man had been healed by Jesus, and had boldly confessed His name. This was too much for the Jewish leaders. It was intolerable that a man should stand up for the One whom they hated. So after reviling the man who confessed Him, *they cast him out*.

Do you not think that their action would have a very powerful effect upon that man, detaching his heart from the system of things in the midst of which he had been brought up, and entwining his affections around Christ? I am sure that his ex-communication by the religious leaders of his day greatly helped towards his sanctification.

"Blessed are ye," said the Lord Jesus, "when men shall hate you, and *when they shall separate you from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke vi. 22).

Why is it necessary for us to be sanctified?

In order that we may be practically suited for God's purpose, and meet for the Master's use. See what is said in 2 Timothy ii. 21 about the vessel that is "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Does not that strike a chord of desire within your heart, dear fellow-believer? Do you not ardently wish to be a vessel meet for the Master's use? You *may* be one, but in order that you may be suited for His use you must be practically separated from all that is not of Him, your heart weaned from the world, your soul emancipated from the bondage of sin and the flesh. In a word, you must be set apart, by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in you, for *Christ*.

You were speaking just now about the means God uses for our practical sanctification.

Is not affliction one of these?

Yes, God has to discipline us and pass us through tribulation, but it is always for our good, that what is of God in us may be developed, and that we may be increasingly suited for God's pleasure.

The word "tribulation" comes to us from the Latin *tribulum*, which was a kind of triple flail with which the Romans used to thresh wheat. The *tribulum* separated the husk from the wheat, and that is what tribulation does for us. There is a great deal of "husk" about us which needs to be got rid of. Hence God's discipline of His children. He purges us that we may bring forth more fruit.

Is not the hope of the Lord's coming another means of practical sanctification?

Yes. We read that "*every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure*" (1 John iii. 3).

It is easy to see how this is so. If we are expecting the Lord's return at any moment we shall be careful about what we do and say. We shall not wish Him to come and find us reading doubtful books, or keeping bad company, or sitting in places of worldly amusement, or saying anything we would not like Him to hear. The thought of His coming, if kept before our minds, and cherished as a hope in our hearts, is bound to have a marked effect upon us, purifying us from what is not of H.M., and sanctifying, or separating, us more and more to Himself.

Does the word "sanctify" in every case mean "separate"?

I do not say that the two words can always be used interchangeably, but generally speaking they can. Certainly the usual meaning of the word as employed in Scripture is "set apart" for some divine purpose.

But we are too apt to confine our thoughts of the matter to what we are sanctified FROM. It is a happy thing to understand somewhat of what we are sanctified FOR.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

AS PRESENTED BY

JOHN.

By A. W. B.

In John's gospel he is announced as "A man sent from God," and for a distinct purpose. He is not a messenger, he is a witness. He is not announcing certain facts, he is attesting truths concerning another. His witness is concerning a Light, which because of blindness, men cannot see. In ch. 5. v. 35, N.T., the Lord says of John, "He was a burning and a shining light." The Lord was light in Himself, John was a light which had been lit by the Lord. There is no prophetic introduction here, nor is there any record of his parentage, for, as these details were not essential concerning one employed as a messenger, they are equally irrelevant to a witness. But it is essential that a witness shall know the one concerning whom he bears witness. And as the One of Whom he bore witness was the only begotten Son whom the Father sent into the world, John comes before us as a man sent from God.

He witnesses first to the pre-existence of the One who has come, and also to His pre-eminence,— "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." Here he does not think so much of our Lord as the mighty One, he thinks of that unique and pre-eminent place which was essentially His, as the One before Whom all men and all things stand debtors, "for of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace." In Col. 1. 17. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist," and in verse 18, and 19, the apostle goes on to say of Him, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

The second occasion on which he witnesses is to the priests and Levites who come, ch. 1. v. 19. His replies to their questions concerning himself show a certain reticence, because a witness does not speak about himself. But he is very definite when he speaks of the Lord. "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not, who coming after me, is preferred before me, Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." In the other gospels he speaks of the Lord as the coming One," suggesting His approach, but here He stands among them, for verse 14 tells us that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. It was the beholding of that moral glory

that convinced John of his utter unworthiness to perform even the most lowly service for the Lord.

In verse 34 of ch. 1, we have the climax of his testimony. "I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." What more emphatic testimony can a witness give than that he saw. In verse 32, John tells what he saw, "The Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove and It abode upon Him." And to confirm this testimony of what he saw, he adds, "but He that sent me to baptize, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

His testimony established, it now begins to come true what he says of himself in John 3, "He must increase but I must decrease," and John himself is the agent through which their hearts will be attracted, for two of those who heard him in v. 36 "follow Jesus."

When he comes before us in ch. 3 it is not altogether as a witness, he rather makes witnesses of his audience, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ but that I am sent before Him." He is now about to pass out of view in John's gospel, and he stands, like Moses on Pisgah, seeing something in which he shall not participate. In Luke's gospel the scope of his message had been "all flesh," but here it is narrowed down. He says in v. 29 "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." With spiritual vision he sees that which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, as the Lord's own possession. John's link is with the bridegroom not the bride. He is no longer active—he stands. He is no longer a voice—he hears and rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. Then he passes out, but not until he has demonstrated the truth, that the One who, in John's gospel, fully satisfied the heart of God the Father, alone can satisfy the heart of man, "This my joy therefore is fulfilled." His ministry is finished but it has finished with joy. His joy was such as the Lord promised in John 16. v. 22 "Your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you."

So the record of John's ministry closes in the gospels. In Matthew he is viewed as the herald of the King! In Mark, in the humble sphere of a messenger! In Luke as the forerunner of our Lord as Son of Man, guiding men's feet into the way of peace. Last of all in John's gospel witnessing, and always with his thoughts and eyes on the One of Whom he witnessed, for in this relation he must be a careful observer. Thus in this fourfold presentation of his ministry, we have, in measure, a correspondence to the character of the presentation and ministry of our Lord. And to-day, through His grace, in our degree, we may still show that correspondence, and present before men graces and characteristics which will remind them of our Lord.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XX.

"If God be for us." Rom. 8. 31.

"It is *Christ* who maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8. 34.

"The *Spirit* Himself maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8. 26.

A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN—(cont.).



For the second strand of our threefold cord we turn to the 40th of Exodus, verse 34, where we read of the setting up of the Tabernacle of Old. Here we see that same cloud, which in Exodus 14 divided the Egyptians from the Children of Israel, now ABIDING in the camp of God's people, and it is real progress in the Spiritual life when the believer learns that the God of Calvary, who delivered him from death and judgment and made him His child, now indwells him in common with all His people, both collectively and individually. (1. Corinthians 6. 19.)

How are you treating this Heavenly guest ?

In time past we were dead *IN* sin, but now through the gracious operation of the Spirit of God we should be dead *TO* sin. John tells us that "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, *GOD* abideth *IN HIM* and He in God." (1 John 4. 15) This "confession" is not a mere lip confession, but the joint testimony of a heart and life lived in true harmony with this great fact. The one who thus confesses Christ to be the Son of God must indeed be a Christian, for by nature we are dead, but if God who is LIFE, abides *IN* us, it is evident that death must have given place to life. As death is the wages of sin, it is equally apparent that the sin question has been dealt with on behalf of that one in whom God abides, for He is of too pure an eye to behold iniquity.

The Lord Jesus "came unto His own but His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him to them gave He power, (Authority) to become the Sons of God, even to them which BELIEVE in His name." God indwells such, and henceforth they live a new life, and should be able to say, "The life which I now live, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." "I live, yet not I, but *CHRIST* liveth *IN ME*." "It hath pleased the Father that in the Lord Jesus Christ should all fulness dwell,

in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and yet He individually indwells the weakest, feeblest believer, of whom it can be said, "*Christ in you* the hope of glory." Every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure. The more we realise our blessings in Christ, the more will our lives correspond with His perfect, spotless life.

We previously observed how that the triune God, God Three in one, was *FOR* the believer.

We now notice with equal emphasis that the same triune God *INDWELLS* the believer, for if any man hath NOT the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. (Romans 8. 9.) We have also observed, earlier in our study that if such a God be *FOR* us, none can be against us, and we can now add that if this same God be *IN* us, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His *Spirit* that *dwelleth in us*. We thus have the assurance of a hope beyond the grave, and no matter whether we have passed away, or are alive when our Lord returns, as the steel flies to the Magnet so will every indwelt believer instantaneously leave this scene of sin and corruption and be caught up, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

If our first threefold strand is composed of the triune God being *FOR* us, and the second threefold strand of that same triune God being *IN* us, the third strand of our cord is no less remarkable, and is composed of the glorious fact that this same triune God is *WITH* us.

Referring again to our original illustration of the Pillar, we find that not only did it abide over the Tabernacle, but it was also *with* them on their journeyings. When the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the Children of Israel went on their way, but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day when it was taken

up. So long as they followed the cloud, they were able to enjoy its light by day, and its protecting care by night.

So it is to-day. God is not only FOR us, and IN us, but He is also WITH us. When the Saviour was born at Bethlehem, it was said that His name should be called "Emmanuel—*GOD WITH US.*" To His disciples at the close of the same Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Lo, *I AM WITH YOU* always." And the message of the Epistles rings down the ages "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*"

Prior to His leaving His loved ones, the Lord Jesus Christ left some very comforting words concerning the Holy Spirit Himself. Did He not say, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter that *He may abide with you* for ever."

The cloud of old was ONLY given to God's favoured people, and it was ONLY for them that the leading and guiding was undertaken. In like manner to-day the SPIRIT of God is ONLY for the PEOPLE of God, as far as leading and guiding are concerned. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8. 14.) The happy result of the Presence of God WITH us through our journey here, is that we have Omnipotent power on our side. For He who said, "Lo I Am with you always," also said "All power is given unto Me in heaven, and on Earth."

May it be our happy portion to experience in far greater measure than ever before, the power of God WITH us, God Himself FOR us, and the Spirit of God working IN us.

G.F.V.

THEM THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING.

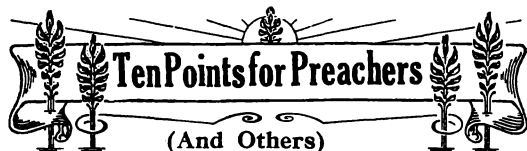
A girl returned from a boarding school. Companions were gathered to welcome. A festal night flew quickly by. At last all had departed, and the girl, putting her arms around her mother's neck, exclaimed, "Oh, mother, this is the moment I have been longing for!"

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Ten Points for Preachers

(And Others)

1. When you find yourself in a difficulty and don't know what to do, don't do it.
2. If an action of yours has been misrepresented, you need not unduly worry. Pray for a good night's rest.
3. When you receive an anonymous letter, answer it; no paper or ink will be needed.
4. If an engagement should be cancelled, thank God and go and preach somewhere else.
5. If no one meets you at the railway station and you have four miles to walk in pouring rain, sing a hymn and march boldly on. Even an apostle has been known to get wet.
6. If a wicked lie about you is going its rounds, keep quiet. No lie of this nature can ever become true without your permission.
7. If you receive two invitations by the same mail, one to a rich place, the other to a poor place, choose the latter; you will be the richer before you get home. Never mind which letter was opened first.
8. When you have a season of success, be temperate. This does not refer to what you drink but to what you think.
9. If all your friends forsake you, and everything goes wrong, including yourself, think of what it will look like in a hundred years' time.
10. Always remember, and never forget, that none but a crucified man can preach a crucified Christ.

"Not Knowing Whither."

A call from God! a dim and untried way,
A faith that does not reason nor delay;
A soul that in the darkness can obey—
Not knowing whither.

A path we cannot see or understand,
Yet faith can sing, "My times are in Thy hand,"
And tread the barren waste or burning sand—
Not knowing whither.

No murmur if the way be rough and drear,
No wonder if the way be far or near;
A step that journeys on without a fear—
Not knowing whither.

God give us faith that evermore shall fill
Our hearts with sweet obedience to Thy will;
Yet we may follow, hoping, trusting still—
Not knowing whither.

RESTORING THE OVERTAKEN.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. 6.1.)

ALAS, how many overtaken ones there are in the Church of God. Whether in Paul's day or ours; whether in dark India, or in more favoured lands; like the poor, they are always with us. The question of restoring such to the fellowship of God and His people is of great importance, yet often they are allowed to drift away from the assemblies with little prayer, and less effort, made to restore them.

In the message of the later prophets we are given very clearly to understand

How the Lord Himself feels

toward such. He will chastise, but judgment is His strange work. Listen to His plea through Hosea, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?" (Hosea 11. 8). While Isaiah cries to Israel to look to Abraham their father and Sarah their mother. Seeing God called them when they were alone and helpless, and blessed them so that they became a mighty nation, surely He would be able to restore them. He exhorts them to look to the hole of the pit from whence they had been digged, and to the rock from whence they had been hewn, and thus to encourage themselves in God.

The "spiritual" are exhorted to restore the fallen. As James and John "mended" their nets, so souls that have become leaky need spiritual repairing. As the Lord "perfects praise" (same word) out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, so the overtaken one needs to be restored to the Lord and his fellow-believers. Only then will there be a harmonious song in the life. A soul out of touch with God is like a musical instrument out of tune, producing discordant notes that jar on every one's ears instead of a melodious song that charms. Who of us does not need the skilful hand of the Perfector of praise to tune our "instrument of ten strings." Instead of rejoicing, the heart grieves, and instead of the stringed instrument vibrating with the music of the "new song" (Psalm 33. 3, 21; 144. 9), there is moaning because of failure and sorrow for sin.

Oh for Skilful Tuners—

spiritual men—in the assemblies who will know where the discordant notes come from, and who will be possessed of spiritual skill to restore the overtaken one, so that the chords that are broken may vibrate once more.

An interesting and illuminating story is told of Paganini the celebrated Russian violinist. One evening, prior to the war, he was walking through a London street, when he saw sitting in the pouring rain a beggar seeking to play his violin so as to attract the attention of passers by and get a few pennies. But his violin was wet and he was no true musician. Consequently his instrument produced the most weird noises, aggravating all who heard him. Paganini, seeing the plight the poor beggar was in, asked him for his violin. With his skilful hands he tightened the strings, and in his own inimitable way he began to play, producing the most wonderful music out of the wet old violin, to the astonishment and amazement of all. People forgot the rain, and the traffic policeman forgot his duty. All listened with rapt attention to the wonderful music proceeding from the beggar's violin. Presently the musician's silk hat was put down, and the people dropped their coins into it. The beggar was poor no more, all because he had committed his instrument into the hands of one who could perfect praise even out of the old wet violin. Our souls would not be impoverished and our lives would not be so full of discordant notes if the Perfector of praise had full possession of our hearts.

The life of Abraham furnishes us with an apt illustration of the

Responsibility of the Spiritually-minded

in this connection. In the mercy of God, Lot had left Ur of the Chaldees with his uncle, thus escaping the corruption that was in the world through lust. But the famine proved too hard a test for Abraham, and to Egypt he went—Lot accompanying him. Having been made a blessing to Lot in the beginning, Abraham is now a stumbling block to him. What Lot saw in Egypt left an indelible impression upon him. He became envious at the prosperity of the wicked, and when, on his return, he separated from Abraham, he chose the well watered plains of Sodom, which were "like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." Poor Lot pitches his tent toward Sodom and soon forsakes his tent for Sodom's dwellings, only to be impoverished and imprisoned by Chedorlaomer. (Gen. 14. 12).

The news of it reached Abraham. It came as a challenge to him to deliver his nephew—his once fellow-pilgrim. Lot was reaping the sad

consequences of his own foolish choice, and Abraham might have left him in his predicament, but being spiritual he could not rest without seeking to help his brother. The valley of Siddim, where the battle was fought, was full of "slimepits," full of danger. Hence, when in the New Testament the spiritual is exhorted to restore the fallen, he is

Warned to Consider Himself.

lest he also be tempted and fall into the slime-pits. Only warriors trained in the art of self-examination, and armed with the spirit of meekness, can be victorious in such a conflict.

But before the scene closes we find Abraham in the "Valley of Shaveh," which is the "King's dale," where he received the blessing of Melchizedek, the Priest of the Most High God, and where he received a new revelation of God as "El-Elyon—the Possessor of heaven and earth." This was followed again by a vision of the Lord as his "shield, and exceeding great reward." Thus blessing after blessing and

Reward upon Reward were His

for his faithfulness. Even though he failed to deliver Lot from Sodom, he did what he could for him by delivering him from Chedorlaomer.

Abraham's spirituality was again revealed when the news of Sodom's impending destruction was imparted to him. He fell on his face before the Lord to plead for Sodom, though not for Sodom's sake, but for the righteous in Sodom. God remembered Abraham, and delivered Lot from the overthrow. Abraham dogged the footsteps of Lot with unceasing, prevailing prayer. He might fail to fully restore him, but he would continue to plead for him. Indifference toward the wayward and overtaken is not a mark of spirituality but the reverse. Spirituality will reveal itself in a godly shepherd care for the flock of God.

May writer and reader alike bear the marks of true spirituality, shown in a godly care for the overtaken, seeking to restore him to the Lord.

From "The Treasury," New Zealand.

REMEMBER!

Remember who it was bade thee to "search the Scriptures."

Remember, that it is easy to be a nominal Christian; but to be real costs something. All is not gold that glitters; if we are to reign with Christ, we **must** also suffer with Him.

Remember, your calling is the result of election; prove your calling, and your election proves itself.

Remember, that baptism is not regeneration: many submit to the former who are not the subjects of the latter.

Remember, that you do not occupy the position of children until you are "born again," and that this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

ON GROWING OLD.

They call it "going down the hill" when we are growing old,
And speak with mournful accents when our tale is nearly told,
They sigh when talking of the past, the days that used to be,
As if the future were not bright with immortality.

But oh, it is not going down, 'tis climbing higher and higher,
Until we almost see the Mansions that our souls desire,
For if our natural eye grows dim, it is but dim to earth,
While the eye of faith grows keener to perceive the Saviour's worth.

For though in truth the outward man must perish and decay,
The inward man shall be renewed by grace from day to day.
They who are planted by the Lord, unshaken in their root,
E'en in old age shall flourish still, and still bring forth their fruit.

It is not years that make men old, the spirit may be young,
Though for the "threescore years and ten" the wheels of life have run,
God has Himself recorded in His blessed Word of Truth,
That they who wait upon the Lord, they shall renew their youth.

And when the eyes now dim shall open to behold the King,
And ears, now dull with age, shall hear the harps of heaven ring,
And on the head, now hoary, shall be placed the crown of gold,
Then shall be known the lasting joy of never growing old.

WORTH ATTENTION.

If God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes.

When unbelief comes in at the door, joy and peace go out at the window.

Our infirmities give God opportunities to make Himself known in grace and power.

A BOOK ABOUT JESUS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

IF a person who is an utter stranger to the book of God were to open the English New Testament he could scarcely fail to be arrested by the fact that on the very first page there stands out twice in bold capitals the name JESUS (Matt. 1. 21-25). If he were then to turn to the last page he would meet with the words, "I Jesus." The Person who is spoken of in Matt. 1, Himself speaks in Rev. 22, and the closing words of the book of God are these: "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." The stranger whom we have supposed would assuredly say, "This is a book about Jesus," and he would speak truly.

But Who and What is this Jesus that so extraordinary a book as the New Testament—ancient, deathless, and universal, the best seller of all publications—should be altogether about Him? Its first verse tells us that He is "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." This is of the deepest importance to Israel, the nation from which He sprang, and amongst whom alone His oral ministry was exercised. He is Heir to the throne of that nation, and Heir also of the promises of God made to Abraham. His descent from these pillars of Israel is accordingly carefully given.

But the writer of these lines is a Gentile, and probably the majority of those who will read them are Gentiles also; what part or lot have we in this Jesus? In answer to our enquiry there are some delightful hints in the very pedigree itself. Four women are mentioned, all Gentiles, two Canaanites, one Hittite, and one Moabite, and three of their names carry a deep moral stain. Blessed be God, the Jesus of Israel is thus interested in Gentile sinners, and His inspired historian goes out of His way thus to let us know it. We are reminded of Paul's words in Rom. 15. 8-9. "Now, I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for mercy; as it is written, for this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name."

But the first verse of Matthew's Gospel does not tell us the whole truth about Jesus. It does not furnish us with a complete answer to our question, "Who and What is this Jesus?" Verse 23 tells it all out. He is not only Israel's King, with title to David's throne, He is God. So the words of Isaiah 7. 14 are quoted, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and shall

call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

A *New* Testament supposes an *Old*, and to the Old Testament Matthew's introductory chapter refers us from its first verse to its last. We soon discover that the same Person is the theme of Scripture throughout. God had long promised HIM; it was Matthew's joy to write that at last the promise was fulfilled. The longed-for One has come. Listen to Paul speaking to a Jewish audience in Antioch in Pisidia: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise that was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children in that He hath raised up Jesus"; as it is written in the second Psalm, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." (Acts 13. 32-33). But did He come into the world merely to pick up David's long-lost sceptre, and restore again the kingdom to Israel? That were a comparatively small matter. Listen to the angel as he addresses Joseph concerning the wondrous child, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Ah, here we have the greatest work of all, that which meets the deepest need of our ruined race: This salvation has not come to us by way of example or precept, but by the way of Calvary's shameful tree. Read Pilate's superscription, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27. 37). That Cross was at once a murder, a gift, and a sacrifice. On man's part it was a murder; on God's part it was a gift ("God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"); and on the part of the Holy Sufferer Himself it was a sacrifice, as we read "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2). On the ground of that all-sufficient sacrifice, the Spirit of God is free to proclaim that "there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10. 12-13).

Had He been less than God, the work of salvation would have been beyond Him; had He not been really and truly man the work would have lain outside His province. Man in the person of Jesus has sustained the wrath of God that was due to human sin and guilt. Every claim of the throne has been met by the only One who could both measure and meet it. "Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"

Reader, "What think ye of Christ?"

TWELVE VIEWS OF THE CROSS.

“That Sight.”—Luke 23. 48.

“And sitting down, they watched Him there.”—Matt. 27. 36.

“See—from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down !”

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown !”

Who watched Him.	How they watched Him.	What they saw in Him.
1. THE SOLDIERS.	With Cruelty.	A CRIMINAL.
2. THE WOMEN.	With Sorrow.	A BENEFACTOR.
3. HIS MOTHER.	With Anguish.	A SON.
4. DISCIPLES.	With Perplexity.	BLIGHTED HOPES.
5. FIRST THIEF.	With Hardness.	A MALEFACTOR.
6. SECOND THIEF.	With Penitence.	A KING.
7. THE CENTURION.	With Conviction.	DIVINITY.
8. THE PRIESTS.	With Mockery.	AN IMPOSTOR.
9. ANGELS.	With Wonder.	LOVE.
10. DEMONS.	With Dismay.	THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.
11. JEHOVAH.	With Affection.	OBEDIENCE.
12. THE PASSERS-BY.	With Indifference.	NOTHING.

DID YOU KNOW?

THAT JOHN—THREE—SIXTEEN.

John 3 is the One-thousandth Chapter of the Bible.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not Perish, but have Everlasting Life.”

God's Only Son in love He gave,
That He a guilty world might save ;
This message, spoken by the Lord,
Contains the essence of the Word :
His “whosoever,” rich and free,
Proclaims Eternal Life to me.

WORTH NOTING.

Four Words which characterise John's Gospel.

They are all found in chapter 3, verse 16.

In the four Gospels they occur thus—

	Love	World	Believe	Life
Matthew	12	9	11	7
Mark	5	3	15	4
Luke	15	3	8	6
John	56	77	99	36

THAT :—

The Gospel by Matthew contains 40 direct Old Testament quotations

The Gospel by Mark contains 14
The Gospel by Luke contains 16 } 40 in all.
The Gospel by John contains 10

THE LORD JESUS IS MENTIONED

By	As Son of God	As Son of Man	My Beloved Son	
Matthew	7	22	2) and once in 2 Peter 1. 17.
Mark	3	11	2	
Luke	7	23	2	
John	11	12	—	

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART VIII.

CHAPTER 13 (Cont.).

WHEN ten men of the twelve that went into the land to search it out came back with an evil report, we must not imagine that they exaggerated in the least the difficulties of conquest. The obstacles that confronted Israel were indeed real and tremendous. What the ten spies did, was to leave God out of the question altogether.

As the prime cause of their terror is of much importance in other connections in scripture, we will examine the matter in some detail. Twice in their discouraging report do these ten men allude to a particular section of the inhabitants of Canaan. In verse 28, after mentioning in a general way the strength of the peoples of the land, they add, (one can almost imagine that they did so in an awestruck whisper) "And moreover, we saw the children of *Anak* there."

Again in verse 32, they state in a general way that their foes were men of great stature, but as if that were not bad enough, now comes the worst, "And there we saw the giants, the sons of *Anak*, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers."

In order to understand the peculiar terror conjured up by the mention of these fearsome Anakims, a glance at the marginal reading of Numbers 13. 33 and also of Gen. 6. 4 is necessary. Here it will be seen that they are called "nephelim" or "fallen ones." The careful reader of this 6th chapter of Genesis will note that it is stated that not only were these fallen ones on the earth "in those days," that is the days before the flood, but "also after that."

The fact that the "sons of God" in every other Old Testament passage had definite reference to angelic beings, strongly suggests that the infamous progeny of the evil union (Gen. 6), the "mighty men of old, men of renown," were in reality supermen, and that of satanic origin. That some such similar outbreak occurred at a time after the flood we have already inferred from that phrase "and also after that" in Gen. 6. 4. In chapter 13 of Numbers these appalling creatures are again found.

In passing it might well be noted that here is the secret of Saul's terror when confronted by Goliath, another of this line. Saul was far from being a coward, he was in fact a brave soldier and ready for any ordinary foe. That Goliath was one of these terrible Anakims is fairly evident from Joshua 11. 22 where we are told that the Israelites failed to utterly destroy this evil brood, but left some—among other places—in Gath, the city whence Goliath came.

Still one further note in reference to this ominous subject: 2 Samuel 21. 22 recounts that the dread race were finally extirpated by David the King and his mighty men—a happy promise that Christ can and will deal with the full power of the foe with whom we have to do. These Anakim represent for us those forces of spiritual wickedness referred to in Eph. 6, far more serious foes than flesh and blood.

Such then is the explanation of the extreme terror that filled ten out of the twelve men sent to spy out the land. Surely this makes the more praiseworthy the amazing faith of the remaining two, who despite a sight of such fearful creatures, they are willing and ready to go forward at the Word of their God.

Nothing is so infectious as fear, and here the fear of ten men reduced a nation of 600,000 fighting men to bitter chagrin and weeping. The evil thoughts thus generated are given in verses 2-4 of chapter 14. In such a scene of discouragement two men stand forth with superb courage, the two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua. Listen to the sublime logic of their words:

"If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us; a land that floweth with milk and honey."
(Num. 14. 8).

But so deeply had unbelief bitten into the hearts of the mass of the people that all the congregation threatened to stone these faithful witnesses.

The rest of the 14th chapter of Numbers is taken up with the sentence of Jehovah upon His disobedient people. At the first He would have destroyed them wholly, but Moses in wonderful

grace intercedes for them, pleading the honour of Jehovah's Name on their behalf.

It is good to see that in and through all such a dark time God will not be thwarted in His purposes. True it is that the ones that believed not should perish by the way, but the very children whom they averred would fall a prey to the enemy, they shall be brought into that good land.

It is very comforting indeed to know that God is never taken by surprise. For us who look backward on the whole scene, there is even a hint of coming failure in the very fruits that the spies brought back with them. The great bunch of Eshcol was of grapes, later associated in Isa. 5. 1-7 with Israel's evil course before Messiah came, when they produced *bad* fruit. Then they also brought back *figs*, linked in Matt. 21. 19 with Israel's conditions when Messiah was among them—no fruit at all. But they brought back no olives, the wonderful token in Rom. 11 of Israel's future fruitfulness when Messiah shall gather them again.

At the close of chapter 14 of Numbers we read of a further folly on the part of the people, evidencing to the full, the perverseness of the human heart. When at the first they had been bidden to go up and take the land, they had refused; now they were divinely commanded to turn back to the wilderness, they presumptuously sought to go forward—only to be ignominiously beaten back at a place called Hormah.

CHAPTER 15.

It is ever the way of our God that in His people's darkest hour of sorrow and suffering, even though it be on account of their own folly, He will give some token of His final purpose to be glorified in them in a coming day. So it is here. After the darkness of chapters 13 and 14, verse 2 of chapter 15 reads with the glorious light of the morning without clouds. "When ye be come into the land of your habitations." Then follows minute and precise details as to certain offerings that God would have brought to Him in that joyful day. Note that the equality of the stranger is here emphasised in these instructions given in the time that Israel went astray.

Verses 22-29 make gracious provision for any sin done in ignorance, and in Acts 3. 17 the apostle Peter takes up this very principle in relation to the disobedient Israel of his own day: "I wot that through ignorance ye did it." Although there are more references to the sin of ignorance in Numbers 15, than in all the rest of the Old Testament, there no examples are given of such sins, probably because they are legion. But the latter portion of the chapter deals with a very different subject indeed—the wilful sin. This contrast is in conformity with the principle laid down in 1 John 5. 16 regarding the sin "not unto death."

the "sin unto death." So vital is this matter of the presumptuous sin, sinning with a high hand, that an outstanding example of it is given for a warning to all. We who look back on such a visitation can gather something of the typical meaning of the impious act in the light of later revelation. Exodus 35. 3 gives the key: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day." The sabbath was typical of God's rest (See Gen. 2. 3 and Heb. 4.), whereas fire ever speaks of judgment. Here then in Numbers 15 was a man who would contradict the idea of God's rest, and bring in instead the idea of judgment. Such is a wilful sin indeed, and it has an exact parallel to-day in those who, rejecting the rest-bringing work of Christ, turn to dead works and ordinances inevitably associated with judgment. So serious was the sin of this Israelite, that all the congregation were required to show their abhorrence by joining to stone him.

Before leaving this question of stick-gathering, it is worth noting the three occasions on which it is mentioned in scripture, and see how God's thoughts on any subject whatever are developed.

In Num. 15 sin is punished.

In 1 Kings 17 sin is pardoned.

In Acts 28 sin is powerless.

After this sad outbreak of lawlessness, God gave to Israel an ordinance designed to keep their minds on His law. They were commanded to make fringes upon the borders of their garments, and put on the fringes a riband of blue. This trimming of their clothes was ever to be a reminder that they were in touch with Him who rules in the heavens.

In the time of the gospels this ordinance had become but an empty ritual for they "enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matt. 23. 5), but the Lord Jesus, as a true law-keeping Jew would have the fringe and border according to the command, and what significance does this give to the act, in faith, of the woman with an issue of blood who "touched the hem of His garment." (Matt. 9. 20 see also Mark 6. 56).



The Name of Jesus.

THE SUPREME NAME—JESUS!

THE SUPREME OBJECT—JESUS!

THE SUPREME SUBJECT—JESUS!

Whose love is as great as His Power,

And knows neither measure nor end.

"Higher than the heights above!

Deeper than the depths beneath—

Free and faithful, strong as death!"

The "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last!"

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and O. Lambert.

No. 8.—MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN.

IT is a wonderful thing that people like you and me, full of failures and shortcomings, can be made meet for heaven, even while living here on earth. But this is what the grace of God is able to do for us.

In Revelation 21. 27 we read that nothing that defiles can enter the Holy City. How, then, can we be made fit to dwell there ?

The efficacy of the precious blood of Christ is so great that it can completely remove the defilement. It can cleanse away the sins of a lifetime in a moment, and wash the sinner white as snow.

If anyone felt that his sins were as black as hell itself, and more in number than the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, we could still point him to the blood that cleanses from *all* sin, that makes the guilty, defiled sinner perfectly fit for God's bright glory-home.

Do taking the sacrament, doing penance, and attending strictly to all religious duties help anyone to become fit for heaven ?

If such things as these can in any way help to fit our souls for the skies, it is strange beyond measure that the Bible does not tell us so ! On the contrary, we find that “works,” though they have their place in connection with the Christian's life on earth, have no place whatever in connection with his salvation, or in fitting him for the skies. Salvation is distinctly said to be “*NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast*” (Eph. 2. 9) ; and if God has saved His people, it is “*NOT BY WORKS of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy*” (Titus 3. 5).

There are many, however, who would energetically disown and denounce the doctrine of salvation by works, who cherish the idea that it depends upon themselves in some way or other to fit their souls for heaven. So they sing—

“ A charge to keep *I have*, a God to glorify,

A never dying soul to save, *and fit it for the sky.* ”

It is true that the Lord has committed a charge to His people, but that charge is certainly not to save their souls and fit them for the sky. *His finished work* is the only thing that can do that. Nothing can possibly add to the value of what Christ has done for us, or make more perfect that

spotless robe of righteousness with which the grace of God has arrayed us.

Is being made fit for heaven the same as having a title to go there ?

Hardly. I might receive an invitation to attend a levée at Buckingham Palace from the King himself. That would give me a clear *title* to go there. But as I stand here I am not *fit* to attend a brilliant function like that. I am not suitably clad. I should need a complete change of attire before my *fitness* for the King's company would be recognised. On the other hand, my dress might be in every respect suitable, but that would not give me a *title* to go. In the one case I should have a title, but no fitness. In the other I should be fit, but have no title. Now, through the grace of God both a title to heaven and a perfect fitness for that holy place, are provided for all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood makes us as perfectly fit for heaven as our sins had made us fit for hell.

But our meetness does not consist merely in the fact of our sins being washed away. *Christ Himself* is the measure of our meetness. We are so linked up with Him that God sees us in Him, decked with all His comeliness, and meet for the presence of God even as He is meet. Our title, too, though based upon the precious blood of Christ, lies in the fact that *He Himself* has entered heaven *for us*. We have a right to be there because He, our Substitute, our Saviour, and our exalted Head, is there.

Suppose it were possible for a sinner to be taken to heaven in his sins, what would be the result ?

I suppose that such an one would feel utterly miserable. With a nature wholly unsuited to God's presence, and without any fitness for a place of light and holiness, it would be unbearable to him. His cry would be, “ Let me get away from this place. ”

I heard once of a betting-man on his way to some horse-races, who, by mistake, went on board the wrong steamer. He found himself amongst a lot of Christians bound for a conference. In the saloon, on deck, everywhere, hymns were being

sung, and conversations going on, of which the things of *Christ* were the topic. The man felt completely out of place, and his discomfiture ended in his offering the captain a good round sum of money to be put down at the nearest landing-place.

People talk easily enough about going to heaven when they die, but they forget that unless they have been made fit for the place, and have received a nature that can enjoy the things of God, they would be as miserable in heaven as that betting-man was amongst the Christians on the steamer. If an hour in their company was unbearable, what would an *eternity* in the very presence of God be to an unregenerate sinner?

Where in the Bible do we read of being made fit for heaven?

In Colossians 1. 12-14. Let me read the passage: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Ought we to pray to God to make us meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance?

If you will glance at the chapter from which we have just read, you will see that from the ninth verse to the eleventh we read of various things which as Christians we can *PRAY* for. We should earnestly pray, for instance, that we might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, and walk worthy of the Lord and be fruitful in every good work, and so on. But verses twelve to fourteen mention things that we can *GIVE THANKS* for. Now, we *pray* for things we want, but we *give thanks* for what we have already received. You will note that *meetness for the inheritance above is one of the things we are to give thanks for, and not one of the things we are to pray for*. That is very clear from verse twelve. It is something which, by the grace of God, is ours already.

In a previous chapter we dealt with that golden little word "hath." How many have been enabled to bid farewell to all their doubts by seeing that "hath" implies present possession! The same word is used here with reference to our meetness for heaven: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which *HATH* made us meet." Oh, let us give thanks indeed to Him for this great gift!

Who are the "us" referred to in that passage?

The fourth verse of the chapter will answer that question: "Since we heard of *your faith in Christ Jesus*." They were people who had come to Christ and believed in Him as their Saviour. The apostle does not refer to unbelievers or

mere professors. *They* are not made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. This great blessing is the portion only of those who have really trusted in Christ.

Are not believers left on earth for the purpose of being made more and more fit for heaven by the grace of God and the influence of the Holy Spirit?

One might answer that question by asking another: Can anything wrought in our souls, or produced in our lives by God's grace and the Holy Spirit, add to the value of the precious blood of Christ? Surely not.

God has most assuredly left us on earth for a purpose, but that purpose is not that we might be made more meet for heaven.

I am aware that some good people cherish the thought that Christians are gradually ripening for the skies, just as an orange, under the influence of the sun's rays, becomes sweet and mellow, and fit to be plucked and eaten. Whatever other aspect of a Christian's blessing that orange may illustrate, it certainly does not show how he is made fit for heaven.

Why, if from the day of your conversion to the day when you bid farewell to earth you could live a life of holy zeal and devotedness in the Master's service; if by continual prayer and the study of His Word you became a giant in spiritual knowledge, you would be no more meet for heaven at your last moment than when, as a poor sinner, you first trusted in Christ. Growth there would be, in many respects—in knowledge, in experience, in devotedness, in zeal; but there would and could be *no growth in meetness for heaven*.

Is there not a place where souls are sent, after death, to be finally fitted for heaven?

Such a place exists only in the imagination of men's minds. The Bible is not only silent as to there being such a place, but its testimony is right against it.

I know that a good many have been accustomed to hear of what is called purgatory, and the same thing has been mooted in rationalistic quarters under the name of "Æonian fire." But will anybody tell me that any sufferings through which *I* might pass, can accomplish what the sufferings through which my Saviour passed for me could not? Would my sufferings be more efficacious to fit my soul for heaven than *His* sufferings were? Impossible!

Oh no; thanks be unto God, my Saviour has won for me by His finished work, not a place in purgatory, but a place in the Father's house. His work is all that is needed to fit the believing sinner for that place, and we are only waiting till He comes, to enter the place He has made us fit for. If called to die, it will not be to undergo a further process of purification by purgatorial

fire, but "to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23). To depart and to be with Christ is a very different thing from departing to be in purgatory, is it not?

There were some Christians at Corinth who were not going on in the right way, and in consequence many fell asleep. What about them?

Their case in no way invalidates the truth we are insisting on. The apostle Paul himself said to those same Christians: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The place that they were *not* fit for, was Corinth. Instead of living for God's glory, and being bright and shining witnesses for Christ, their discreditable conduct was bringing reproach upon His name and making Christianity a by-word among the heathen. It was for this reason that God intervened and removed them from the earth by death.

There is all the difference in the world between being "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and being "meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2. 21). Many are fit for glory who are very far from being fit vessels for the Master to use here on earth. So God has to chasten them, and discipline them, and sometimes to take them away from earth altogether.

Is the case of those Corinthian believers an instance of the "sin unto death"?

Yes, I think so. If God has made Himself known to us in grace, we must not conclude that He ceases to be a wise and just Governor. He cannot allow sin to go on amongst His people unchecked. But even though the sin be of such a nature that God sees necessary to check it by the removal of the one who sins, yet that one, if a believer in Jesus, is removed to *heaven*.

We will suppose that a father, as he sits in his house, hears his son's voice mingling with the voices of some bad, rough lads in the street. He is shocked to hear the language that comes from his own boy's lips. Opening the window, he calls: "George, come here!" George turns round, and his father continues: "I have seen how you have been misconducting yourself. I cannot trust you out there any longer. Come in here at once!"

Thus he calls the boy away from the street, where he was bringing discredit upon his father's name; but where does he call the boy to? He calls him *home*.

That is what God has sometimes to do with His children. Their sin is a sin unto death. God removes them from earth (the place they are *not* fit for) to heaven (the place that, through the blood of Jesus, they *are* fit for).

Is there any other instance in the Bible illustrating the same principle?

Yes, the case of Moses. A wonderful servant of God he was, but he sinned in disobeying God's directions on one occasion, and failed to maintain God's honour in the eyes of the people. For this God said to him: Get thee up into this mountain Abarim . . . and *die* in the mount whither thou goest up" (Deut. 32. 49, 50). Moses was not allowed to lead God's people into the promised land. His service was given to Joshua, and God called him away from earth.

If anyone asks, "But how do you know that after his failure Moses went to heaven?" I reply, "Because when the Lord Jesus was transfigured upon the mount, Moses was one of His companions who appeared in glory with Him" (Luke 9. 30, 31).

Moses' fitness for *heaven* did not depend on his faithfulness, or he never would have got there. His continuance as God's chosen servant on *earth* did depend upon his faithfulness and because he failed he was called away. So with us. If unfaithful, we are not "meet for the Master's use," and God will have to deal with us as He sees fit. But our meetness for glory depends upon something, the value of which no failure on our part can ever diminish, THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

In saying that, are you not setting forth very dangerous doctrine?

It is enough for me that it is the doctrine of Scripture. But after all, do its practical effects strike you as so very bad? Are those who are assured that Christ's precious blood is all that is needed to make them fit for heaven such very careless and dreadful people? As a matter of fact, it is the other way round, and in real life full confidence in the power of Christ's blood to cleanse, and the assurance that through it we are made fit for glory, are found to go hand in hand with a godly walk and a concern for God's glory on earth.

Does not the case of the dying thief illustrate how a sinner is made fit for heaven without any works on his part?

It does indeed. Poor man! With his hands made fast to the cross, what manner of work could he do? He could only turn to the Lord in all his vileness and helplessness. This he did, and was blessed at once with the promise, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." It matters little what men say or think as to what or where "paradise" was. The point is that he was there and then made fit for the company of Christ, and had the assurance of being *with Him*.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS

AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

CHRIST'S INVITATION.

(Matt. 11.16-30).

THESE are notes of a Thursday evening discourse.

He said verses 20 to 24 teach human responsibility, whilst 25 to 27 teach the doctrine of divine sovereign grace. Here is

1. *The spirit in which the doctrine is to be received.*
That of thankfulness.
2. *The author of election,* v. 26.
3. *The ground of election.* The Lord is a sovereign;
Lord of heaven and earth.
4. *The objects of it.* "Babes."
5. *The reason of it;* for so it seemed good in thy sight."
6. *The economy under which we are placed.*

The Son must reveal the Father to us.

The text was verse 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I. *To whom is the invitation addressed.* Those who "labour": literally, whether with mind or body. Since the fall, man has had to labour, and harder as the world grows older. It also includes the labour of those who labour to establish a righteousness of their own. Also those "laden" with sin.

II. *The invitation itself.* "Come unto me." What is it to come to Jesus? It is to listen to His doctrine, and read His words. Then to believe His truth, and cast yourself upon it, trusting to Him, and nothing else: and then to enjoy this rest perfectly, there must be a constant coming.

III. *The blessing promised,* Rest, the best word in the English language next to "God," and "Jesus Christ". Rest is a part of heaven. Jesus gives rest as to the remembrance of past sins, and the dreaded hour of sin in the future. Rest as to the cares of this world. As to desires, understanding, affections, etc., This rest is nothing to what it will be in the future. He will give rest when dying—when the dead shall rise—in the judgment.

A rest from sin, from temptations to sin, and from the natural tendency to sin, and from the need of watching against sin. Rest from all doubts and fears, from the assaults of men and devils, from toil and pain, a complete rest.

And this is for all who come to Jesus.

When Spurgeon was building his great orphanage he happened to be dining out with a Dr. Brock and he casually remarked that two thousand pounds

(\$10,000) had to be forthcoming for his builder on the following morning but that there was nothing in hand. And he quietly added, "The money will be paid at ten o'clock." That sounded like terrible fanaticism to Dr. Brock and he said, "I wish you would not say that." He had a high opinion of Spurgeon and did not like to think he was becoming fanatical. But while they were dining a telegram came stating that two thousand pounds had been provided for the orphanage. Dr. Brock felt ashamed of himself, and asked all the guests to put down their knives and forks and return thanks to God. Spurgeon had learned a little of the meaning of that text, "Have faith in God . . . whosoever . . . shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have *whatsoever he saith.*" Spurgeon spoke in faith and God gave him the desire of his heart.

WILLIAM LUFF.



WHAT! ask for a human hand, sir,
To pat my back and say,
"Bravo, my son, it was nobly
Hands off sir, stand away! [done?"]
Did you lend a hand to help me,
When struggling up the hill?
If not, I venture to spurn your praise:
If you helped me, help me still.
What! fret if a human heart, sir,
Despise what I seek to do?
I trust, I sought, in the work I wrought,
His glory who helped me through.
You may proudly pass me by, sir,
I proudly stand above
The shrivelled soul that would blame my deed,
Or the heart that would now approve.
What! live for the commendation
That comes from a form as weak
As my own frail form in the raging storm?
Man's fleeting praises seek?
And die if he fail to give them?
If somebody does not see
The little toil I have sought to do?
Man's praise is too small for me.
My God, I would ask no other
To stand at my feeble side:
I only ask, in Thine own given task,
That Thou would'st my God abide.
Lord, shew me that Thou approvest,
I ask for no other sign:
But would go straight on and finish
The work that is mine and Thine.

WILLIAM LUFF.



Threshed Wheat


EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XXI.

"The Secrets of Wisdom are double of understanding."

Job. 11. 6.



IN drawing this series of editorials to a close, it will be both interesting and instructive to note a number of other truths which have a dual presentation in the Word of God.

We shall thereby see how this principle of double-sided truth runs right through Scripture, and affects, in some way or other, every essential doctrine we find there. We need to bear in mind, however, that there is in every one of us the ever-recurring tendency to set up one of these sides or statements of truth in opposition to the other; or to attempt to weaken the point of the one by means of the other. Therefore we need ever to remember the command, neither to add to, nor to subtract from, His Word. God's truth is ever in extremes; but not in one extreme without the other. For safety, the two extremes must be held together. The truth lies not anywhere in between the two extremes; but in the extremes themselves combined. And heresy, which is a work of the flesh (Galatians v. 20), means a choosing. It is often confounded with error, but differs widely therefrom. Heresy is truth; but onesided truth held without the other side—it may be held so as to oppose, to disparage, or to neutralise the other side.

God essentially is One: He is also Three. Each of these are Scripture truths. Attempt to blend them, or to go in the middle of the way between them, and you at once drift into the fearful error of the Magians, which was afterwards adopted by the Manichees—the root of two gods, one good and the other evil. This the Lord emphatically denies to Cyrus in Isaiah xlv. No; hold both sides of God's truth here. If you maintain the former, but reject the latter, you are a Unitarian. If you maintain the latter without the former, you are a Tritheist.

God is like you bright orb of His; He is light and heat, or love. He is both absolute purity,

and He is the good One. Beware of seeking to set one of these phases of His character in opposition to the other; or of preferring the one to the other.

Two statements of God are made in the Word as to His thoughts of us. Christ died not to reconcile God to us; but us to God. Before Christ died, God loved us as much as He does now. Christ's cross opened a way for His love to reach us. Yea, it was God's love that gave Christ. Yet, on the other hand, the blood is ever offered, as in Leviticus, to God for atonement. How are these two views to be reconciled? Not by denying or weakening either! Personally, He ever was propitious; officially, He required a sacrifice. Hence, in John iii. 14, Christ dies because God is righteous. But in John iii. 16, Christ dies because God is love.

Christ is God; He is also man. Avoid the peril of steering, in your view of the truth here, anywhere between the two extremes. He is God, being of the same substance as the Father in one nature; He is man—perfect man—much more perfectly man than you or I, for we are fallen and imperfect men. We resemble a mirror smashed to atoms; He as man is like the mirror whole. Or, rather, we by nature have been broken up by sin, that was without, obtaining entrance into us. But He was bruised on the cross through the love that was erst pent up in Him, at length flowing out.

There are **TWO ADVENTS OF CHRIST**: keep your eye on each. Each advent will be found to be comprised in two stages; the first at Bethlehem and Calvary; the second into the clouds for His saints, and then to the world to judge and reign.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED is both the burnt-offering, in which God shall ever find exquisite delight; and the sin-offering, from which He turned away His face. (Lev. i. and iv.).

ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION are both taught in Scripture. Christ made atonement for sins TO GOD: but redemption is of persons. The one, eyes the offended majesty of God; the other regards sinners, the unworthy objects of divine love. Because the former is God's truth, the gospel is to be preached to every creature. It is the blessed result of the latter, that all the purchased ones are drawn to Christ. How much fighting has there been between persons who have accepted the one or the other of these truths.

Christ by dying *bought* everything, even the earth itself (Matthew xiii. 44). But a *ransom* He paid only for the "many."

WILLINGLY did Christ proceed towards the cross in love to His Father. But if the prince of the world would bruise Christ, he must come and do it. Towards him He would not move an inch. Both counter views are in John xiv. 31 with 30.

The cross of Christ is the crowning proof of God's love to man, and of man's hatred of God.

Salvation is most *costly* and most *free*; it cost God everything, it costs us neither money nor price. Look and be saved.

The Christ in whom we are encouraged to trust is most suitable for us; and we, too, sinful, needy, and wretched, are thus most suitable for Him. Each of these two suitabilities, it is declared, that God has Himself seen to, in 1 Cor. i. 30.

How God deals with our sins is told us in Rom. iii. 19 to v. 11. But how He delivers us from evil nature He unfolds in Rom. v. 12 to end of viii. *Our sins, He forgives* through Christ's blood. But *our nature, He does not forgive*; nor does a believer want it. His desire is for deliverance from it. This God gives, along with a new and divine nature by death and resurrection in Christ.

He that believes in Christ is *clean every whit*. (John xiii.). Yet is there need of a *daily cleansing* by Christ's priestly application unto us of the water of the Word. (Eph. v. 26 and 1 John i. 8).

Salvation is a present *gift*. (John v. 24). It is also a *process*. (Phil. ii. 12). Yet it is *future*. (Rom. xiii. 11; Heb. ix. 28).

Our **Sanctification** is *complete*; for Christ is it. (1 Cor. i. 30). Yet it is *progressive* as to our apprehension. (1 Thes. v. 23).

Scripture speaks not only of peace *with* God, but also of the peace *of* God. All Christians have the former! Many have not the latter. The one is for my conscience; the other is for my heart. Having peace *with* God, I can look up to Him boldly, and know that He has no anger towards me; yes, and

that He beholds me in Christ with delight, In possession of the peace of God, I am then unmoved by any circumstances around me, however appalling. *Faith* is the divine means of obtaining the former, (Rom. v. 1); but the pouring out of the soul, and the spreading of one's sorrows before the Lord, and leaving them with Him, such are the ways by which we enjoy the other, (Phil. iv. 6, 7). *That one* is consequent on being reconciled to God; but *this* is through the knowledge that God is at the helm, ordering all for my good. Thus it makes the very repose in which God dwells, to be mine too. Moreover, to these two there is to be added a third, for that same Phil. iv. proves that there is something even beyond the peace of God, which is the felt presence of the "God of peace." Thus, whilst peace *with* God is through faith, and the peace *of* God is by prayer, the presence of *the God of peace* is experienced only upon our obedience to His Word. Hence it is that at the very close of most of the *Pauline epistles*, you read of this phrase, "*the God of peace*"; but never once at their commencement.

(To be Continued.)



"HE CARES."

He spread a cloud for a covering
And a fire to give light in the night
He satisfied them with the Bread of Heaven.

Psalms 105. 39, 40.

Over the slumbering camp is shed,
The light of the pillar Jehovah spread
Watch through the night to keep!
And never came night, but the light still shone
From evening fall till breaking dawn,
As the wearied pilgrims sleep.

Day by day—as a mantle spread
With kindly folds—the cloud overhead
Their homeless footsteps guide.
Till the Syrian sun, with its blinding glare,
Fiercely scorching the desert air
Sinks at the eventide.

Through dreary years, with never a break,
Ere ever the slumbering hosts awake,
Like Heaven's dew descending
It falls on the sand—so smooth and white—
'Tis the bread of His angels who dwell in light,
Jehovah on earth is sending.

A. W. B.

“BIBLE DIALOGUES”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and P. Brown.

No. 9.—BACKSLIDING.

IT is a very solemn subject that is to engage our attention on this occasion. I believe that most, if not all, Christians know what it is to backslide. I do not mean that they have fallen into open sin. One may conduct himself in the most exemplary manner, and yet all the while be a “backslider in heart.” Many of us, I am sure, have to mourn over times when we have consciously slid back from communion with God, and when our souls have been chilled and beclouded. Let us pray, therefore, that God will help us in our consideration of the subject.

What is the cause of backsliding?

In order to answer this question, I must point out that backsliders are of two kinds. There are those who have never got beyond a mere profession of Christianity. Brought under religious influences, they have taken the place of believers in Christ, and in all sincerity imagine that they are on the way to heaven. But there has been no divinely wrought conviction of sin in their souls; their consciences have never been ploughed up by the power of God’s Word; to true repentance and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they are entire strangers. In spite of their profession, they are what they always were, unregenerate sinners. Sooner or later, perhaps, the religious life upon which they have entered becomes irksome to them. They feel that they cannot live up to the profession that they have made. Old tastes and desires re-assert themselves, and little by little they slide back into their former manner of life and are looked upon, by those who once believed them to be real Christians, as *backsliders*. Like the sow of which we read in 2 Peter 2. 22, their washing did not go deeper than the surface; outwardly reformed, they had never been transformed into Christ’s sheep, and their turning again to the mire of sin is only what might be expected.

The other class consists of those who have been genuinely converted. As hell-deserving but repentant sinners, they have put their whole soul’s trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning work. Their sins are forgiven and they are Christ’s for ever.

Alas that we should have to say it, but it is only too true, that even such may backslide, and grow cold in heart, and fall into sin.

Many causes may contribute to bring about the declension of a Christian. Perhaps one of the most frequent is self-confidence. We are so prone to forget that we cannot get on for a single hour unless we lean upon the strong arm of Christ for support. We are sometimes foolish enough to fancy that the wonderful blessings we have received are enough to keep us going on without constant dependence on the Blessor. We shall do well to remember what happened in the case of Jacob. On that memorable night by the ford Jabbok he was wonderfully blessed. God changed his name, and most significantly it is added, “*the sun rose upon him.*” But the very next thing we read of Jacob is that “*he halted upon his thigh.*” Darkness had given place to sunshine, doubt and misgiving had been replaced by confidence, the blessing of God had been freely bestowed, but Jacob was left as weak and helpless in himself after it all as he had been before. He still needed to lean for support upon something outside himself. And long years afterwards the same necessity existed (Heb. 11. 21.).

The same thing is true, in a spiritual way, of every child of God. Constant and hourly dependence is the only way to be kept from backsliding, and this will be so to our last moment on earth. To forget this and to trust in any way to our own power of continuance is to ensure failure and defeat.

If one who is truly a child of God backslides, does he need to be saved over again?

I might answer this question by asking another: If a boy were to run away from home, does he need to be made his father’s son over again? No, indeed; he may need chastisement, and when repentant he will need forgiveness and restoration to his place in the home circle, but the bond of relationship between him and his father is one which no misdeeds on his part can sever.

Now the bond that is formed between the believer and God is an everlasting bond. It is God Himself who has formed it, and “*whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever*” (Eccles. 3. 14). God has saved him, and made him His own dear child. He has sealed him with His Spirit, and assured him that he shall *never perish*. Moreover, he has become a member of Christ’s body, and an object of the special love and care of Christ

Himself. Can all that be compromised, and God's work undone, and a sheep plucked from the Shepherd's hand? To a thoughtful mind, and one who comprehends what is implied in a soul being saved, to ask such questions is to answer them.

Is there not such a thing as being blotted out of the book of life?

You refer, I suppose, to what is said in Revelation 3. 5. But we must remember that in the city of Sardis there were some who had, as it were, written their own names in the record of the living ones. They had a name to live, as verse 1 tells us, but in reality they were *dead*. Now if God writes anyone's name in the book of life, it is because that one is truly alive, having been quickened by God Himself. And if God writes a name in that book, He will never blot it out. But if anyone takes the place of being a living one, without ever having "passed from death unto life," it is as if he had inscribed his own name where it has no right to be, upon the pages of the book of life. And all such names God will assuredly blot out. But they are the names, not of backsliding saints, but of false and lifeless professors.

Did not the apostle Paul fear that after all he might possibly become a castaway?

If he did, he must have doubted the truth of what he himself constantly taught! But Scripture says no such thing as your question supposes. The passage that is in your mind is 1 Corinthians 9. 27, which, you will observe, does not mention such a thing as *becoming* a castaway, though the possibility of being a professor, and even a preacher, and yet after all being nothing but a poor castaway, is clearly recognised.

But for an explanation of this and similar passages which appear to teach the possibility of a true believer being ultimately lost I must refer you to a helpful little book called "*Fallen from Grace; or, Castaway*," where the matter is gone into more exhaustively than time will permit us to do on this occasion.

Why does God permit His children to backslide?

We cannot speak of our backslidings as being by God's permission. It is true, of course, that He has power to keep us from backsliding, but it is not His way to treat us as mere inanimate machines. He has made all His stores of grace and power available for us, so that if we wander and stray, we have no one to blame for it but ourselves. And God uses our failures and falls, to impress upon us the lesson that we are slow to learn—that of our own utter weakness and incompetence.

But in order that we may be preserved from stumbling and erring, God has given us a living

Saviour in heaven to be our great and mighty Intercessor. He knows our weakness and our need, and He lives to meet it with His grace and power.

We have also the Holy Ghost dwelling within us to be our Guide and Comforter, to make the things of God real to us, and to control us on behalf of Christ.

Then, too, we have the priceless treasure of God's Word to act upon the conscience and point out the way of truth.

With such resources as these there is no excuse for backsliding. It is only when we neglect the wonderful provision that God has made, and try to walk in our own might, that we are overtaken with spiritual disaster.

If a Christian sins, is he in every case to be considered a backslider?

Hardly; for in that case who amongst us would not be a backslider? We must distinguish between the one who persists in sin and the one who is "overtaken in a fault," though even the latter needs restoration (Gal. 6. 1).

If you watch a column of smoke you will often see it driven to and fro by the passing gusts of wind. Yet *its main direction is upward*, in spite of everything. So with the Christian. He is liable to be influenced by passing things, and through lack of watchfulness to be overtaken in a fault. But *if his main direction is upward*, and if he continues in that course, mourning his failures and pressing on in spite of all, he is not to be regarded in the same light as one who goes on for days, or weeks, or months without getting into God's presence in self-judgment and confessing his sin and seeking grace to enable him to turn from it.

What do you mean by a "backslider in heart"?

The term is a scriptural one, as you will see if you turn to Proverbs 14. 14. We have an example of what is meant, in the case of the saints at Ephesus. They were what many would doubtless have regarded as a model company. Their zealous labours, their faithfulness in repudiating false teachers, their endurance for Christ's sake, were well known. Nevertheless, He who reads the heart had something against them: *they had left their first love* (see Rev. 2. 2-4). Outwardly they were all that could be desired, but their love to Christ had ceased to burn with its former brightness, the ardour of their first affection had cooled; they were backsliders *in heart*.

How many of us have to confess that the same thing is true of us! And how evident it is, from the case of these Ephesian believers, that activity and zeal in the Lord's service, even when occupied with uncompromising fidelity to true doctrine, are no remedy for a departure from "first love."

How can a backsliding child of God be restored ?

If thorough restoration is sought, there must be a thorough going to the bottom of one's sin and declension in the presence of God. No mere expression of sorrow and prayer for forgiveness will suffice. There must be real self-judgment, and a retracing of one's steps to the point of departure.

I remember that once, while sitting in my lodging, a little mouse came out of its hole and began to gambol about the room. Some motion of my foot, however, soon startled it, and away it ran, and vanished into its hole. A few minutes afterwards it re-appeared, this time coming from a hole on the opposite side of the room.

Let every backsliding Christian mark this. You cannot do as that mouse did ! It ran into one hole and came out of another, but that is impossible for you. You have got into some dark hole, away from the light of your Saviour's presence, away from the joy of communion with God. And if you are to be restored *you will have to come out at the same hole as that into which you went.*

What I mean is that you will have to retrace, in God's presence, that piece of your soul's history that lies between the moment of your departure and the present time. With the Lord's help you can do this ; and to confess the first wrong step, and judge yourself for having taken it, is a great point gained.

Bear in mind, all the while, that the blessed Lord looks upon you with eyes of unchanging love. All your sinful wanderings have not produced the smallest diminution of His faithful love for you. Think of this. Turn the thought over in your mind, " He loves me, notwithstanding all," and with the thought of that true, strong, tender, eternal love, carry your confession into the presence of God. "*Take with you words, and turn to the Lord,*" and He will heal your backsliding and fill your heart with joy once more.

But be sure you offer no excuses for your declension. When the German Emperor despatched a contingent of soldiers to aid in quelling the Boxer insurrection in China, he bade them remember that their foes were cruel and merciless. " Give them no quarter whatever," he said.

Your greatest foe is yourself, and in turning to the Lord you will do well to follow the advice given by the German Emperor to his soldiers, and *give yourself no quarter whatever.*

In confessing your sin thus, you may rest assured that you are forgiven. " If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." You may not, and probably will not, experience any sudden relief, or any immediate dispersion of the clouds, but forgiven you most

certainly are, the moment you pour out the sad story of your sin in your Father's ear.

Then, through the advocacy of Christ, restoration ensues. He will bring His word to bear upon you ; He will speak to your heart in a way that will melt you, and deepen within you the sense of His love and faithfulness and your own folly and unworthiness. Then, distrusting your own wisdom and strength, you will seek to go on in the power of His grace.

When a backslider turns thus to the Lord, is his restoration immediate ?

Not usually, I believe, though his *forgiveness* is instantaneous the moment confession is made. But restoration is a further thing than forgiveness, and is not brought about so speedily. The returning wanderer is made to feel that his sin is no slight matter, and that the privilege of communion with God is not a thing that can be cast aside and then resumed at pleasure.

In saying this, I have in my mind a passage in Hosea 5. 15, and 6. 1, 2, which, though primarily referring to Israel, states the principle that I am seeking to explain.

The Lord withdraws Himself in chapter 5. 15. " I will go and return to My place," says He, " till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face." The effect of this is that the people exhort one another. " Come," they say, " and let us return unto the Lord : for He hath torn, and He will heal us ; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. *After two days* will He revive us : *in the third day* He will raise us up." A period of time is thus anticipated between the turning of their souls to the Lord and the revival and raising up that will come from Him. This period of time allows of the soul passing through exercise, and of its reality being tested. But if its attitude of true contrition and self-judgment is maintained, the restoration is as certain as the forgiveness ; and we may be sure that God will not keep one waiting a longer time than is sufficient for the needful lessons to be learnt.

Restoration, let me add, does not usually come in the shape of a sudden burst of ecstasy, or anything of that kind ; but is brought to pass by our having our thoughts diverted from ourselves to Christ. The Holy Spirit directs our hearts to His love, and in being engaged with Himself, the blessedness we longed for is ours once more.

AN OLD VERSE

The end of all creation
Is leading up to this,
To God the greatest glory,
To man the greatest bliss.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART IX.

CHAPTER 16

ISRAEL had many times murmured against the Lord who had so wonderfully led them out from the House of Bondage through the waste howling wilderness on towards the land He had promised to them. We have noted, too, how that the legal position they took up at Sinai resulted in judgment rather than grace meeting their constant complaints.

But all that we have dealt with hitherto fades into insignificance compared with the events of chapter 16 that we are now to study. The ringleader of the rebellion was a cousin of Moses, Korah the son of Izhar (See Ex. 6. 21). The two next most notable associated with him were Reubenites named Dathan and Abiram, and the careful reader of the second and third chapters of Numbers will have discovered that the tribe of Reuben encamped the same side of the Tabernacle as did the family of Korah the Kohathite. Truly evil communications corrupted good manners (manner of life). That two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation should be found willing to link themselves with the rebels is indicative of the seriousness of the matter.

And what was the ground of their complaint? It was jealousy of the unique position occupied by Moses in the will of God. Moses very quickly touches the root of the matter when he confronts the malcontents in verse 10 with: "Seek ye the priesthood also?" Moses as the leader and prince, and Aaron as the priest ever typify the Lord Jesus in His peculiar offices on behalf of His people, and God is ever jealous that none shall usurp those appointments. Note the subtle flattery in the words of Korah "All the congregation are holy."

The stubbornness of the rebels is manifest from their attitude recorded in verses 13-14. *Delay in reaching the land*, a delay mark you certainly due to their own hardness of heart, this plus that jealousy to which we have already referred resulted in such an explosive mixture that it looked as if the whole fabric of Israel's national system would be shattered.

The attitude of heart of the rebels may be judged from v. 13 in which they refer to EGYPT as a land

flowing with milk and honey, equally with CANAAN, the land of promise.

Moses when at first confronted by this array adopted his ever present recourse, he fell on his face before Jehovah, content to leave the issue to Him.

In such movements as this there are almost always degrees of guilt, and here it is not difficult to distinguish at least three distinct circles. There are the nucleus composed of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their immediate relatives. Next come those 250 princes of the congregation mentioned in connection with them. Still further again there was the mass of the congregation itself of whom we read in verse 19 that Korah gathered them all against Moses and Aaron upon the morrow.

In conformity with these degrees of iniquity we find that Jehovah in His righteous judgment fits the punishment to the crime.

The ringleaders are dealt with in a way so dreadful and horrifying that fifteen hundred years later, when the Apostle Jude wrote his epistle, the visitation was still a matter of common knowledge. The very form in which Jude refers to the matter in is significant, it is for him the very sum of wickedness, worse indeed than the way that Cain trod, worse indeed than the greedy opposition of the false prophet Balaam, Korah's *gainsaying* is the climax of evil.

The actual form of the judgment on the ringleaders was in itself a justification of the divine authority of Moses. The true servant is ever ready to put his Lord to the test, and Moses does so here.

Verses 28-30 give the terms of the challenge, one that Jehovah answered even as its last words were uttered.

The mass of the people, and presumably the 250 princes that had hitherto fully supported the rebellion were over-awed by the confident demeanour of Moses, and had separated themselves from Korah and his immediate company. Hence they escaped that most severe judgment.

They were only just in time, for the very ground clave open and swallowed up those wicked ringleaders in the sight of the whole camp. But yet the 250 princely conspirators were not to escape

entirely. Judgment, albeit of a slightly lesser order, quickly overtook them, for fire from Jehovah fell and consumed them every one. So jealous is the Lord for the men of His appointment. To-day there are many who take advantage of God's longsuffering to make a travesty of His Christ Whom He hath appointed Head in the Church which is His body. While it is yet "The acceptable year of Jehovah," the stroke of judgment is withheld, but soon shall be ushered in "The Day of vengeance of our God." Then woe to those who do that which is right in their own eyes, choosing as priests whom they will and ousting from His rightful place the only Priest that God will recognise—Him after the order of Melchisedec.

In verses 36-40 of our chapter there is a reminder and a warning to Israel concerning this grievous rebellion on the part of Korah and the others. The censors that they had brought in their defiance were to be made into plates for the altar of sacrifice. Every one who approached into the presence of Jehovah henceforth would have before his eyes a token of the divine principle "towards them that fell, severity," but with it the confidence that goodness would be extended unto those who continue in His goodness. (See Rom. 11. 22).

One would have expected that the dire lessons of these two judgments would have sufficed to quell every rising thought against God in the hearts of the people, but the amazing fact is that the very next day the whole mass of the congregation again murmur against Moses and Aaron, charging them with having killed "the people of the Lord." The audacity of it! People of Jehovah indeed; rather impious rebels that had taken in vain that Holy Name and perished in their sin. Deprived of their leaders, and with a double testimony of God's sore displeasure before their eyes, the people still strive. Surely God speaks once, yea twice, but man regardeth it not. Then it is that there breaks out in the camp one of those fearful plagues that Jehovah only sends as an extreme penalty upon a stiff-necked people.

And the now terror-stricken congregation are utterly dependent upon the intercession of the very one whose authority they had so recently called in question.

Verse 47 is a beautiful picture of the blessed effects of the Gospel. The plague was raging throughout the camp, but Aaron by means of the Fire taken from off the altar, the place of accepted sacrifice, makes a division between the living and the dead—and thus the judgment stroke is stayed. God was indeed in Christ reconciling a revolting world to Himself, and hath committed to us the reality of the blessed ministry of reconciliation of which Aaron's action was but a wonderful figure

CHAPTER 17.

As the lesson of the "broad plates," made from the censors of the judged rebels, placed on the

altar of sacrifice proved inadequate, Jehovah now ordains an even more evident and startling demonstration of his sovereign choice of the nation's leaders.

This time the testimony was to the princes, or heads of each tribe, themselves. The rod of which we read in verse two, was almost certainly the tribal staff which was handed down from generation to generation, emblematic of the tribe itself. It was such a rod (there called a "staff") that Judah himself gave as a pledge to Tamar in Gen. 38.

Each of these twelve particularly dry sticks was clearly marked with the name of the tribe that it represented, and then all were placed in the Tabernacle—probably in the Holy Place—and left there all night.

In the morning the twelve heads of the tribes of Israel were gathered together by Moses in front of the Tabernacle. Jehovah would now seal His choice beyond all controversy.

Out the rods were brought, and prince after prince took his rod from the hand of Moses and gazed at it. Reuben took his rod, It went in a dry stick, and a dry stick it came out. Likewise did Simeon, Ephraim, Manasseh and all the other non-priestly tribes. But when the rod bearing the name of Levi appeared there was an amazing sight. No longer dry, but it had budded, bloomed and even brought forth ripened almonds, blessed fruit of glorious resurrection.

That the testimony might not be forgotten, it was ordained that this fruitful rod should be kept in the Tabernacle before the Lord, and all through the rest of the long desert journey, in company with the pot of manna and the tables of the law, it was found in the Ark of the Covenant itself. Reference is made to these three things in Heb. 9. 4.

Only when Israel are safely planted in the Promised Land under Solomon the man of peace and rest, do the rod and the pot of manna—joint symbols of secret disobedience—disappear. In 1 Kings 8. 9 we read "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb."

The effect of the testimony of the fruitful bough upon the people was remarkable. It produced a deep revulsion of feeling. They who a day before had murmured even against such an awful judgment as that which came upon Korah and his circle, now cry out in dismay "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish." The testimony of resurrection is more effective than that of Judgment. The woman of 1 Kings 17 was doubtless amazed and impressed by the miraculous way in which the oil and the meal was sustained by the word of Elijah, but it was when her son was brought back to life that she cried: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is truth." 1 Kings 17. 24.

CHAPTER 18.

It is remarkable how few actual details are given us in the book of Numbers—or elsewhere for that matter—of the long period of penal wandering that the people of Israel spent between their refusal to go forward (Ch. 13-14) and their arrival at Kadesh on the borders of the land for the second time. (Ch. 20. 1-2).

At the end of Chapter 14 is the divine sentence upon them because of their unbelief. Chapter 15 is occupied with ordinances in the light of their future entrance into the *land*, and only the sad chapters 16 and 17, at which we have just looked, give us a glimpse of the in-between. Chapters 18 and 19 are occupied entirely with ordinances, and the next we hear of Israel is at Kadesh again, from which they march forward unhindered right to the end of their journey.

In this 18th chapter, as in the 15th, it is the *land* that is in prospect, the duties and portions of the priests and Levites, the giving of those tithes by means of which the Tabernacle services were maintained.

It is good to see that for the second time after a serious revolt on the part of His people, Jehovah's next words assure us that His purposes can never be thwarted by human failure. Compare the sequence of chapters 13, 14 followed by 15, and 16, 17 followed by 18.

Chapter 19 although it also deals with ordinance has special reference to wilderness conditions, and is so important that its consideration must be reserved for the following article—if the Lord will.



A sense of insufficiency possesses the disciples, for Jesus is not with them and they miss Him sorely. The wind is contrary and the Master's presence would make such a difference. But He is engaged in urgent matters on the distant mountainside, where He is in communion with His Heavenly Father. An earthly kingship is His for the taking, and would even be thrust upon Him if popular acclamation could have its way. Purely materialistic considerations must, however, always be subject to spiritual adjustments and the King of Kings is in the secret place of prayer, where such adjustments become possible. It is a Spiritual Kingdom with which He is concerned for He must be about His Father's business. The Heavenly Kingdom matters so much more than anything that earth can offer and yet it is vitally concerned with earthly things.

The little company, on whom the welfare of that Kingdom in the days to come, depends so much, are already being tossed in the winds of adversity and discouragement. They are finding the going very hard; for they consider not the miracle of the loaves with all that it meant and, because their faith is weakening without His visible presence, they toil in the rowing.

Evening comes and Jesus sees them toiling in the rowing, yet He delays His appearance on the troubled waters. Another and greater trial is being reserved until the fourth watch of the night, the darkest hour before the dawn. Where the interests of the Kingdom are concerned, the faith of the disciple must be proved, for faith is the root principle upon which the Kingdom is being established. So that, whether it be on the stormy Galilean waters or in the boisterous winds of to-day's adversities, the faith of those who follow Jesus must needs be put to the test of endurance; and if after much human endeavour and toiling the Master makes an unusual appearance to the disciple, it is only because of the pressing need for spiritual adjustment. The unusual appearance may be in the form of a sudden calamity, an affliction or perhaps a bereavement. It is the darkest hour; but to the disciple who has a faith which endures, it is the hour before the dawn. When grievous trial succeeds a season of striving and toiling, the Christian's reaction in the dark hour reveals the quality of his faith. The cry of alarm is eloquent of fearful foreboding; while the calm acceptance of the over-ruling Providence of God indicates a serene faith which rules out fear.

But it is the Master who is passing by and, knowing humanity's frailties, He listens for the appealing cry in the moment of distress. For His "Be not afraid, It is I," answers all human need; and the cry of helplessness has only to be uttered for Him to be ready to minister to the need as only He can. The Lord's presence brings transformation and, as He soothes the troubled soul, all is changed. The wind abates, the storm ceases, and the angry sea is calm once more. The bitter becomes sweet and the seemingly overwhelming trial becomes bearable after all because He is sharing it. Heaven is nearer and earth does not seem to matter quite so much as it did. There is no need to toil in the rowing now that Jesus is in the boat; and the renewal of the disciple's faith enables them to smile at the storm. The rest of the voyage is soon accomplished. Gone are the anxieties of the dark hours; for, transcending all, is the glory of the sun rising in the presence of Him Who has been interceding at the Throne of Grace—the mount of God. The disciple's own spiritual adjustment has been made.

SYDNEY DICKINS.

A PAGE OF SERMON OUTLINES

FOR BUSY WORKERS. ~ Arranged by G.F.V.

AN EIGHTFOLD REFERENCE TO GOD. SEVEN THINGS ABOUT THE SUPPER.

In 1 Peter 2.

1 Cor. 11. 23-30.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1. Chosen of God | Predestination | v. 4 |
| 2. Acceptable to God | Acceptation | vv. 5 & 20 |
| 3. People of God | Resuscitation | v. 10 |
| 4. Glorify God | Exultation | v. 12 |
| 5. Will of God | Obligation | v. 15 |
| 6. Servants of God | Occupation | v. 16 |
| 7. Fear God | Veneration | v. 17 |
| 8. Conscience towards God | Consideration | v. 19 |

1. Revelation—
" I have received of the Lord."
2. Commemoration—
" This do in remembrance of Me."
3. Proclamation—
" Ye do proclaim the Lord's death." R.V.
4. Anticipation—
" Till He COME."
5. Perpetuation—
" TILL He come."
6. Examination—
" Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat."
7. Condemnation—
" He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh to himself judgment" (margin).



GOD IS - - - LET US.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| God is Truth—1 John 5. 20. | Walk in the truth | —2 John 4. |
| God is a Spirit—John 4. 24. | Walk in the Spirit | —Gal. 5. 16. |
| God is Love—1 John 4. 18. | Walk in love | —Eph. 5. 2. |
| God is Light—1 John 1. 5. | Walk in the light | —Eph. 5. 8. |

DAVID FOUND TIME TO PRAY.

Psalm 55. 17.

1. At the evening.
2. At the morning.
3. At the noontide.
4. And on special occasions. Psa. 51. 1. 19.



PSALM 12.

Four modern conditions in an ancient Psalm.

1. The decline of godliness—
" The godly man ceaseth." verse 1.
2. The spread of lawlessness—
" Who is lord over us ?" verse 4.
3. Increase of helplessness—
" The sighing of the needy" verse 5.
4. The exaltation of vileness—
" The vilest men are exalted" verse 8.



PSALM 15.

A Heavenly Citizen Described. Verse 1.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Reliable | — Verse 2. |
| 2. Lovable | — Verse 3. |
| 3. Capable | — Verse 4. |
| 4. Honourable | — Verse 5. |
| 5. Immovable | — Verse 5. |

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

The only place He can occupy,
as He is the only One Who can fill it.



- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| On the Cross. | John 19. 18. |
| In Resurrection. | John 20 19-20 |
| In Glory. | Rev. 5. 6. |
| The Centre of our gathering. | Matt. 18. 20. |
| The Leader of our Praise. | Heb. 2. 12. |



" OPENED " in Luke 24.

1. The opened Sepulchre. v. 2
2. The opened Scripture. v. 27.
3. The opened Eye. v. 31.
4. The opened Understanding. v. 45.
5. The opened Heaven. v. 51.

JUSTIFICATION

In Job 25. 4 the question is asked—

“How then can man be justified with God?”

The answer to this great question is found in the Epistle to the Romans, where, in chapters 3, 4 and 5 is seen the ground upon which God justifies the sinner.

In connection with this great truth shall we notice the following:—

1. WHAT JUSTIFICATION IS.

To justify means to declare righteous, to make free from charge.

When a sinner believes in Jesus he is completely cleared in Heaven's court by God, who is both Judge and Justifier. The sinner is guilty (Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23), but because of what Christ has done, God forgives and also justifies him.

2. THE PERSON WHO JUSTIFIES.

“It is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8. 33).

Thus justification is by God Himself, the One against whom sin was committed.

The Judge is the Justifier, and since He is for His people, who can be against them?

3. THE PEOPLE HE JUSTIFIES.

“He justifieth the ungodly” (Rom. 4. 5), who are also described in Rom. 5 as “without strength” (v. 6), “sinners” (v. 8) and “enemies” (v. 10). The moment any sinner says from the heart “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18. 13), he is justified through Christ Jesus.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF JUSTIFICATION.

The principle on which God justifies the sinner is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we read in Romans 5. 1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” (See also Romans 3. 28 ; 4. 3-16 ; Acts 13. 39).

5. THE PRICE OF JUSTIFICATION.

The price of justification in relation to the sinner is without money or merit, as Rom. 3. 24 declares “Being justified freely by His grace.”

The sinner has “nothing to pay” (Luke 7. 42) and nothing to say (See Rom. 3. 19); therefore God freely justifies. Justification is all of grace and therefore not by works at all.

6. THE PRESENT REALITY OF JUSTIFICATION.

In Acts 13. 39 we read “all that believe *are justified.*” We have not to wait until we get to heaven to be justified, but we “are justified” here and now. What a blessing! This present possession is accompanied by peace with God, access into grace, rejoicing in hope and many other blessings. In the verse referred to above (Acts 13. 39) we also see:—

The Person	By HIM
The People	all
The Provision	that believe
The Present (time)	are
The Position	justified
The Proportion	from all things”

7. THE PRACTICAL ASPECT OF JUSTIFICATION.

The practical aspect of justification in relation to the person who has been justified is seen in James 2. 24, where we read “By works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Let us remember that James does not contradict Paul because both writers are dealing with justification in different aspects. Paul deals with the Godward side of justification and James with the manward side. We are justified by faith *before God*, and justified by works *before man*. We cannot see each other's faith; we can only see the outward evidence: therefore, if we have accepted Christ, it is only reasonable for others to expect to see the evidence of it in works. Let us see to it then that we show our faith by our works.

S. LAVERY.



There were four spices in the Holy Ointment. (see Exodus 30. 23-24). So the Four Gospels present, in divine harmony, the glories and graces of the Person of Christ.

The New Testament is divided into 260 chapters, and is said to contain more than 300 references to our Lord's coming again, and attendant events.

“None who tread the path of duty, walk with aimless feet.”

The Holy Spirit in olden times was only a Visitor: He is now a Resident, and as such He furnishes.”

“A parable is a shell that holds good fruit for the diligent, but keeps it from the slothful.”

PORTRAITS OF CALVARY.

No. 1.

By J. H. McCormick.

IT is a scene of sin caused by disobedience to a God of goodness, Who had made full provision for every need of His creatures in a Paradise of delights. Man—ungrateful man—craved a new experience which could only be gained by disobeying the one command of his friend, and he ate of the forbidden fruit and reaped the sad consequences of his foolish action. Man's test was a very simple one. He was given full permission to use the fruit of all the trees of the garden with the one exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Everything which was needful for him, all which was for his good and whatever was for his blessing, was fully provided and freely permitted him to use, but the fruit which would give him the knowledge of good and evil, a knowledge which could only come to him by committing evil, was expressly forbidden on the pain of death, death which subsequent Scriptures reveal as being in a threefold form, (a) the death spiritual, dead in trespasses and sins; (b) the death physical "and he (Adam) died"; and (c) the death eternal, "the lake of fire. This is the second death." Those who to-day eat of the fruit of this forbidden tree are crowding our hospitals, asylums, poorhouses and prisons. The knowledge of evil is very bitter fruit indeed. The man disobeyed the divine command and immediately died spiritually, i.e., he was separated from God and fellowship with Him by his sin. This was at once seen by his dread of meeting God, his sense of shame, his hiding amongst the trees of the garden, and the birth of conscience as an accuser in his soul. The fruit of sin is seen in the woman's agonizing sorrow in childbirth, her subjection to her husband, and in their toil, sorrow and return to the dust from whence they were taken. Sin, sorrow, suffering, toil and death are linked together in man's history on earth. Every sorrow you have, every pain you bear, all the weariness you feel, each death you see, every funeral you attend and every grave you behold, cry in clarion tones "man has sinned. You are a sinner. You must pay the penalty and receive the wages of sin, even to the second death, the lake which burneth with fire."

Divine mercy appears upon the scene of man's first sin. God is seeking out the lost ones in order to save them. He searches his conscience to convict him of his sinful disobedience and bring him to repentance and confession of his sin, and He spake of a coming Deliverer, One Who would become

man's Saviour by enduring the judgment due to his sins. How great that mercy is to sinful men is seen in the full light of the Gospel which we enjoy. The Apostle writes of man's terrible condition as a slave to the world and the Devil, and as dead in sins, and upon his helplessness and hopelessness he casts the light of Divine mercy and power in these wondrous words of cheer, "but God Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us to live together with Christ. For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."

The great Deliverer, our Lord Jesus Christ, was revealed to fallen man as the woman's promised seed, Who should bruise the serpent's head and yet die in the act of giving the Devil his death blow, all of which prophecy was fulfilled in the birth, sufferings and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus, Who has made full provision in His sacrificial work for the salvation of everyone who is willing to be saved and for their deliverance from the power of darkness.

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin
He sets the prisoner free.
His blood can make the foulest clean
His blood avails for you."

The ransom price of man's salvation was typified in the death of sacrificial victims whose blood was to cover the sins of the guilty pair. These types speak of the death of Christ as the One sacrifice for sinful man, Whose precious blood availed to put away sin and thus enable God to righteously forgive the sinner and cleanse him from its guilt. "Christ in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1). The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The garments provided by God Himself for the naked couple were the skins of the animals which had been offered in sacrifice. Their blood covered the sins and their skins covered the persons of the guilty two. What a picture of the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus and its blessed results to those who believe in Him as personal Saviour. His precious blood has put their sins away and as the skins of the slain animals were made by the Lord God Himself into coats of skin to cover the sinful so "Christ is made of God unto us (once sinners, now forgiven and justified through faith in His name) righteousness." He is the best robe wherewith the returning prodigal, having been washed and cleansed, is clothed, and He is "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, upon all them that believe." They are beautiful garments wherewith to stand arrayed in, before the eyes of a holy God. Are you clothed in Christ? (Concluded on Page 120)

SPURGEON'S SERMONS

AS I HEARD THEM.

By WM. LUFF.

HAVING preached in the morning upon the Woman who touched Christ, Mr. Spurgeon preached in the evening upon David in the Cave of Adullam. (1 Sam. 22. 1, 2.)

"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."

An appropriate reading was Luke 12. 1-12.

David at this period is a type of Christ in this present time—anoointed king, but not reigning: a proper time in which to show ourselves His friends.

I shall speak to those who are enlisted in His service, "His brethren, and all His father's house."

1. Boldly avow His Kingship, everywhere and in all company. He deserves it, for He has saved you.

2. Leave the world to join Him.

3. Do something daring to show your loyalty to Him, as the three strong men did to fetch David a draught from the well of Bethlehem. Is there not some one to fetch Jesus a draught of water? His meat and drink is to do His Father's will, and see souls saved. One man slew a lion in a pit in winter. Another stood in a field and cleared it of the Philistines.

4. Keep up your courage when with David.

I am going to do a little recruiting business. These men ought to have come to David because he was their king, and on account of his character and exploits: but they did not; they came because they needed him. I might speak of Christ's character and courage; but you will not come to Him until you feel your need.

1. They were in distress, "so hard up," as we say. You are in distress because you have no merit. Come to Jesus, for He has merit. You have not power. Well, you do not need any, for Christ died for you when you were without strength. You are without sensibility. Come, for Christ can raise the dead.

2. They were in debt. "Ah," says one, "I have to pay my life, my soul." You are just the man to come, for Christ has paid your debt.

3. They were discontented. You cannot go where you once did: you are out at elbows

with yourself and everything. The talk you once enjoyed seems silly now: the play does not satisfy you. Then come to Christ. A sailor who had served Satan sixty years said when he came to join the church, "I've been sailing under a very bad master; but now the ship is old, she has got a new owner, has run up a new flag, carries a new cargo, and runs for a new port." C.H.S. also told the following

After I had been preaching in Boulougne, a week or two ago, I was met outside by several who had found peace through reading the sermons, etc., and amongst them a sailor, who took hold of my hand, and said, "Don't you know me?"

"I've seen you somewhere; but cannot say where." "Oh! I'm Satan!"

"Then I know you." On account of his wickedness this sailor well deserved the name; but one Sunday he came into the Tabernacle: his heart was touched, he began to cry for mercy, and Nat that was his true name, became a real Nathaniel."

In conclusion the preacher said—

III. I want to say a little about the service. You must let David become a captain over you—must submit to His orders—be baptised—come to the communion, etc.—You must be nothing, and He all in all—You must fight for Him. He founds a Hospital but does not intend us to be always cripples. He takes in criminals, but only to make them good soldiers.

SPURGEON'S BIBLE.

Believing that many of our readers would like to see the inscriptions written by Mr. Spurgeon in the Bible he always used in his study, we have copied them in the hope that they may induce many more to prize the precious "Lamp" as much as he did:—

The lamp of my study.—1856.

The light is as bright as ever.—1861.

Oh, that mine eyes were more opened!—1864.

Being worn to pieces, rebound 1870. The lantern mended, and the light as joyous to mine eyes as ever.



PORTRAITS OF CALVARY *Cont. from Page 119*

The gift provided by the Lord God for Adam and his wife was received by them. They received the divine provision to cover their sinful shame as they had previously rested on the blood of the sacrifices to cover their guilt from the eyes of God. In token of their willingness we read that "the Lord God clothed them" in the coats of skin which He had made. So the gift of Salvation is freely offered to all, and all who are willing to receive it and do accept it are not only forgiven all their sins and justified from all things, but they are also clothed in the best robe of Divine righteousness, even Christ Himself.



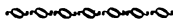
Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER. PART XXII.

"The Secrets of Wisdom are double of understanding."

Job. 11. 6.



There are two main stages in the work of the Holy Ghost towards us who believe in Christ, between the two Advents—first He quickens the dead soul, enabling him to believe; and then, after belief, He comes and dwells personally in that individual. The latter mercy, which is only for believers during this dispensation, is very much lost sight of.

So also is the double truth, namely, that not only in *each* believer He dwells as in a temple (1 Cor. vi. 19), but also, He gathers believers together, and dwells in them *corporately*; so that when they are gathered together to worship, they should so demean themselves as having Him with them, as builded together for God's habitation through Him. (Eph. ii. 22).

In each believer the *Holy Ghost* intercedes with groanings which cannot be uttered; for each believer *Christ* intercedes with God.

Each Christian has the *Holy Ghost* as his Paraclete, Comforter, or Advocate; but *Christ* also is our Advocate with the Father. Thus the *Holy Ghost* and *Christ* are both our Intercessors as to God; both our Advocates as to the Father.

Two attitudes does the Lord Jesus take: He is both in the ship of the church with us here; and He is on yon mountain's brow, watching it as tossed with the waves and billows. (Mark iv. 38, and vi. 48).

Two attitudes or characters does the *Holy Ghost* take. He is the Seal, marking God's claims on us; He is the Earnest, marking our claims through grace and blood, on God.

In two great relations to Christ does God stand, to wit, God and Father. And because we are associated with Christ, therefore in these identical two relations does God stand also with us—such are the two great names by which we should invoke Him, as our God and as our Father.

And if we follow Christ, we will find that He has a second rest to which He can bring us. If we give Him the burden of our sin, He will give us rest. If we take His yoke and His burden on us, we shall enjoy a found rest. Thus there are two burdens and two rests in Matt. xi. 28-30.

Our walk, our obedience, if it is not of a humanly-devised sort, must consist in following Christ *inside the veil and outside the camp*. (Heb. x. and xiii.). We must not jumble these two ideas together; but firmly hold and humbly act out both. If a worship is to be invented for the unregenerate but religious world, as they cannot by faith mount up to the embrace of God's love, therefore professing believers, who will not separate from evil disparagement of the blood and work of Christ, will persist in calling themselves miserable sinners, deprecating wrath and damnation, and uttering solely the language of the spirit of bondage.

The word perfection in the New Testament is the translation of two utterly different words in the Greek. One, as in Col. i. 28 and Heb. v. 14, and the other, as in 1 Cor. i. 10 and 2 Cor. xiii. 9 and 11. The former looks at our individual likeness to Christ; the latter of our being well fitted into the Body, that is, of our each knowing and keeping our proper place in the assembly of God.

Whilst Corinthians teaches us that the body has many members, and that all the members have not the same office; so Ephesians adds thereto, that to this body God gives gifts of MEN. The former proves that the Spirit must not be quenched in others, nor He restrained from using whom He pleases; the latter, that His wont is to edify the others generally through particular individuals. The one affords scope to the babe, or to the unlettered, so to minister in the assembly, as that great God to whom alone the church belongs

sovereignly, would have him ; the other marks a distinct provision made by the glorified Christ for His people's growth. The one proves the grave responsibility to the Lord of each, as to whether he speaks or is silent in His presence ; the other affords evidence that rule in this body is perpetuated by the Lord, seeing that it is His will that those who feed the flock are, with others whom He stirs up, also to rule in it. (Heb. xiii. ; 1 Peter v.). The need, too, of this rule is obvious, inasmuch as where there is liberty to the Spirit, there must be liberty to the flesh, which latter, for the health of the body, and for the glory of the Lord, should be judged. Hence the one class of gifts marks the liberty of all ; the other, the subjection of all. The one impresses on us the thought that Christ is our only Lord and Head ; the other demonstrates His faithfulness and love. The one shows us how we are cast on Him ; the other that He will never fail us. Because all ministry, if scripturally exercised, is the taking for oneself of a lower place than that which others have (Matt. xx. 26, 27) ; and is moreover carried on " among " believers, rather than over them. (1 Peter v., and 1 Cor. ii. 6). It follows that these gifts of pastors, teachers, etc., like every thing else of the Spirit, can only be spiritually discerned. Nor should it escape notice, that whilst the gifts of Ephesians are solemnly pledged to the end, those of Corinthians are not. Oh, how much of balanced truth have we here ! and how easily any of us may go astray, through the wresting of either side thereof. The ignoring of the Corinthian side thereof, has introduced the apostacy, and has set up clerisy, and led Christendom to reject the Holy Ghost. The refusing of the Ephesian side of this truth, has led many silly sheep to fancy themselves shepherds, and often brings in leanness, coldness, and death.

The second epistle of John says—Beware whom you receive into fellowship. The third epistle of John—Beware whom you reject from fellowship. The assembly in its attitude of witness for the truth before the world, appears in Scripture in two widely different aspects. It is " the pillar and ground of the Truth ; " consequently, it can have no complicity or fellowship with the infidel doctrines of the day ; otherwise it ceases so far to be the assembly of God. But there is another view. It is also a nursery, or hospital, and its pastors are represented as put over the Lord's " healing " or " nursery work." See Luke xii. 42, and Matt. xxiv. 45. And observe that these striking words were uttered upon two different occasions. As Trench says, " The noble, careful character of the work comes strongly out." In some assemblies attention is almost engrossed by the former view ; in others so much is made of the latter, that the standing up for the truth is neglected. Heeding only the one,

we may become stern and Pharisaic in our action towards the erring. If we observe only the latter, we may show love in deed ; but it will not be love in the truth. If we spend our time in looking for the faults of our brethren, we are ourselves ensnared ; but if amid much rubbish, we can behold a true though feeble work of grace, such a sight is a Divine judgment in favour of ourselves. (See Acts xi. 23, 24). It is exceedingly easy for anyone to see the faults of any other Christian : it is a test of our own growth in grace when we can mark the action of the Spirit of God upon the soul of another. God saw that His first day's creation work was very good : anyone could see that such was the character of His sixth day's work. So in the assembly, it is not difficult to mark the flesh in others ; it is not unfrequent to hear inaccuracies of statement in others. We need grace to know how to treat such cases, so as neither to surrender truth, nor to compromise love. As the late Mr. Groves wrote : " *When assemblies cease to stand forth as witnesses for the TRUTH, and prefer to stand forth rather as witnesses against all that they judge to be ERROR, they are lowered from heaven to earth in their character as witnesses.*"

(To be Concluded)

FAIRLOP GOSPEL HALL.

Space of late has not permitted us to mention much concerning the new work at Fairlop, but as many friends have kindly written enquiring as to its progress we are happy to insert a few lines telling of God's continued goodness.

Some 18 to 20 of us meet each Lord's Day morning, at 10 o'clock for the Breaking of Bread, and 50 to 60 gather for a Public Service at 11 a.m. Our Sunday School at the moment numbers 350, and our Gospel Service in the evening averages about 150. Since the Hall was opened in April last we have had the joy of baptising twelve Believers, and as we go to press, we have just concluded a special effort among the Young, when several elder scholars professed conversion and at least four parents found the Saviour. Thus prayer has been wonderfully answered and much fruit has been seen. Please continue in earnest prayer that the Winter season may be one of much fruitfulness. The Task is great, the labourers few, but the Harvest is sure.

Any desirous of having fellowship in the expenses of this work, or of helping in the cost of the Building itself, may send their Gifts to the Editor, and same will be personally acknowledged.

You will be assured a warm welcome any time you are free to pay us a visit.

The Book of the Wilderness.

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART X.

CHAPTER 19

THE remarkable ordinance given in this 19th chapter of Numbers is specially in view of the period of governmental wanderings of the children of Israel which came upon them as a result of their refusal to go up to the land at the Word of Jehovah (Chs. 13 and 14). But this section is important for another reason. It contains the fifth of the seven types of the death of the Lord Jesus that are found between Egypt and Canaan.

To refresh our minds it might be well to recapitulate them.

1. The Passover—shelter from the judgment of God. Ex. 12.
2. The Red Sea—deliverance from the power of Pharaoh. Ex. 14.
3. The Waters of Marah—making possible that which naturally is impossible along the way. Ex. 15.
4. The Smitten Rock—the constant supply of refreshment. Ex. 17.
5. *The Ashes of the heifer.* Num. 19.
6. THE BRAZEN SERPENT. Num. 21.
7. THE CROSSING OF JORDAN. Josh. 3.

The last two (in large type) remain to be considered later.

Despite all these wonderful provisions from the hand of their God, as Israel walked through the dreary desert they constantly became defiled in a variety of ceremonial ways. By following our ordinary duties of life we become defiled in a physical way; we look at our hands towards the close of the day, and they are dirty. They have become so, not by any conscious act, but through the inevitable contact with objects around the home, in the train or bus.

Here is the very essence of the question at point; it is not wilful sin, nor even known sin, but the defilement that is unavoidable by passing through a scene itself defiled.

How to deal with this state of affairs has puzzled men all down the ages. Monasticism would suggest as a solution a complete retirement from the world's activities altogether.

Moralists urge the cultivation of natural strength of character in order to withstand these fouling influences. Both of these leave out one vital factor at least—the presence of the un-

changed and unchangeable "flesh" in the believer. The first system ignores its existence altogether, the second avers that it can be trained and cultivated into bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Both the Scriptures and the painful experience of God's people testify to the falsehood of these doctrines. The way of God is not to remove us from the place of difficulty, but to maintain us IN it; not to improve the flesh, but to apply to the new creation in the believer the worth of the death of Christ.

The Divine provision is found in the "Waters for purification" described in the chapter we are considering.

The heifer is to be "red," literally "Adam" colour, reminding us of the Saviour who came in the likeness of sinful flesh. But there is a further qualification in the same verse (2) "without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke," still more emphasising the essential holiness and freedom from the bond of sin wherein all other flesh is bound. Upon Him the grievous yoke of sin was never found.

That this red heifer is definitely of the character of a special sin-offering is evident from the statements of verses 3-5: (See Lev. 4. 1-12).

1. Slain outside the camp.
2. The sevenfold sprinkling of the blood.
3. Wholly burnt outside the camp.

Then there is a feature added, which is only elsewhere found in connection with the cleansing of the leper in Lev. 14. Into the burning of the heifer that is slain are to be cast three things:

1. Hyssop—the lowliest of herbs.
2. Cedar wood—from the most magnificent of trees.
3. Scarlet—literally "worm-scarlet" speaking of the glory that comes through suffering unto death.

So the highest and lowest of man is thus connected with the wonderful death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the sacrifice is completed it is the ASHES that are kept. The ordinance is not a type of the soul laying hold of the worth of the death of Christ for the first time, but rather the bringing to remembrance of the value of a sacrifice already believed upon.

In verse 13 the case is contemplated of defilement through a man nearby dying, or even one of the family living in the same tent (v. 14).

Here it is important to note that the "cutting off" mentioned in the same context, is not because of the defilement, for as we previously explained this is definitely unavoidable, but because being defiled, the one in question did not avail himself of the remedy provided.

Neglect on our part to deal with communion broken—which now answers to the ceremonial defilement of the Old Testament, will certainly result in our, too, being cut off.

Note that one dying in a tent results in all the family living in that tent becoming defiled. So now one in a house or assembly may easily be the cause of broken communion of all associated with him.

The *open vessel* of verse 15 suggests those who have no regard for the protective covering that separation from defiling influences affords, and the *grave* of verse 16, which when touched, at once defiles, is solemnly indicative of those sins we thought long buried, but which if toyed with prove corruptly alive.

Notice in v. 19. that the process of purification in the type is carried out in two distinct stages—on the third day and on the seventh day. The "clean person" who does the sprinkling is clearly figurative of the Lord Jesus Himself, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" of Psalm 24. 4. The sprinkling too, is connected with "living water", that well-known figure of the activity of the Holy Spirit to cleanse.

At the first sprinkling on the 3rd day, the ashes call to mind the character of the sacrifice, and for us it is the reminder that sin of any kind is so black in the sight of God that the death of the Saviour was necessary to deal with it. This consideration makes the defilement that at the first appeared trifling, now to loom black and large. We see that what occurred was in fact part cause of the sufferings of Christ on account of sin. The introduction of hyssop into the act of sprinkling has reference to the humiliation that this process engenders.

When the soul is thoroughly bowed down before God by a sense of the enormity of the transgression, then comes the comforting assurance that this very defilement has been put away by the death of Christ of which these ashes are a remembrance. The familiar figure of washing the clothes follows upon the second application—there must be judgment of circumstances if the full blessing is to be obtained.

Thus does the double character of the type guard against superficial sorrow, but rather insists upon that godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

CHAPTER 20

It has already been pointed out that apart from the sad business of Korah, no historical details are given of the long period of 38 years penal wander-

ings of Israel between the first and second visit to Kadesh (Num. 13. 26 and 20. 1).

The Israel that had entered upon the desert journey with timbrel and dance had now passed away, but their progeny were unhappily much the same as the fathers, and the lesson of Exodus 17-7 is here repeated even in actual name—"Meribah" (Num. 20. 13).

The utter folly of the people is surely manifest by verse 5 of the chapter. They chide with Moses because they have not yet reached the land of promise, whereas the delay was entirely on account of the nation's own evil course.

The question here of the second smiting of the rock is of vital importance in typical study. The need of the new life for constant refreshment was met in Exodus 17 by the striking of the rod on the rock producing that wonderful flow of water. But the stroke, typical of the judgment that was laid upon the Saviour's head, should by no means have been repeated. The spoken word, of calling to mind the previous stroke, was alone needed.

Note in v. 9. that it was the rod "from before the Lord" that Moses was commanded to take. This was the rod of which we were told in Num. 17 that it blossomed and brought forth ripe almonds—a rod quite unsuitable for striking a rock. This priestly rod was not in any way connected with judgment—there were no cherubim wrought into the priestly robe either. Moses for once is piqued by the rebellion of the people, as we may well judge from his words in verse 10; "Hear now, ye rebels!"

Nothing but the sovereign grace of God permitted the needed water to flow in the face of such wrong conduct, but in spite of grace Moses personally had to suffer for his error.

A glance on the map of the journey will show the reason for Israel's request to Edom that they might pass through his land on their way, and the refusal on the part of the Edomites meant a long and wearisome detour for the people. The Lord is very definite, however that Israel should not contend here (See Deut. 2. 9) and the children of Israel deliberately avoided conflict. It is noteworthy though to see in later scriptures, that judgment comes upon the nation of Edom for their ancestor's churlishness. See Jeremiah 49. 17, Amos 1. 14, and the whole of Obadiah.

This 20th chapter contains another very important matter—here is recorded the death of Aaron the priest, who led them forth, and who was the chief minister of that Tabernacle they built in the wilderness. Even before they enter into the land promised to their fathers, it is here impressed on the children of Israel that their's is a failing line of priests which cannot continue by reason of death. Stripped of those garments of glory and beauty, Aaron passes off the scene to make way for his son Eleazer. So by contrast as well as by comparison does the wonderful Old Testament instruct us regarding the glories of Him Who is Priest for ever after the power of an endless life.

"THE LORD'S PRISONERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES."

By ERNEST BARKER.

THE examination of Prison Life from a Biblical viewpoint is exceedingly interesting. Generally speaking, a person is sent to prison as a punishment for evil doing, but in the sacred record we find that God's servants were imprisoned for *well doing*, and this contrast is both significant and important.

JOSEPH.

The first occasion the word "prison" occurs in the Bible is in Genesis 39. 20, where we read, "And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison." Thus we see that Joseph was the first of the many servants of the Lord who were granted this privilege of suffering in this particular form for righteousness' sake. We are able to obtain a glimpse of the way in which this noble character suffered in his Egyptian dungeon by reading Psalm 105. 18:—"Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron." But all these unpleasant experiences were over-ruled by God in a most remarkable manner. We are informed more than once that the Lord was with Joseph in that prison, and whatever he did the Lord made it to prosper. Were it not for this tremendous fact, Joseph would undoubtedly have given way to despair, but God was faithful to His devoted servant, and Joseph not only knew the joy of having a Divine Companion with him during the period of his incarceration, but he also had the joy of knowing that, through his temporary separation from the outside world thousands of his fellow creatures were blessed.

Let us derive comfort from this fact that, whatever our circumstances may be, **GOD IS WITH US**. This truth is seen twining and intertwining itself throughout the pages of Scripture. He is with us in our trials, our disappointments, our difficulties our anxieties, and our sorrows. He has graciously promised never to forsake us, and, if we are wise, we shall take full advantage of this promise and rejoice in the consciousness of His unflinching presence.

MICAHIAH.

Another faithful servant of the Lord who was most unjustly cast into prison was Micaiah, the son of Imlah. The interesting account of this man's courageous attitude before king Ahab is recorded in 1 Kings 22, and the very reading of the events

which took place on that great occasion is enough to inspire one with fresh zeal and devotion. The wicked king of Israel hated Micaiah because he always prophesied, not what Ahab desired him to say, but, what God told him to say. For the unsatisfactory state of his mind, the king of Israel had himself to blame. Had he been wise enough to fear the Lord: had he sought to place **HIM** first, the result would have been altogether different. Ahab sent for Micaiah in order that he (Micaiah) should say whether the king should go against Ramoth-Gilead, or whether he should forbear. The prophet's attitude was unflinching and uncompromising. His words to the messenger who was sent to fetch him were:—"As the Lord liveth, what my God saith unto me, that will I speak." When, at length, he delivered his message to the king, Ahab was so enraged that the very instructions he gave revealed the white heat of his anger:—"Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." But Ahab never returned in peace. Whilst Micaiah was enjoying the presence of the Lord in the prison, Ahab met with an untimely end, and was placed in his dishonoured grave.

JEREMIAH.

We now come to the fascinating history of the prophet Jeremiah—one of the most remarkable men in history. In chapter 32 of his prophecy we are told that he had been shut up in prison by Zedekiah, king of Judah, only because God's servant had been faithful in pronouncing judgment against Jerusalem because of the sinfulness of the people. Jeremiah's prison experience was strangely intermittent. He was put in and taken out quite a few times, but the last occasion he was imprisoned was by far the most trying. He was cast into the dungeon where there was no water, but plenty of **MIRE**:—"So Jeremiah sunk in the mire," and had it not been for the kind and timely intervention on the part of Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, he would most probably have succumbed, especially as the bread in the city was exhausted. But God did not forget His loyal servant, and Jeremiah was ultimately delivered through the humane action of Ebed-melech who drew the prophet out of the dungeon, using old cast clouts, and old rotten rags for that purpose—not by any means the most dignified way of delivering a representative of

Jehovah, but God has chosen the *base* things of the world for His glory.

Jeremiah was characterised by courage and faithfulness. He spake the word of the Lord fearlessly, and was quite content to leave his future in God's hands. Even in prison his courage did not fail him. Whatever the message was which God gave him to deliver, he delivered it thoroughly and unflinchingly. May we be as faithful and as courageous in our day and generation.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

When we approach the New Testament we see that the same experiment was resorted to by the enemy of the Gospel. The first recorded instance is that of John the Baptist. The genuine courage of that remarkable man was never more conspicuous than when he confronted the wicked and unscrupulous Herod, and sternly rebuked him for his gross immorality in marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whilst his own wife was living. For this John was bound and placed in prison, from which he never came out alive. It was his privilege to seal his faithfulness with his blood. Thus ended the earthly career of a man whose influence has reached down the ages and affects us to this day. The contrast between John and Herod was seen not only during their respective lives, but also in their death. The Baptist was buried reverently and lovingly by the disciples, whilst Herod, in common with the rest of his kindred, was buried unmissed, undesired, and unmourned.

It is very significant to observe that it was whilst he was in prison that John the Baptist received from the lips of the Lord Jesus one of the grandest testimonies that any man could enjoy:— "Among them which are born of women, there has not risen a greater than John." It is quite true that there may have been those who were as great as he, *but there was none greater.*

THE APOSTLES.

If there is one book in the Bible which abounds with prison experiences more than any other, it is the Acts of the Apostles. When the servants of Christ preached "Jesus and the Resurrection," the enemy was so enraged that he stirred up the minds of the religious authorities to so great an extent that many of God's representatives were persecuted even to death. But the devil's zeal outran his wisdom, and instead of hindering the spread of the gospel, the unceasing persecution fired the preachers with greater devotion than ever. Let us glance quickly at the various records of "prison life" which we have in this most interesting portion of God's word.

As a result of healing the lame man in Chapter 3, and the Apostle Peter's powerful preaching of the resurrection, the priests and Sadducees apprehended Peter and John, and put them "in hold" until the next day. On the morrow, God's servants were summoned before the religious tribunal, who asked them by what power, or by what name, they had dared to preach in this fashion. Peter, who was a magnificent opportunist, utilised the occasion by presenting Christ crucified, risen, and glorified as the only Saviour. The healing of the lame man was such an outstanding miracle that even the members of that religious tribunal could not deny it, and, seeing that they were afraid of the people, they thought it wise to do no more than to command Peter and John not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. They might just as effectively have commanded the planets to cease their revolutions around the sun. There was a holy fire burning in the souls of these men which all the united power of the enemy was unable to quench.

A little later on we read that such extraordinary power was exercised by the preachers of this glorious Gospel, and so many sick people were healed, that the high priest, and all that were with him, laid their hands upon the apostles, and put them in the *common prison*. This implies that God's servants were treated as *common* prisoners, in which, no doubt, they rejoiced, especially as they called to mind that fact that when their Lord was on earth it was the *common* people who heard Him gladly.

But a most remarkable thing happened. The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, released the evangelists, and commissioned them to go and preach the gospel in the temple. Early the following morning, when the council, and all the senate of Israel met, they sent to the prison and commanded the prisoners to appear before them, but the officers returned with the disconcerting news that, although the prison was shut with all safety, and the keepers were standing in their appointed places before the doors, *the prisoners had fled.*

Whilst the agitated members of the tribunal were debating the matter, wondering what they should do, another messenger arrived with the startling information that the very men who were put in prison were standing in the temple, and actually teaching the people. The evangelists were accordingly brought before the council once more, and were asked why they dared to preach "in this Name." Again Peter utilised the occasion by declaring the gospel to these obdurate religious authorities, with the result that the apostles were beaten, and again commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, after which they were allowed to go their way.

The closing verse of chapter 5 tells us in eloquent language how the preachers thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the midst of all this opposition:—"And they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

PETER IN PRISON AGAIN.

We need only to turn over a few pages of our Bibles to find the record of another exciting "prison experience." On this occasion Peter was in prison alone. Herod the king had apprehended him, cast him into prison, delivered him to the care of sixteen soldiers, intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people. That night Peter had the unique experience of sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and "the keepers of the door kept the prison." Surely Peter was secure. Surely there was no means by which he could effect his own escape. Surely Herod could now satisfy his devilish desire and treat him in the same way as he had already treated James, the brother of John, whom he had killed with the sword. Surely no *earthly power* could prevent Peter's martyrdom. No, *but a heavenly power* could—and DID. The Lord sent His angel into that dark prison, who smote Peter on the side, and gave him exact instructions what to do. As Peter arose, his chains miraculously fell from his hands, and, having girded himself, and having fastened on his sandals, he followed the angel who led him safely past the first and second ward. They then came to the iron gate which led into the city, "which opened to them of its own accord." Thus Peter was delivered from the cruel hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Our God is a great Deliverer. He delivered Israel out of Egypt. He delivered the three godly Jews from the burning fiery furnace. He delivered Daniel from the lions. He delivered His servant Peter from a prison so closely guarded that his enemies were persuaded that escape was impossible. But we must not overlook the part which prayer played in Peter's freedom. Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for Him, and those supplications were graciously answered even beyond the expectations of the believers.

PAUL AND SILAS.

We now come to one of the most remarkable prison experiences on record. Paul and Silas were mercilessly cast into a dark, filthy, pestilential dungeon, with lacerated backs and fastened feet. Instead of being downcast and miserable, these two loyal servants of Christ were full to overflowing with the joy of the Lord. At midnight (when the outside world was quiet and fast asleep), these two men prayed, and sang praises to God. That was indeed a *real* praise and prayer meeting. Paul

and Silas were *confident, united, and joyful*. They were far too busy to quarrel, and much too occupied with their Lord to desire aught else but His glory. God answered their united supplications and thanksgivings by sending one of the grandest earthquakes ever recorded. The foundations of the prison rocked: the doors were suddenly flung open: the shackles fell from the prisoners' wrists: and, best of all, the jailor and all his household were gloriously converted to God. Thus we see how all things worked together for good. God was behind the scenes ruling and over-ruling on behalf of His beloved servants in a way which only He could devise. This teaches us that it is perfectly safe to leave our affairs in the Lord's hands. He knows the end from the beginning, and we shall find that, when we are misunderstood or opposed in any way by the enemy, if only we place our confidence in Him, He will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday.

THE GREAT APOSTLE.

This series of articles would not be complete if we were to overlook Paul's imprisonment first in Jerusalem, then in Cæsarea, and finally in Rome. When he visited Jerusalem for the last time, it was not long before the entire city was moved in its antagonism against him, and the doctrine he preached. The fanatical Jews went about to kill him, and so great was the disturbance that tidings were brought to the chief captain that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Paul was thereupon bound with two chains, and carried by force to the castle, the multitude following him, crying, "Away with him." Soon after this Paul was again bound, this time with thongs, the object being that he should be examined by the cruel method of scourging, though subsequently this intention was turned down by the chief captain. The following day the apostle was brought before the Sanhedrim, when things came to such a pass that the members of the council nearly engaged in a tug-of-war over his poor body, and the captain, fearing lest Paul should have been "pulled in pieces of them", commanded the soldiers to take him by force, and once again to carry him to the castle.

Within a few days Paul was transferred to Cæsarea and brought before Felix, before whom he faithfully testified of his faith in Christ. The last verse of Acts 24 informs us that by the time Felix vacated his office, Paul had been a prisoner in Cæsarea for two years, and during the whole of this period he had been bound. When he appeared before king Agrippa he was still in this condition, according to his own words:—"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, *except these bonds*." (Acts 26. 29).

It is very significant that when God's devoted servant at length sailed to Italy, we are told that *he and certain other prisoners* were committed to the care of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band, though it would appear that during that ever-memorable voyage Julius was favourably disposed towards him, and granted him a fair amount of liberty. But this liberty was short-lived, inasmuch as when he arrived in Rome his chains were still upon him, and although it is true that he was suffered to dwell by himself, yet he was constantly guarded by a soldier. But God never once forsook His servant, and enabled him for two whole years to preach the gospel he loved, and to teach those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence without hindrance. In point of fact Paul's imprisonment in Rome turned out to be an abiding blessing both to the church, and to the whole world. The truth spread throughout the whole of Cæsar's household, and this accounts for the wonderful words in Phil. 4. 21 :—" All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household."

The apostle wrote five epistles whilst he was incarcerated in his Roman prison, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy, and Philemon, and these letters form five of the most wonderful documents in the entire realm of literature. It was whilst he was a prisoner that he said : " For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It was toward the end of his imprisonment that he wrote to Timothy on this wise :—" For I am already poured out, and the time of my dismissal is at hand," which is the literal rendering of 2 Tim. 4. 6. It was also about this time that he wrote those truly pathetic words concerning his defence before the cold-blooded Nero :—" At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Soon after this Paul willingly bowed his neck to the soldier's sword for the sake of his adorable Lord, Whom he had so faithfully served, and for Whom he had so consistently lived. Thus terminated the earthly course of one of the most famous and courageous men that ever lived. The great secret of his wonderful life was the REALITY OF CHRIST TO HIS SOUL. During the whole of his Christian experience he never once counted his life dear unto himself, if only he might finish his course with joy. He realised that God was ever working in him, both to will and to do concerning His good pleasure.

May this brief study of THE LORD'S PRISONERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES encourage us to be increasingly devoted to Him to Whom we owe all we have and are. May our lives be brighter ; our service less selfish : our love more intense ; and our worship more real. So shall our influence for the Master extend to the remotest parts of the earth.

SUGGESTIVE OUTLINES FOR GOSPEL PREACHERS. " SO GREAT SALVATION."

1. SALVATION REQUIRED—Eph. 2. 1-3.
 - (A) *The Wrong Course*—"Ye walked according to this WORLD" ("All that is in the world is not of the Father" 1 John 2-16).
 - (B) *The Wrong Conduct*—"Fulfilling the desires of the FLESH" ("They that are in the flesh cannot please God" Rom. 8. 8).
 - (C) *The Wrong Control*—"According to the prince of the power of the air" ("The whole world lieth in the Evil one" the DEVIL. 1 John 5. 19).
2. SALVATION REVEALED—verses 4-5.
 - (A) *Its hidden Spring*—"God who is rich in Mercy" (Isaiah 55-7).
 - (B) *Its mighty Stream*—"His great love wherewith He loved us" (John 3-16).
 - (C) *Its rich Supply*—"By Grace are ye saved" (2. Cor. 8-9).
3. SALVATION REVIEWED—verses 5-7.
 - (A) *verse 5.* "When we were dead in sins He hath quickened us together with Christ,"—*Our guilty Past removed.*
 - (B) *verse 6.* "And hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ,"—*Our present position secure.*
 - (C) *verse 7.* "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus,—*Our future happiness certain.*"
4. SALVATION RECEIVED—verses 8-9.
 - (A) *HOW EXPERIENCED?*—"Through Faith" ("Without Faith it is impossible to please God" Heb 11. 6).
 - (B) *HOW EXTENDED?*—"It is the Gift of God" ("God has offered faith to all men." Acts 17-31 margin).
 - (C) *WHAT IS EXCLUDED?*—"Works, lest any man should boast" ("Boasting is excluded, by the Law of Faith." Rom. 3.27)
5. SALVATION'S RESULT—verse 10.
 - (A) *A NEW CONTROL*—"We are His workmanship"—("It is God that worketh in you" Phil. 2-13).
 - (B) *A NEW CONDUCT*—"Created in Christ Jesus unto good works"—*"Working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Christ Jesus. Heb. 13-21.*
 - (C) *A NEW COURSE*—"God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"—("Walk in the Spirit" Gal 5.16).

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and W. E. Powell.

No. 10.—THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

IN our previous dialogues we have spoken of many wonderful things that are found in the Bible. On this occasion we are to speak of the Bible itself, and the claim that it has upon our obedience. I trust that as a result our reverence for God's holy Book may be increased, and a desire for a deeper acquaintance with its teachings may be implanted in our hearts.

What makes the Bible different from every other book ?

The Bible comes to us with a claim that no other book in the world, worthy of serious attention, makes. I need not refer to the Koran, nor to the sacred books of the Hindus and other Oriental nations, nor to the vapourings of Mormons and Swedenborgians. Inspiration may be claimed for them by their adherents, but no one here would be disposed to attach any weight to such a pretension.

Setting aside these products of fanaticism and paganism, if we compare the Bible with other good and useful books, we find that it stands upon immeasurably higher ground than even the best of them. Books written by devoted men of God are helpful and profitable to read, and their writers may have had the assistance of the Holy Spirit as they penned their words. But, for all that, the words of such books are the words of their writers, not the very words of God. With the Bible it is different. Its words are divinely given. “ *By inspiration of God* ” (2 Tim. iii. 16). That is, the Bible was written, not through good and holy thoughts being suggested by God's Spirit to the writers (such as may happen nowadays), but by the very words being divinely inspired so as to preclude the possibility of mistake or imperfection. The Holy Scriptures, as given at first, are like their Divine Author—perfect. This is the truth for which by the grace of God, I desire to stand.

How can you prove that the Bible is inspired ?

The Christian who knows and loves his Bible will find in its wonderful excellencies, and in the way it speaks to his heart and affects his conscience, a sufficient proof of its divine origin.

If you stood in the street yonder to-morrow at midday, you would need no man to prove to you that the sun shone. You would feel its warmth, and that would suffice you. Nor if you received a sharp cut from a razor would you need further proof that its edge was keen. In like manner, when one's heart is warmed through reading this blessed Book, as only divine love can warm it; and when the conscience is affected, as only the voice of divine authority can affect it—one has proof of the inspiration of Scripture.

External evidences are poor things to rest one's faith upon. Yet in the case of the Bible they are by no means lacking.

The marvellous and detailed fulfilment of its prophecies; the perfect harmony between its various parts, indited as they were under varying circumstances and at different epochs; the utter failure of its critics to substantiate their charges of imperfection; the impossibility of the human mind, trained and cultured though it be, to fathom and exhaust its teachings—all these, and many other facts, testify to the divine authorship of the Bible.

How does the divine inspiration of the Bible accord with the fact that its various parts were written by men ?

Men were used to inscribe the words, and for this purpose writers were selected whose character, position, or history suited them in a special way to communicate the revelation given to them. But the words by means of which they made their respective communications were just as truly the words of God Himself as if His own finger had penned them.

Let me illustrate what I mean. When Moses was summoned to the mountain-top he received the law, engraven upon two tables of stone, “ written with the finger of God ” (Exod. 31. 18). Without employing any human instrument whatever, God Himself had written the words. “ And the tables were the work of God, and the writing of God, graven upon the tables ” (Exod. 32. 16).

But when Moses came down from the mount and found the people shouting and dancing in honour

of a calf of gold, in a fit of righteous anger he shattered the divinely given tablets into fragments.

Upon this, Moses was again called to the mountain summit that the tablets might be renewed. But in this case *Moses* was to prepare the materials (Exod. 34. 1), and though God again undertook to write His words upon them, *it was with the hand of Moses He would write them*. "The Lord said unto Moses, WRITE THOU these words" (v. 27). Yet, though the hand of Moses, on this occasion, penned the words, they were just as truly the words of God Himself as when His own finger had written them; so Moses could say, "*These are the words which the Lord hath commanded*" (Exod. 35. 1).

This will help us to understand how words, written upon humanly manufactured materials, by the fingers of men, may yet be the very sayings of God. Such are the words of the Bible.

If you will turn to Acts 1. 16, you will see that the words of Scripture are thus described. The apostle Peter, quoting from the Old Testament, calls the quotation a scripture "*which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake*". So also, in Acts 28. 25, Paul exclaims, "*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet.*"

Some people claim to have found contradictions and mistakes in the Bible. What do you say to that ?

It is generally easy to prove that the mistakes exist in the minds of the critics, and not in the Bible. Take, for instance, the alleged discrepancy between the teaching of Paul and that of James on the subject of justification. The one says we are justified by faith, the other that we are justified by works. But on examination we find that the justification of which Paul speaks, is justification in the sight of *God*; whereas James treats of justification before *men*, a totally different thing. Thus the accusation of error recoils upon the critic's head, and he is found guilty of superficiality and lack of discernment.

Take another example. In Matthew's Gospel the so-called "Sermon on the Mount" is said to be delivered upon a *mountain*, where the Lord Jesus sat and taught His disciples. "But;" says the critic, "in Luke's Gospel this same sermon is said to have been delivered while our Lord *stood*, and that, too, not on a mountain, but in the *plain*" (Luke 6. 17). And this instance is brought forward as a conclusive proof of one gospel writer contradicting another!

I should have thought that it is a conclusive proof of nothing but the blindness of the would-be Bible critic. For even supposing that the sermon recorded by Matthew and that given by Luke were exactly the same, word for word (which they are

far from being), it does not follow that there is any contradiction between the two accounts. Wherever the Lord went, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, He had the same message to proclaim, and would very probably enunciate the same truths in the same or similar terms in different localities. What is there to prevent our believing that on one occasion the Lord uttered the words in Matthew seated upon a mountain-side, and upon another occasion the words in Luke standing in the plain? This appears to have been the case.

So far from it being an instance of imperfection in the Bible, it is another example of its wonderful and detailed perfection. For in Matthew the Lord is presented as the long-looked-for Messiah of the Jews, the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the peoples was to be. The great burden of His message as thus presented was "*Come unto Me.*" How suitable therefore is the picture which Matthew draws of the Lord seated upon the mountain, and His followers gathered around Him!

But in Luke He is presented as the Son of Man, come down in heavenly grace to meet the need of sinful men. The burden of the gospel message in Luke is not so much "*Come unto Me,*" as "*I have come to you.*" "*The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.*" Hence His descent to the plain to utter the sermon, is the incident selected for portrayal by the pen of Luke, in beautiful harmony with the purport of the gospel.

So much for the critics.

A microscopist, or chemist, however skilful, can never satisfy his hunger by the dissection or analysis of the plate of food that is before him. Nor shall we, if we sit in the critic's chair, thrive by our study of God's Word. In a humble, child-like spirit we should *feed* on what God has given for the nourishment of our souls, and leave fault-finding to those who wish to remain lean and famished all their days.

Are there not many things in the Bible very hard for young Christians to understand ?

Yes, undoubtedly; but, on the other hand, there is much that the simplest believer can understand and upon which he can feed. There is a story told of an old lady who likened the reading of the Bible to eating a plate of fish. "When I come to a bone," she said, "I am not troubled because I can't digest it. I just lay it on one side, and go on eating that part of the fish which I *can* manage. And when I read the Word of God, and come across anything that is beyond my poor comprehension, I do not worry over it, I just leave it till such time as the Lord may please to give me better understanding, and, meanwhile, I turn my attention to the abundance of precious truth which is simple enough for me to understand, and I get a good meal for my soul from it."

That old lady was wise, and I should advise all young Christians to read their Bibles on the same principle. What they find difficult to understand they may leave for future consideration, or they may seek the help of some spiritually minded Christian who is more advanced in the things of God than themselves.

Is there not a danger of young Christians wrongly interpreting the Bible, and thus doing themselves spiritual damage ?

There is not only a danger, but a certainty, of our wrongly interpreting Scripture if we trust to our own understanding in the study of it. There is only one Person on earth that can rightly interpret to our souls the blessed teachings of God's Word. I refer to the Holy Spirit. He is here, amongst other reasons, for the express purpose of illuminating our souls with the knowledge of the truth. It was He who, in the first instance, indited the words of the Bible, and He can make their meaning plain to us. He is the Divine Interpreter of the Divine Book.

Thank God, we are not left to private judgment for the interpretation of Scripture, nor are we dependent upon the decisions of learned doctors, or the pronouncement of any self-constituted human authority, papal or otherwise. We have the Holy Spirit Himself to be our Teacher and Guide. He who reads his Bible in simple and earnest dependence upon His teaching will not be disappointed. He will be kept from many an error, and be fed with the finest of wheat.

If a young Christian were to say, "I would like to study my Bible, but I don't know how to begin," how would you advise him ?

That is a rather difficult question to answer, for so much depends upon the degree of familiarity which one has with the Scriptures.

One might begin by studying the wonderful parables given to us in Luke's Gospel, which set forth in so striking a manner the grace of God. Such Parables, I mean, as the Prodigal Son, the Great Supper, and the Good Samaritan.

Then, too, one might search the Scriptures to find what they say as to any particular subject that may be exercising one's mind.

But I should particularly recommend all young Christians to read over for themselves the portions of Scripture that come before us in our public meetings, those from which the gospel is set forth, or which may be chosen as the subject of a Bible-reading or an address. Such portions are often selected with special reference to the spiritual needs of young believers, and should be studied in private after being considered at the meetings.

What is the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Bibles ?

The translation commonly used by English-speaking Roman Catholics does not differ very materially from the Authorised Version in general use amongst Protestants. In some respects the Protestant version excels, in other respects the Roman Catholic version is to be commended.

But the Roman Catholics include within the covers of their Bible the books commonly known as "The Apocrypha." These books were never received as canonical by the Jews; they do not afford the internal evidences of divine inspiration as do the books of "the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets"; they are never quoted either by the Lord Himself or the apostles: so that we have very good reasons for not regarding them as divinely given, however authentic as histories some of them may be.

Another point is that the Roman Catholic versions are never issued without "notes" at the foot of each page. Needless to say, these notes are human productions, and far from being merely explanatory. They often distort the plain meaning of the text so as to make it teach what is most manifestly contrary to its real import.

But apart from the inclusion of the Apocryphal books and the addition of these baneful "notes," there is little to choose in point of excellence between the two versions.

Why is the Bible divided into Old and New Testaments ?

The Old Testament contains an account of God's dealings with men while they were on probation. A large part of it is devoted to the story of the Jews, who represent man under the most favourable circumstances, tried and found wanting.

From the New Testament we learn how, after man's utter failure and ruin had been demonstrated, God intervened in grace, sending His Son into the world to be its Saviour, and through His death and resurrection securing blessing for man upon an entirely new ground.

The Old Testament is thus introductory to the New, and the New is the complement of the Old.

Are there any non-essentials in the Bible ?

It seems hardly likely that God would have gone to the trouble of making a revelation to us of things which we may regard with indifference. We too often resemble the old astronomers who regarded the earth as the centre of the universe, and reasoned accordingly. We are apt to regard ourselves as the central figure of God's wonderful plan, and to reckon anything of which we do not see the immediate bearing upon our own blessing

to be a "non-essential." But this is a grievously selfish way of looking at the matter. The fact is that it is *Christ* who is the central object of all God's purposes and plans, and what is revealed is in view of His glory. We may not see how any particular truth affects *us*, but if it is in any way connected with the glory of Christ, can any loyal heart call it a "non-essential" ?

We may be sure, then, that everything in the Bible is essential—essential to Christ's glory and the completeness of God's revelation, and if we attempt to dispense with any part of it we shall be losers in consequence.

Would you advise an unconverted man to read the Bible ?

Certainly, for its words are words of life. I do not mean by this that a man can be saved through Bible-reading. One may read through the Bible and be able to repeat chapter after chapter of it by heart, and yet remain unsaved.

But numberless instances are on record of souls to whom the voice of God has come in quickening power through the page of Scripture. Some passage is brought home to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and is thus the means of awakening and blessing. Even infidels, studying the Bible with a view to finding fault with it, have been aroused and led to Christ through what they have found therein ; heathens, in localities where the living voice of the preacher has never been heard, have obtained copies of God's Word, and found life and blessing in Christ through its means.

Are you in favour of teaching the Bible to children ?

Most decidedly. Christian parents neglect a most important duty if they do not endeavour to store the minds of their little ones with the truths of God's Word. It is true that for those truths to be effectual there must be a work of the Holy Spirit in the Soul ; but if the mind is stored with Scripture while young, there is material that the Holy Spirit can use at any subsequent time. How many there are who, during mature life, have had some passage of Scripture which they learned in the days of their childhood brought powerfully before their souls in such a way that conversion has been the result ! So that even if we have to wait many days, or years, for the seed to spring up, it is well to sow it in the minds of our children. We may be sure that if we do not instil into their minds the teachings of God's Book, Satan will be ready enough to take advantage and plant his evil thoughts there. By all means, then, teach your children, and let them be taught, the truths of God's holy Word.

CONCERNING

1935.

With our next issue we shall complete another year of *Threshed Wheat*, and Volume VI will be available. Looking back over the year that has gone we can but record the goodness of God in many ways, and judging from the appreciative letters received from our readers we feel sure that the present year's issues have been some of the most helpful, and we have an abundant supply of excellent MSS. for the coming year. We shall hope to detail next month a few of the papers in hand, but meantime take the opportunity of asking for your fellowship in obtaining new subscribers for 1935. We will gladly send sample copies for free distribution, if you will let us know how many you can wisely dispose of.

On Page II of Cover, this month, you will find our Free Gift Offer for 1935. For every subscription sent direct to this Office before December 31st, we will supply any one of our Pad "A" Calendars that you care to select from our lists. What better gift at this season than to subscribe 2/6 for *Threshed Wheat* to go to your friend every month next year, and in addition we will post direct now a nice Scripture Text Daily Pad Calendar, free from all advertising matter, either to your friend, or if you prefer, to you direct ? The only cost to you being 9d. for Box and Postage.

Remember you can select any Pad "A" Calendar you like, and it will be sent you entirely "FREE." Be sure and send in your subscriptions and those for your friends early.

It has been most encouraging during the present year to find the large number of readers who, when sending their own subscription for *Threshed Wheat* have added 1/3 to pay for a copy to go to some Missionary abroad. We are always pleased to supply *Threshed Wheat* at this special half-price rate to any Missionary, and should you care to join the happy band of subscribers who thus seek to cheer some lonely worker, we shall be very happy for you to do so. (*Special free gift Calendar offer does not of course apply to these half-price Subscriptions*).



Editor.



Threshed Wheat

EDITORIAL.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PART XXIII.

"The Secrets of Wisdom are double of understanding."

Job. 11. 6.

And as there are two great classes into which the Word divides all mankind, so it will be found that the same Word sub-divides each of those classes into two. As for the wicked, they are spoken of as either those who know not God, or those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. i. 8). Which of these two parties are the more culpable and exposed to sorer punishment Luke xii. 47, 48 will inform us. But then there are two classes of believers. There are those as the Lord, by Peter, tells us, who are adding to their faith manliness, knowledge, etc. And there are those who have forgotten their purgation from their old sins. Contrast Abraham with Lot, Elijah with Obadiah, Jeremiah with Ebedmelech, Mary with Martha, Epaphroditus with Demas.

So also there are two resurrections; the one of all the dead in Christ on the morning of the millennial reign, and called in Scripture "the resurrection of the just"; the other the resurrection of the unjust, at the close of that reign.

For that millenium, glorious as it shall be, is not the last state of things unfolded to us in Scripture. As now righteousness *suffers*, so then it shall *reign*; but subsequently it shall *dwell* in a new heaven and a new earth. The millenium is characterised as the kingdom of the Son of man; but in the succeeding state, God shall be all in all.

The time would fail me to speak of the two Jerusalems—the one heavenly, the other earthly, the two peoples for those two Jerusalems; the two rivers, one of them the Holy Ghost (Rev. xxii. 1), the other of actual waters. (Ezek. xlvi. and Zech. xiv. 8). Moreover, there are, as we know, the two Testaments, one called the Old, the other the New—one which might be termed the book of the kingdom, the other the book of the Church. The view of two fulfilments of many prophecies, the one incoate and partial, the other final and complete—this view, which I doubt not is the true one, would, when embraced, speedily settle many controversies.

And as this two-fold view of Scripture doctrine appears to be the true one, so in particular Scriptures, in details as to daily practice, and in many other important points, the same double presentation of truth in God's Word continually obtains.

Sometimes the two sides of the truth are uttered, as it were, so in one single breath, that careless readers fail to observe the balanced teaching—e.g., "Abide in me, and I in you"; "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine"; "merciful and faithful High Priest"; "The Apostle and High Priest of our Confession"; "Christ is all AND in all." How often do we, for instance, hear the last sentence so quoted that the double truth is lost sight of, and the whole is thrown together into the one inaccurate statement that Christ is all in all.

Each of the two great ordinances of Christ—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—present us with two delightful truths; the former that we are dead with Christ and risen with Him; the latter that, as living souls, we need food which He supplies, and also that we are waiting till He comes.

And those two ordinances surely each presuppose that we are not all spirit, and yet not all body. Were we all the one, perhaps to believe with the heart might suffice. Were we all the other, possibly confession with the mouth at baptism might avail. Some whom I know are all for the internal; some wholly for the external. Which is right? Or, are both right in their place?

Some there are who frequent so many gatherings in a week, that they seem to imagine that worship should be wholly in public; some conversely appear to eat their morsel alone, to enjoy communion in private, but are unsolicitous as to helping others less spiritual than themselves, in the various ways indicated by the Holy Ghost in the Word, as to the assembly's behaviour when gathered. Or again; if some in the assembly, under the plea of liberty for the Spirit, should

demean themselves otherwise than the Word enjoins, then they need to be reminded that worship, to be acceptable to God, must not only be "in spirit", but also "in truth." (John iv.). And once more, love and reverence, reverence and love, should characterise all our worship of Him who is both our God and our Father.

Specially, then, should we eye the blood-stained mercy-seat, and seek to know God's estimate of that crimson dye. Oh! how consoling to know that the blood was sprinkled not only *before* the mercy-seat, as if for the worshipper's eye, but also *upon* the mercy-seat, as if for the very eye of God. (Lev. xvi.). And however we may fail in our apprehensions as to the value of that blood, still God's dealings with us are, as we know, according to His value thereof.

Then too, conversely, when we go into the world we should demean ourselves therein as strangers and pilgrims. Once we were strangers *there*. (Eph. ii. 19). But now we are strangers *here*. And "pilgrims" too—this term looking to the place *to which*, whilst "strangers" refers to the place *from which* we are journeying. For again, we are *elected* out of a wicked world; we are *predestinated* to God and glory. Then we shall remember that once we were both "alienated from God, and also enemies in our mind by wicked works."

Whilst we are journeying there, one joy of ours is that we have companions—brethren. To us all, the command has been given, "See that ye fall not out by the way." Only in our love of the brethren we must begin with God and Christ, otherwise it is nothing more, save in name, than hollow liberalism, latitudinarianism, and admiration of their fleshly amiabilities. Hence the Lord, in 1 John v. 1, 2, conjoins the two directions as to the love of God and the brethren, and shows that neither must be pleaded to set aside the observance of the other.

In our daily walk we are instructed to be "sincere and without offence." (Phil. i. 10). The former word in the Greek denotes, "judged in God's sunlight"; the latter refers to our carefulness not to stumble others. The former encourages us to seek God's light on our ways; the latter cautions us not in every sense to neglect man's judgment. Compare Gal. i. 10, with 1 Cor. x. 32, 33.

We are to seek to be filled with the knowledge of His will, *that we may walk worthily*. On the other hand, we are to *walk worthily*, *that we may be filled with the knowledge of His will*. (Col. i. 9, 10).

The two parables of the virgins, and of the talents, regard our two-fold life. The one looks at the grace of God within us; the other, at our work for God around us.

Also, again, we must combine the teaching of the parable of the pounds, in Luke, with that of

the talents in Matthew. The talents represent the servants possessing different measures of ability, but equally improved and equally rewarded. But the pounds in Luke xix. represent the servants with equal ability, but with different measures of improvement and proportionate reward. Together, they teach us that our *responsibility is according to ability*, and our *reward will be proportionate to faithfulness*.

Then when He comes, His grace shall have its triumph; for He will receive us to Himself. In His righteousness, He will also judge our service, and crown us accordingly. Then as kings we shall rule creation *for* God; as priests we shall lead creation's worship of God. As the true cherubim we shall execute heavenly power on earth; as the seraphim, our work will be to declare and witness for God's holiness. And whilst we who believe shall be for ever with the Lord, both those that know not God and also those that obey not the gospel, shall go into everlasting punishment.

Slow are we to learn the ways of God. There is a freeness in the statements of the Divine Word that amazes us. Then we with our unbelief seek to qualify it—to neutralise it. We recall a counter statement, and endeavour to neutralise the one that staggers us. Then there is danger. God means all He says. Let us hold to all of it. Let us give up no part of it. Let us not add unto it, nor diminish aught from it. God has given us two eyes to read it with; and two feet to walk in His paths with. Onesidedness with Israel led them to Crucify Christ; they eyed the glories only. Onesidedness with christendom is leading it to its ruin. The second coming of the Son of God they will not see.

Are you unsaved? And do you plead the Divine sovereignty in extenuation of your guilt? Know that Scripture combines continually your responsibility therewith. (See Matt. xi. 20 with 25; chap. xiii., v. 14 with 15; 1 Pet. ii. 8). Mark how the great chapter on divine sovereignty ends. (Rom. ix.). Observe its last verse, and behold the goodness and severity of God.

Do you say you believe? But is your faith unaccompanied by obedience? Your faith is dead, being alone. Compare verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians ii. Are you tempted by Satan to dwell exclusively on one side of Scripture? Then reply to him as Christ did, "It is written *again*." In short, remember ever that statements may be divers, without being diverse; *counter, without being contrary*. Oh! to love all the Word of God. Dislike any one part of it, and you would oppose and reject that identical feature in Christ the living Word, if He were here visibly present. We cannot afford to give up one part of God's Word. It sanctifies us. The part that presses us, like as in a seal, we most need.

G.F.V.

THE END.

The Book of the Wilderness,

A Simple Outline of THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

By H. Dennett.

PART XI.

CHAPTER 21.

THOSE who have followed these outlines through will recollect that we noticed as far back as Exodus 19 an important crisis in the course of the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Then it was their ill-judged pledge of absolute obedience to the law of their Holy God. It was indeed for evil that this turning point affected their way, resulting indeed in judgment, instead of grace, meeting their frequent unfaithfulness.

But in Numbers 21 there comes another turning point, one that now turns to their good rather than evil, and one which depends on God's sovereign and over-ruling grace rather than on their poor promises.

There are at least two distinct phases of this crisis, first the victorious battle of Hormah, vv. 1-3, and secondly the raising of the Brazen Serpent. vv. 4-9.

To understand the significance rightly of Hormah, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the disaster that overtook Israel as recorded in Numbers 14. 40-45. The people who had at the first refused to go up to possess the Land when so bidden of Jehovah, afterwards presume to do so when forbidden of Him. As might be expected, only defeat could follow, and Israel were ignominiously smitten by the inhabitants of the land.

"And the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites . . . and smote them . . . even unto Hormah" (Num. 14. 45).

Now in chapter 21, after the long tuition of the desert journey, Israel again are on the borders of the land. They have learned very much indeed, and they will not presume in their own strength now.

When some of the Southern tribes of the Canaanites launch an attack upon them and take some people prisoners, it is to Jehovah that Israel now turn. Casting themselves on Him they vow a vow, this time not impossible of performance as in Ex. 19—and the Lord acknowledges their zeal,

and gives them the victory. The point of the whole incident lies in the name that Israel gives to the place—they call it "Hormah" in vivid memory of their fathers' failure of the former day.

For us the principle may be summed up in a phrase which, though somewhat worn by usage is nevertheless very true: the point of departure is the point of recovery. It is as if coming to a fork in the road, we turn down the wrong way and go far from our destination. There are no cross cuts, and to get back to the right way we must needs retrace our steps back to the very fork where we went wrong in the first instance. In the world there are nearly always quick ways across by which a mistake may be rectified, but *never* in the things of God.

That it was a grievous detour which was forced upon the people of Israel by the callous refusal of Edom to allow them to pass through their land is undoubted. Difficulties that can be borne at the early stage of an undertaking, often not only appal at a later stage, but even call up bitterness that would be hard to understand apart from the time of its occurrence.

Israel had complained many times before, as we have noticed, but Jehovah was pleased to use *this* occasion to bring to a head and quench for good their evil speakings.

Their provocation was certainly serious. First there was the ever-recurring hankering after the things of Egypt, but here they even express their open contempt for the "angel's food" that had sustained them all along their way.

The stroke that follows their outburst, and the remedy provided by Him Who dealt the stroke, are of the utmost importance not only to Israel in the first place, but also to us in view of the connection with John 3 and other vital New Testament Scriptures.

The instruments used of Jehovah to punish His disobedient people were *burning* serpents, and a reference to the margin will show that the word

"burning" ("fiery" in ordinary version) is the same as "seraphim" in Isaiah 6. The seraphim are the "burning ones" at whose presence and utterance the prophet is appalled. Here the serpents are the means of judgment. Note that the effect of their bite was not discomfort or disease but *death*. The severity of the stroke quickly brings the people to their senses; they acknowledge their sin against Jehovah and earnestly desire His intervention.

Never is the Lord deaf to a cry of this kind if uttered in sincerity, but the mode of deliverance is unique. Moses is commanded to make a serpent and place it upon a pole that all might see. The actual material used was *copper* (usually rendered "brass" in the Authorised Version) and could be so hardened by the ancients that it would stand the fiercest fire. Hence it was used in the Tabernacle for the Altar of sacrifice, etc. The typical significance points to Him Who alone could endure the fierce wrath of God against sin.

Because as we have mentioned, the Lord Jesus uses this very incident as a figure of His own work at Calvary (John 3), it is of the utmost importance that we should get a right view of its setting. Note then that neither in Numbers 21, nor in John 3 is the forgiveness of sins in question. Rather in both type and anti-type is it a question of *perishing* or of LIFE!

"When he looketh—shall *live*" (Num. 21. 8)
 "Shall not perish, but hath everlasting *life*"
 (John 3. 16).

The fuller New Testament exposition of this marvellous type is found in Romans 8. 3:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

It is not without significance that when Israel journeyed forward after their remarkable experience it was "toward the sunrising", and that from this moment until they entered the land itself, every murmur was hushed, and never again did they long for that land of Egypt whence they came out. Real progress is now made. How essentially true is this of believers to-day. It is one thing to see that the Saviour died "for our sins, according to the Scriptures" and a blessed thing it is indeed. But even with such a knowledge, we, as Israel, may often slip back, may often hanker after things of the old life, may often be overcome by the power of Satan.

But when we see the wonderful truth of Romans 8 that not only are individual sins dealt with, but the root principle itself has been judged in the Person of Christ, what wonderful deliverance from

things and circumstances there is. We shall have occasion to refer to this again in connection with the attack launched against Israel by Balaam.

In verse 16 of Numbers 21 the people arrive at Beer (meaning "a well") and as is proper with a company so lately the objects of divine deliverance, they *sing* there (Cf. Ex. 15. 1). It is the Song of the Springing Well, for Jehovah had promised them water. Note that the refreshing stream comes not by smiting the rock, nor even by speaking to it, but by strenuous effort on the part of the nobles of the people themselves. The water was there but the earth that hindered its flow must be dug away before the people can drink. Surely significant to-day.

At the end of the chapter, Israel come to the border of the country of the Amorites under Sihon their king. Here again in conformity with their divinely ordained policy of non-aggression through the wilderness journey, Israel ask for a passage through, promising in no wise to harm the country as they went. The circumstances are similar to those of which we read in Ch. 20. 14 in relation to Edom, but there are two important differences. Speaking to Edom the messengers said "Thus saith *thy brother* Israel", and when a refusal they met, the nation made a painful detour rather than violate the territory of the Edomites. But to the Amorites there is not any question of "brother", and the refusal of Sihon was not met with further entreaty (see Ch. 20. 19-20), but with instant demonstration of war. That the conflict was of Jehovah is evident from the outcome—the utter overthrow of this entire Amorite kingdom and its conquest by victorious Israel. Thus is God's sovereignty evidenced. It is not safe to presume upon the grace shewn to another!

After the subjugation of the land of these Amorites, Israel was confronted by yet another foe—the people of Bashan led on by their gigantic king Og (See Deut. 3. 11).

The particular mention of Sihon and Og in the Psalms of praise for God's deliverances of old, in Psalms 135 and 136, call for special note. It has repeatedly been pointed out that difficulties that may be met with courage in the earlier stages of an enterprise are apt to appal when they recur towards the end. Israel had already had to fight their way through the Amalekites right at the commencement of their journey, and had had various brushes with other foes later, but now as they were almost ready to enter the land itself they are faced by the most formidable foes of all.

There seems little doubt but that special help was given by the Lord to meet this crisis that might have made them faint at the very last. So need we that grace that we might in our day *finish* the course to His praise and glory.

A Christmas Message.

THE FIRST ADVENT OF CHRIST.

In our consideration of the first advent of Christ we will look at it under different headings, each commencing with the letter "P".

(1) The Prophecy.

In Genesis 3. 15 we read, "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." The meaning of this prophecy has become clearer to us since its fulfilment. The development of the prophecies regarding His coming are interesting and we will now look at a few of them.

His Birth—

Gen. 3. 15; Isa. 7. 14; 9.6. Cf. Matt. 1. 23.

His Birthplace—Micah 5. 2.

His Ministry—Isa. 61. 1. „ Luke 4. 15.

His Betrayal—

Psa. 41. 9; Zech. 11. 12, 13. „ Matt. 26. 15.

His Death—

John 13. 18.

Num. 21. 9; Psa. 22. 18. „ Matt. 27. 35.

His Resurrection—Psa. 16. 10. „ Acts 2. 24 27.

His Ascension—Psa. 68. 18. „ Eph. 4. 8.

(2) The Preparation.

The preparation for the birth of Christ is seen in Luke 2. 1-5. Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth (v. 4) and there seemed no reason why they should leave it, but God was working behind the scenes. He set in motion the machinery of the Roman Empire in order that His Beloved Son might be born in Bethlehem, and so Augustus issued a decree "that all the world should be taxed." (Luke 2. 11). According to law, everyone must go to his own city to be taxed, and as Joseph and Mary belonged to Bethlehem, they went to that city. It was there that Jesus was born. (Luke 2. 6, 7). Thus God fulfilled His Word, i.e. Micah 5. 2.

"He moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

(3) The Person.

In Matt. 2. 1. we read, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem." These wonderful words bring before us a wonderful Person, with a wonderful Name.

The One co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, (John 10. 30; 1. 1) "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5. 2. mar.). Who "made Himself of no reputation

and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2. 7).

Wonder of wonders! The Son of God laid aside His royal robes and was born a Babe in Bethlehem! Thus for the first time the creature looked upon the Creator in human form. Wonderful sight!

His name which is Jesus and means Saviour (Matt. 1. 21) is worthy of our attention. Precious Name! The sweetest name our ears have ever heard. A name which tells me of my need of a Saviour. God has come down to save sinners. This blessed Name has appealed to old and young throughout the succeeding ages. The weary have found rest and the dying comfort through it; and the reader can be saved while reading these lines through Him who bears this Name. (Acts 4. 12).

(4) The Place.

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem" (Matt. 2. 1; also Luke 2. 15). Bethlehem appeals specially to us because it was associated with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its meaning is "The House of Bread" and He who is "The Bread of Life" (John 6.35) chose to be born there in order that He might have a body in which to die on Calvary's cross, that everlasting life might be offered to "whosoever will". Have you accepted it?

(5) The Presents.

The wise men presented unto Him (not *her*) gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matt. 2. 11).

(a) GOLD — His Deity.

Gold is taken to represent His Deity, which is revealed in the following Scriptures:—

Isa. 6. 1; 9. 6. Cf. John 12. 40, 41.

Micah 5. 2. „ Matt. 2. 6.

John 1. 1. „ Rom. 9. 5; Heb. 1. 8.

(b) FRANKINCENSE — His manhood.

Frankincense was also presented to Him, and is suggestive of His Holy Manhood, because frankincense was fragrant and gave a beautiful perfume. (Exod. 30. 35), reminding us of Christ's fragrant life of righteousness on earth, which was well pleasing to His Father. (Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5). Jesus Himself said, "I do always those things that please Him" (the Father). John 8.29.

(c)—MYRRH His Death.

Myrrh was used for embalming the dead. (John 19. 39, 40), and therefore speaks of the death of Christ. Through His death peace has been made with God for the sinner, and those who believe have peace with Him. (Col. 1. 21; Rom; 5.1). May we first present ourselves to Him, and then present unto Him our praise, prayer, time and possessions.

(Continued on page 140).

“ BIBLE DIALOGUES ”

IN A GOSPEL TENT.

By H. P. Barker and S. W. Royes.

No. 11.—PRAYER.

Is there any special reason why you have chosen the subject of Prayer to immediately follow our dialogue on the Holy Scriptures ?

YES. In the spiritual life of the believer the two things—the Word of God and prayer—must go hand in hand, or shipwreck will be the result. In Luke 10. 39 we find Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, hearing His word. She is commended for the good part she chose, and we learn from her case how right it is that we should desire to know the Lord's word. But immediately following upon this an incident is recorded from which we learn the importance of prayer ; and we see from the close conjunction in which the two scenes are placed on the sacred page how intimately connected the two things—the Word of God and prayer—are.

In order to keep a fire burning, a constant supply of both fuel and air is necessary. Deprived of either, the fire would die away. In the same way, two things are needed if the fire of joy and communion is to be kept burning bright in the believer's soul—a constant application of the Word to his heart, and the constant exercise of prayer.

To whom should prayer be addressed ?

To God, and to Him alone. Nowhere in Scripture do we find a trace of any such thing as prayer being addressed to the Virgin Mary or the saints. It seems rather late in the day to have to press this, and fight the battle of the Reformation upon this point again. Yet, alas ! the practice of invoking the dead is becoming prevalent in circles which were once avowedly Protestant. God is thus robbed of the honour which belongs to Him alone ; creatures are exalted at the expense of the Creator ; dead men and women are adored and invoked instead of the living God.

Of course, in speaking of God as the only One to whom our prayers should be addressed, I do not for a moment mean that we must not pray to the Lord Jesus. He is God, equally with the Father, and equal honour belongs to Him (John 5. 23). We find Stephen praying to the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit. Paul, too, prayed to Him concerning his thorn in the flesh.

We cannot define, in any cut-and-dried way, the occasions when prayer should be addressed to the Father and when to the Son. Generally speaking, we turn to God our Father with reference to

our needs as His children here on earth ; we turn to the Lord Jesus in connection with His service in which He graciously permits us to engage.

It only remains to be said that the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, is never presented as the object of either prayer or praise. He is on earth, dwelling within us, to indite, not to receive, our prayers and praises.

Has God promised always to give us what we ask for ?

He is too wise a Ruler and too loving a Father for that. What earthly parent would undertake to grant every thoughtless request that his child might prefer ? There are many precious promises, gleaming upon the page of Scripture, which assure the believer that his prayers, under certain conditions, will be heard. But whether God, in His love and wisdom, sees fit to grant any particular request or not, there is one thing upon which we may always count. Turn to Philippians 4. 6, 7, and you will see what I mean. God pledges His word that in every case His own peace shall keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Infinite love may deny us the thing which we ask for, but *this* boon, the keeping of our hearts in the serene atmosphere of God's own peace, will never be refused to the one who brings his requests to Him.

What conditions are there that ensure Prayer being answered ?

We will turn to the Scriptures and see. Look first at Psalm 66. 18. “ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” If we would have our prayers answered we must be right with God in secret. Our private life must tally with our public profession. Sin concealed, like a serpent in the bosom, takes all vitality from prayer. A bad conscience is a certain barrier in the way of our petitions being granted. God will not pour His blessings into unclean vessels. So the first condition for prevailing prayer is a *good conscience*.

Now read James 4. 3. “ Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” From this we learn that those who ask anything of God for a selfish reason will assuredly be disappointed. God will not be a party to self-gratification. The prayers recorded in Scripture, to which such wonderful answers were

given, were prayers on behalf of others, or prayers that had God's glory in view in connection with those who uttered them. A second condition, then, is a *pure motive*.

Then see James 1. 6, 7. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." *Unwavering confidence* is necessary, then, if we would have our prayers answered. To doubt, is to dishonour God, and to deal a death-blow at our own petitions.

Look now at 1 John 3. 22. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." *Obedience* on our part is another condition. We are not left in ignorance as to what things are pleasing to the Lord. But it is not enough to *know* them. We must *do* them if we desire to receive of Him the things we ask.

Once again, turn to John 16. 23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." Here is a fifth condition. If prayer is in *Christ's name* it will be answered. What is it to pray in His name? It certainly does not mean to pray about any and every thing that we please, and then wind up by saying, "All this we ask in the name, and for the sake, of our Lord Jesus Christ." It means that what we ask for must be something to which the name of Christ can truly be attached something which *He* would ask for were He in our circumstances. This calls for spiritual discernment which can only be acquired in nearness to the Lord. So asking for anything in His name implies that we are in close communion with Him.

Since God knows all our needs, why should we pray to Him about them?

It surely is enough to know that God would have us pray. Scores of Scriptures might be cited to show that prayer is acceptable to God. Nobody imagines that we pray in order to inform God of what He does not know. Nor do we pray in order to secure His interest or His love. The saint who prays intelligently realises that he is speaking to One who knows his every need far better than he does himself, whose interest in all that concerns His people is unbounded, and whose love could not possibly be greater than it is. The object of prayer is that dependence upon God might be expressed, and that our souls might be brought into touch with Him about what we pray for; that in waiting upon Him we might learn His mind; that utterance might be afforded for desires which the Holy Ghost has wrought within us, and that when the answer comes we might be conscious that it is indeed *from God* that it comes.

Should we pray for a thing, more than once?

No definite rule can be laid down with regard to such a matter. In some cases we are made to feel that our petition, for some wise reason, will not be granted, and that we are not at liberty to continue asking. Instances of this may be rare, but most assuredly they occur. Moses when he prayed that he might be allowed to enter Canaan, was forbidden to repeat the request (Deut. 3. 26).

On the other hand, sometimes when asking the Lord for a special thing, an overwhelming sense that one is heard, and that the petition is granted, comes upon one, and one feels that to ask again would be presumptuous.

But these are exceptional cases, and generally speaking, the Lord would have us *go on praying* for a thing that is upon our hearts. He often keeps us waiting for months, and even for years, before giving an answer, in order to test the reality of our desire and to prove our faith. He would have us importunate about what we seek of Him, and thus show that we are really in earnest. This is the lesson conveyed to us in the parable of the traveller who applied to his friend for bread at midnight (Luke 11). He was heard *because of his importunity*. Another parable—that of the injured widow (Luke 18)—enforces the same truth, that men ought not to faint or grow weary in prayer.

It is not that God is a hard and unwilling Giver, but that importunity is a test of earnestness and faith.

Is it desirable to have stated times for private prayer?

Most certainly it is for the great majority of Christians. Anything that is left for odd moments is often neglected altogether, and I am persuaded that the lack of having regular times is the reason why there is so little prayer amongst us. The saints of old had stated times. "Evening, and morning, and at noon," said David, "will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice" (Ps. 55. 17).

Daniel, too, cultivated the same habit, and nothing could prevent him from kneeling down in his chamber three times a day and praying and giving thanks before his God (Dan. 6. 10). Alas! what trivial things we permit to rob us of our time for prayer!

Call the practice "legal" if you will, but I wish there were much more of such legality! I earnestly commend to every young believer the habit of reserving a certain time every day for private intercourse with God. Early in the

morning is the best of times, and immediately before retiring at night.

But besides having regular times for prayer, of which nothing should be allowed to deprive us, we should seek *always* to be in a prayerful, dependent spirit, ready at a moment's notice to turn to the Lord about any difficulty, or in any emergency. We have a charming instance of this in Nehemiah. He was the king's cup-bearer, and while in the performance of his duty he was suddenly asked a question by his royal master which he felt utterly unable to answer without reference to the Lord. Divine guidance was urgently needed, but the king's question must have an immediate reply. The immediate reply was forthcoming, but in the hardly perceptible interval between the asking and the answering, Nehemiah was able to turn to the Lord in prayer. "I prayed to the God of heaven, and I said unto the king" (Neh. 2. 4, 5). Would that we were always near enough to the Lord to be able to consult Him and seek wisdom and guidance at His hands as readily as Nehemiah did!

Would you recommend any special form of prayer?

I would not. The Holy Ghost is here to form our thoughts and desires on the lines of God's will, and He lays upon our hearts the right subjects for prayer, and enables us to present them before the Lord. We are thus exhorted to pray "with all prayer and supplication *in the Spirit*," and to pray "*in the Holy Ghost*" (Eph. 6. 18; Jude 20).

It is true that, left to ourselves, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," but in the Holy Spirit we have the best of teachers, and we may safely leave it to Him to control and direct us in our prayers.

Do you believe in long prayers?

Yes, so long as they are uttered in private and really come from the heart. We cannot be too much or too long upon our knees in secret. The Lord Jesus on one occasion continued a whole night in prayer; but the mere fact of a man continuing long in prayer does not secure him a hearing. No one is heard for his much speaking. Reality and deep reverence should mark us in addressing God.

But I presume your question has reference to public prayers. If you will look up the prayers recorded in the Bible you will find that the longest of them—that uttered by Solomon at the dedication of the temple—took less than ten

minutes, however slowly and reverently pronounced. It has been well said that when one really wants anything very few words will suffice to convey his request. It is when one has nothing in particular to ask for, that the prayer takes twenty or five-and-twenty minutes.

The Lord Jesus was omnipotent, and was the Creator of all things. Why, then, was there any need for Him to pray?

It is true that the Lord Jesus was what you say. He was "over all, God blessed for ever." But He came to earth to tread the pathway of a dependent Man, and everything that God looked for in a man was found to perfection in Him. Obedience, truth, righteousness, confidence, dependence—all these were seen in Christ. And it was as a Man, in the lowly pathway into which His grace had brought Him, that we find Him again and again in prayer. In all this He has left us a bright example. May we follow faithfully in His steps!

(Continued from page 137).

(6) Praising.

According to Luke 2. 13, 14, there were "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Well might the heavenly host praise God, for never before had such good news been heard by human ears. May we who know Him also praise Him.

(7) The Period.

The Period is seen in Gal. 4. 4. "When the fullness of the time was come" i.e. When man had been tried (and failed) under innocence, conscience, human government and law, God sent forth His Son. Truly God is never before, nor behind His time. "In due time, Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6).

(8) The Purpose.

The purpose of His coming is stated in 1 Tim. 1. 15; where we read "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" therefore He came to save you.

Why not, then, accept Him as your personal Saviour? and be amongst those who are waiting for His second coming, to take them to be forever with, and make them like, Himself. S. LAVERY.

OLD PARABLES RE-STUDIED

By ROBERT LEE.

THE PARABLE OF THE OPPOSITE.

LUKE 18. 1-8

HOW will this old parable look re-christened ? It is usually called "The Parable of the Unrighteous Judge"—it can be called "The Parable of the Opposite."

You will observe by verse 1 why the Lord Jesus related this touching story: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." The Scriptures give us a wonderful outline of the things we ought to do, and the young student would discover it a helpful exercise, to find them by the aid of a Concordance. There are lots of things we ought to do, and here is one—"We ought to pray and not to faint."

This Judge was evidently unusually reckless and desperate. There are very few, even of the most callous, who are quite so abandoned. We have known some of the most unprincipled of officials, who nevertheless have had a great respect for the views of others. But this Judge had neither respect for God, nor the opinions of men. The self-pleasing indolence of the fellow is amazing.

The few points given here descriptive of the widow are very touching. The exceeding desolation of widowhood in the East, has often been noticed. They are without the tender regard and the hand out-stretched to help, that is so common in Western lands, and which certainly is one result of the influence of Holy Writ. For the Bible is very solicitous for the welfare of widows. God has been pleased to reveal Himself as "Father of the fatherless and Judge of the widows." She was weak and poor—remembering the conditions of Eastern Law Courts, we recognise the hopelessness of her case. For, being weak, she could not compel the Judge to do her justice; and on account of her poverty with no bribe to offer, she had no means to induce him to withstand for her sake, the evil plans of formidable adversaries.

"Yet because this widow troubleth me" or as in the R.V. "wears me out," or as in the Margin "Bruises me," he decided eventually to act. This is an exaggerated expression. He declares that her repeated coming has beaten him black and blue (so literally). Surely we have here the exercise of the worst form of selfishness.

1. IS THAT JUDGE A PICTURE OF OUR GOD ?

Emphatically no ! The strength of the Parable lies in the unlikeness of this judge to the Judge of all the Earth. Of course, there are times when God seems as this unjust judge, with no ear to hear, and apparently deaf to the prayers of His people. Consequently the Lord's people often expect a speedier deliverance than He wills to vouchsafe to them. But this is not a picture of our God. It is a parable of unlikeness. You see how that judge acted; well that isn't how our God acts !

Another point. Ponder well the narrative for it teaches this:—For if a bad man will yield to the mere voice of the importunate, though he hates to do so, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful prayers which He loves.

2. IS THIS WIDOW A PICTURE OF OURSELVES ?

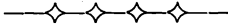
It well may be. There are many lonely ones in this World. Observe, she was

- (1) A lonely woman—no husband or child. How many lonely ones there are in the world. Perhaps the reader is one, whether man or woman, maiden or youth.
- (2) She had an adversary. And so have some of us. Yea, in the person of Satan we all have a very formidable enemy. Yet we need not be left helpless in his clutches.
- (3) The adversary had wronged her.
- (4) She demanded vengeance.
- (5) Note her persistence, which was rewarded.

Is there no force in the context ? Note how this parable is sandwiched. It teaches us what to do when face to face with gross injustice. And who has not, at sometime or other, suffered from such. The lesson is—let us remember that the Lord is coming to adjust all wrongs; and our duty in the meantime is to pray without ceasing.

A Riddle for Christmas.

Christmas is always a time for riddles and here is an old one, published 1759, entitled "A Believer's Riddle" by Ralph Erskin, M.A.



" I'm something that from nothing came,
 Yet, sure it is, I nothing am :
 Once was I dead, and blind, and lame,
 Yea, I continue still the same ;
 Yet what I was, I am no more,
 Nor ever shall be as before.
 I am divorced, yet married still,
 With full consent, against my will :
 My Husband present is, yet gone ;
 We differ much, yet still are one.
 My life's a pleasure and a pain,
 A real loss, a real gain.
 I'm cross'd, and yet have all my will ;
 I'm always empty, always full :
 My hunger brings a plenteous store,
 My plenty makes me hunger more.
 I'm lib'ral, yet have nought to spare :
 Most richly clothed, yet stript and bare.
 Glad in this world I live, yet see
 I'm dead to it and it to me."

Here are paradoxes indeed, but they increase as we read on :—

" The work is great I'm called unto,
 Yet nothing's left for me to do :
 I clear myself from no offence,
 Yet wash my hands in innocence :
 Though still my sins displeasing be,
 Yet still I know Heaven's pleased with me."

Further on in his riddle the writer explains how this is possible :—

" My peace and safety lie in this,
 My creditor my Surety is :
 He to the Law, though Lord of it,
 Did most obediently submit.
 What He ne'er broke, and yet must die,
 I never kept, yet live must I.
 The Law which Him, its Keeper, killed,
 In me, its breaker, is fulfilled."

In other parts of this curious riddle the work of grace in the heart is described :—

" I travel, yet stand firm and fast ;
 I run, but yet I make no haste.
 On earth there's none so great and high,
 Nor yet so low and mean as I :

None are so foolish, or so wise,
 So often fall, so often rise.
 Though in my flesh dwells no good thing,
 Yet Christ in me I joyful sing :
 Sin I confess and I deny,
 For though I sin, it is not I.
 I'm both unfettered and involved,
 By law condemned, by law absolved ;
 My guilt condignly punished see,
 Yet I the guilty wretch go free.
 Mine arms embrace my God, yet I
 Had never arms to reach so high ;
 His arm alone me holds, yet lo
 I hold and will not let Him go."

How many difficulties and differences of doctrine would disappear if we all learnt the secret of this riddle !

" I do according to His call,
 And yet not I, but He does all ;
 But though He works to will and do,
 I without force, work freely too."

In conclusion, this quaint old writer sums all up by saying :—

" I'm from beneath, and from above,
 A child of wrath, a child of love ;
 A noxious briar, a harmless pine,
 A sapless twig, a bleeding vine ;
 A staple fir, a pliant bush,
 A noble oak, a naughty rush.
 I'm ranked with beasts of different kinds,
 With spiteful tigers, loving hinds ;
 And creatures of distinguished forms,
 With mounting eagles, creeping worms,
 A slothful owl, a busy ant ;
 A dove to mourn, a lark to chant :
 And with less equals to compare,
 An ugly toad, an angel fair."

The application of the riddle Ralph Erskin gives thus : " A jewel prime, though wrapt up in the rags of homely rhyme."

" That saints be neither at their worst nor best,
 Too much exalted or too much deprest.
 The sound in faith no part of truth control :
 False teachers own the half, but not the whole.
 The riddle has two feet, and were but one
 Cut off, truth falling to the ground were gone."
 And happy truth if verified in you.

SOME ~ INTERESTING ~ FACTS

First English Bible (Wycliffe's) published in 1380.
 First printed of all books was a Latin Bible.
 Price of a Bible in 1270 from £30 to £37.
 Careful writing of a Bible in the Scriptorium occupied about ten months.

The e are about 773,692 words in the Bible.
 There are about 3,566,480 letters in the Bible.
 Bible divided into chapters in the 13th century.
 Bible divided into verses in the 16th century.
 The Septuagint was commenced about 284 B.C.
 The Apocrypha was written a considerable time after the completion of the Old Testament.
 Oldest MSS. are those of the New Testament.
 Divisions of the Old Testament, Luke 24. 44.
 God in government—The Old Testament.
 God in grace—The New Testament.
 Old Testament history completed with Nehemiah.
 Old Testament prophecy completed with Malachi.
 Isaiah is most complete as to prophetic subjects.
 Obadiah unfolds the ruin of Edom.
 Nahum treats of the ruin of Nineveh.
 Habakkuk in sublime language declares the rule of the Chaldeans.
 Kingdom of Judah—see the books of Chronicles.
 Kingdom of Israel—see the books of Kings.
 Headings of the psalms are as ancient as the text.
 "Selah," *pause*, occurs about 70 times in the psalms
 The psalm-divisions end respectively with
 Nos. 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150.

The ten tribes are descended from Shem. Gen. 10.
 The British are descended from Japheth. Gen. 10.
 Historical origin of all nations; see Gen. 10.
 Chaldean destruction of Jerusalem, 588 B.C.
 Roman destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D.
 Kingdom of Judah existed about 390 years.
 Kingdom of Israel existed about 260 years.
 There were 20 Sovereigns of Judah—many *good*.
 There were 19 Sovereigns of Israel—all *bad*.
 The "Jews" as a people are first mentioned as such in 2 Kings 16. 6.
 "Hebrew" first applied to Abram . . . Gen. 14. 13.
 There were 13 Judges—from Othniel to Samson.
 There are 5 temples mentioned in the Scriptures.
 "The Faith" might characterise Paul's 14 Epistles.
 "God," *plural*, occurs about 2700 times.
 "God," *singular*, occurs in the Bible about 60 times.
 "LORD" occurs about 6860 times in the Old Testament.
 "Jehovah"—Israel's title of covenant relationship.
 "Father"—God's title of relationship to Christians
 The Church is *prophetically* announced in Matthew ; chaps. 16 and 18.
 The Church is *historically* given in the Acts.
 The Church is *doctrinally* taught, and only so, in Paul's Epistles.

WALTER SCOTT.

WHEN GOD SETTLES

Queer letters find their way into newspaper offices. Here is one from a farmer to an editor :

"Dear Sir,—I have been trying an experiment. I have a field of corn which I ploughed on Sunday. I planted it on Sunday. I cultivated it on Sunday. I cut it and hauled it to the barn on Sunday. And I find that I have more corn to the acre than has been gathered by any of my neighbours this October."

The farmer sent his letter, sure that the editor could have no answer to the sneer implied in it. But imagine his feelings when in the next issue of the paper he read his own letter in print, and at the end of it this one sentence :

"God does not make full settlement in October."

That will bear thinking over.

WHAT DOES THE "LORD" MEAN?

In Acts. 10. 14, we read : "Peter said, Not so, Lord." Have you ever thought of what a contradiction in terms we have there? You have either got to drop the words, "Not so," or you have got to drop the word "Lord."

I spent two hours yesterday with a lady over these words, and she was rebellious indeed against the Lord's dealing. I wrote them down in the margin of her Bible at the bottom of the page ; and I handed her the Bible and the pencil, and I said, "The time has come for you to make the decision. Are you going to score out the words, Not so, or the word Lord? You must do one or the other." There was a great struggle in her heart, and through tears she scored out the words, "Not so." I said, "What have you got left?" and she said, "Lord." Is not the Lord enough?

