
THE FAITH
AND
THE FLOCK

1918

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Jehovah Ropheka.

Sore bruised, with bleeding heart, and weary brain,
I entered my own door, and closed it fast—
“Here will I stay till, life and sorrow past,
My spirit journeys to its home again?”
And then I spread my table in the dark—
A platter full of bitterness, a cup
Brimming with tears; on these I thought to sup,
And die in lonely loveless silence. Hark!
Someone has followed me, and stays beside
My unblest door. Why should I rise to see
Who knocks? This is no fare for company,
And I have neither fire nor light inside.
“I cannot let thee in, who e'er thou art.
“Knock at some other door, seek out a happier heart.”

But yet he knocked and knocked again, again,
Until my eyes o'erflowed to think that One
Should be so patient, standing there alone.
And so I rose, and covering up my pain,
I asked, “What dost thou want in this poor place?”
He answered, “Let Me in, I come to share
Thy supper.” Then I laughed in my despair,
And drew the bolts, and saw a gracious face,
And felt a dim sweet sense of hope, and cried,
“Come in and eat, if Thou can'st eat such food
For I have nothing else, nor any good
Of any kind in my poor dwelling. Pride
Would keep Thee out, concealing such poor cheer;
Yet, do Thy will with me, and what Thou findest here.”

And so we sat together, and He blessed
The meal before us, and **He supped with me,**
His sweet words calming all my agony,
And thus we ate the supper I had dressed.
Then, while I looked, and longed, yet feared to ask
“Who art Thou?” He, with winning kindness, drew
From His own stores a loaf. “This is the true
And living Bread,” He said, “and thine the task
To cleanse the platter, while I pour the wine.
As thou didst give Me welcome I to thee
Give welcome. Thou to-night shalt sup with Me;
I shared thy fare, now rest thee, and share Mine.”
Oh, what a feast my Lord for me has spread,—
And still I drink His Wine, and eat His blessed Bread.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 1.

JANUARY, 1918

Price 1d

1918.

A New Year's Message.

"More than Conquerors."

ROM. viii. 36-37.

"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."

An American admiral said once, "I have fought in many engagements, and been victorious in all. But I have one more enemy to encounter, and I know that when we meet I shall be defeated." He meant DEATH. This is not being *more* than conqueror, to be defeated at last. The Apostle Paul, facing even death itself—as he faced it often—yea, speaking as one who was "killed all the day long," could exclaim. "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*" Throughout time, and throughout eternity, he knew of no enemy that could vanquish him.

And to what does he attribute his final and complete victory? Not to his own courage, or determination, or wisdom, or strength—not even to his own faithfulness or holiness—though all these were necessary—but, to "Him that has loved us." He traces it all to one source, and that source the love of God.

Nor does the Apostle speak in the singular number, for this is a victory that belongs to all the redeemed, though it may be more manifest in the lives of some, than others. But the writer of the epistle to the Romans is speaking here from the height of God's purpose, and of each and all who are called according to that purpose, it may be said, as truly as was predicted of Gad, "he shall overcome at the last" (Gen. xlix. 19) though on the way we may, as he was, on occasion, be overcome.

But it is not a necessity to know defeat. Through Him Who has loved us, we may be more than conquerors in respect of

every adversary, whether it is sin, Satan, or death. And anyone who could quietly and contentedly acquiesce in defeat, would prove thereby that he knew nothing either of God's saving power or His love.

In the chapter before us, the being more than conquerors is connected with the circumstances through which we are called to pass—all that is incidental to this groaning creation. Through God's love we can surmount all the trials and vicissitudes of life. Sin, of course, cannot be excluded, for this fallen world with its sighs and tears, its pain and suffering—groaning and travailing in pain together—is the direct result of sin. But in this chapter it is the result, rather than the cause, that is in view. And nowhere in the whole Bible do we find man's fall, and the wonderful love of God, which man's sin has called forth, brought together in a more striking way. Side by side they are placed—all the ills that flesh is heir to, on the one hand, and all the love of which the infinite heart of God is capable, on the other.

It will be objected by some, Why, if God does love in this way, did He ever permit the human family to be so afflicted? Would it not have been greater love to have spared His creatures so much suffering? In other words, Why did not God prevent the fall? If we think for a moment of the kind of creature God wanted, and that He made, we shall see at once the irrelevancy of all such questions. To have made it impossible for man to fall, would have made it impossible for man to be a man. The fall testifies as much to man's greatness, as it does to the disastrous consequences of his offence.

But we do not propose to discuss the question from that side just now. What we rather want to show is that God in His love is seeking to turn man's failure to good account, and that even the woeful consequences of evil can be made to subserve the highest ends of good. Some fourteen times over in this chapter, in a few verses, is suffering referred to, until almost every word in the English language that indicates pain, loss, hardship, bereavement, is brought into requisition; yet, strange to say, no chapter has more to say about God's love. It literally glows with it; and the climax is a very pæan of exultant praise in honour of it. The reality of the love must never be doubted because of the mystery of the pain.

The chapter has, for this reason, an intense interest for that numerous throng of men and women, who, to-day, are called to suffer so much anguish of body or mind, and brings them a message of surpassing comfort. God's love can make us "more than conquerors." Instead of sinking beneath the load, we are uplifted; instead of becoming bitter, our lives are sweetened. In the hour of agony, God makes His love a reality. He draws near in the darkness—and the very suffering makes way for Him to enter and take possession of the heart. His love is found to be a solace; and where it is known, there all is peace and rest. Opposition breaks down, resentment flies, the shadows of unbelief disappear, murmuring gives place to thanksgiving, and we become "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

WINNING OUR SPURS.

A simple story from history may help to illustrate the meaning of the difficulties of life, and show us why we are left to wrestle with such antagonistic forces. At the battle of Crecy, the Black Prince, who was leading the van of the English army, was very hard pressed, and in danger of being worsted. Some knights rode off to his father, King Edward III., who stood on a neighbouring hill watching the conflict, to ask for help. The king refused. "No," said he, "let the young man win his spurs." The young man did win his spurs, and with more credit to himself than if he had received the succour that was asked. God wants us to "win our spurs," and this is why we are exposed to so much. If in this life there were no conflict, nothing to overcome, no dangers to be encountered, no trials to endure, and no sorrows to feel, how could we ever become "more than conquerors?" God does not spare us these experiences, but He uses them all to produce some good effect. We might have expected to read, that, because God loved us, we should be spared the calamities mentioned in verse 35 of our chapter. That, because of his love, no tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, should ever come nigh us. It is not so recorded. But instead, a whole catalogue of ills, to which even the believer is liable, are mentioned. How can we explain the mystery? God loves us too well, and too wisely, to shelter us from every adverse wind. We are allowed to feel

the bitter blast of adversity, or the numbing sense of loss, or the blank caused by bereavement—we are allowed to groan and travail in pain—that in the possession of a love that is never more ours than then, we may be more than conquerors. God's love arms us against every enemy.

GOD'S LOVE MOST REALISED IN TRIAL.

Love does not spare us even the very worst—and the greatest ills that can come are all enumerated in our chapter. But not any of them singly, nor all of them together, can separate us from the love of Christ, nor from the love of God, in Him. On the contrary, it is when we are undergoing these trials, love is at its best—nearest and sweetest. Those three Hebrew youths in Babylon, were not spared the furnace, but Christ was nearer to them in that welter of fire than ever before. Could they have had His company amidst luxury and ease as they had it amid scorching heat? Not only was there the miracle of deliverance, but their's was the blessedness of companionship and communion. The furnace *with* Him, was to be preferred to the highest station *without* Him. We can imagine what an ineffable calm would steal into the soul of Daniel when confronting the lions, and what a sense of the Divine presence he would have as he realised the restraining power that was upon them. That den of lions must have been to him a very holy of holies. Could he have had one experience without the other? Both Daniel and his companions were "more than conquerors" through Him that loved them. To have been spared the suffering would have been to lose the blessing and the triumph.

What shall be said of Stephen? It is true, his life was taken. But heaven was never nearer to him than when feeling all the force of the enemies' malice. He saw not the gnashing of their teeth, he felt not the stones; he saw heaven opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus. In him we learn the meaning of being more than conqueror.

WHAT GOD DID FOR STEPHEN.

A young preacher, who afterwards became famous, once had a public discussion with a noted infidel. During the debate the sceptic turned upon his youthful antagonist and said, "You

say that your God is a God of love. What did He do for Stephen when he was being battered to death? Why didn't He deliver him?" The preacher felt that the whole discussion turned upon his answer to this challenge. He silently lifted his heart to God, and immediately there was given him this reply:—"God did something better for Stephen than save him from the stones, *He enabled him to pray for his murderers.*" The sceptic was so impressed with the answer, he promised to come and hear the young man preach.

Just here lies the secret of God's purpose, He is conforming us to the image of His Son. To Stephen belonged the inestimable privilege of following in the footsteps of his Master. And in enabling him to pray for his murderers God made him more than conqueror. For it is character God is seeking to produce in His saints; and all that appertains to this groaning creation is being used to that end.

The Apostle Paul speaks of being "killed all the day long." But he does not question the love of God because of this. He dwells upon it. He revels in it. Every tribulation brought a new discovery of it. His was no easy lot, though called to the highest service God could confer upon him.

"Even unto this present hour," he says, "we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. iv. 11-13).

But his testimony is that the love of God never left him. So confident is he that he challenges all things in earth and heaven, in time and eternity, in the present and the future, to separate him from it. A love that was sufficient of itself, a love that was ever present, and remained, when comforts, as well as companions, had departed—a love that could take the place of everything else, and that became his riches in poverty, his strength in weakness, and his consolation in all grief and thrall—was a love that made him more than conqueror, because it made him independent of all else, even life itself—for if death came, it was but the receding tide that would bear him out to the wide ocean beyond, with love on every side of him, beneath, around, above.

If there is so much in this world which seems to contradict

the thought of God's love, this chapter affords evidences of it that are unmistakable. It does not indeed ignore the other side. As we have already indicated, the same chapter which reveals the heights and depths of Divine compassion, reminds us also of "all our woe." The Bible never disguises anything on that side. And this imparts confidence. The same Book which reveals the love, never hides, or minimises, the disaster. Yet, it never encourages either unbelief or despair. Do we ever realise how *strong* the Bible is? and as tender as it is strong. Its strength is wonderful. With unfaltering hand it traces the evil of the world, and pictures it in all its varied manifestations and results, revealing the unalterable depravity of man, which will, finally, as far as he is concerned, plunge everything into apostacy and ruin; yet it never loses its grip of the end, and that end is as bright as God can make it.

THE EVIDENCES GOD HAS GIVEN OF HIS LOVE.

1. First, have we ever thought that if pain and suffering had not entered the world we never could have known Divine love, as we know it now? For the test of love is, how much it can bear for the sake of others. In that incomparable chapter on love (1 Cor. xiii), the first thing to be said about it is, "Love *suffereth long* and is kind." Had there been no pain and no suffering to endure, then love would have lacked an opportunity to display itself. Let us never forget that pain, and pain alone, made it possible for God fully to reveal Himself. Christ felt pain—He groaned—He suffered agony—He shed tears. Weariness, want, and woe were His portion. Had no such things existed, what losers had we been! We never could have known Him as we know Him now.

2. Although "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," and "even we ourselves groan within ourselves," yet we are assured that "*all things work together for good* to them that love God." Estranged from Him, at enmity with Him, full of doubt and questioning, nothing works together for good, but in subjection to Him, accepting what He says as true, trusting Him, "*all things work together for good.*" What can love do more than achieve for us the highest and the best? "*God commendeth His love to us, in that while*

we were yet sinners Christ died for us." If we have learned the meaning of that, and love Him in return, then we may believe that through everything, however dark and disappointing—however contrary to our wills things may go—our good is God's constant aim.

3. Another evidence of the love of God is the purpose He has formed concerning those who believe. That purpose is, *to conform us to the image of His Son* (v. 29). This is what God has before Him; and one reason why we do not always appreciate His dealings, and sometimes give way to fretting, is because our aims and desires are so contrary to His. It is the image of His Son He wishes to see in us, and the being conformed to that image has a present application. Do not let us postpone it altogether to the future. There is a present process, and the conformation is proceeding now, though it will not be perfected until the day of glory.

How God must love us, if nothing will satisfy Him, but having us like the One He loves best. Have we not here the very proof He Himself gives us? Do we ask for worldly ease and advantage as proofs. They are passing, and they are poor at the best, and they might deform our character, and so be proofs, not of love, but, of His want of care. Here is the unmistakable proof—God will have us one day like His Own Son: "glorified together. All this is an infinitely higher proof of His love than worldly ease and enjoyment.

4. But at the back of all, and above all, we have another evidence of that love. And it closes and completes the evidence, for what can be said after it?

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."

Do you ask for some proof that God really loves you? How would you have Him prove it? Would you ask Him to give you everything this world affords—friendship, fame, riches, pleasure? That would be no proof that He cared for you. *It would cost Him nothing.* Do you ask that He would create a new world, and give it you, to be all your own? Would you believe then that He really loved you? It would be no proof, either way. It might not be for your real happiness, and—*it would*

cost Him nothing! By a word He could create a thousand worlds and present them to you. But what would they cost Him? Nothing! And until we find that which *has* cost Him something, we have no proof of whether He loves, or of how much He loves.

Where shall we find this? Where shall we discover the final proof the heart craves for? God Himself alone could disclose it. Blessed be His Name, He has done so—"HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON." The choicest and the best, the closest and the dearest, the object of His eternal love and pleasure, has been given. Had God said, "I would like to save; I am ready to do a great deal for my creatures, sinful as they are, but I must spare my Son all suffering, I cannot allow Him to enter that dark, sin-stained world, and die," the final proof of His love would have been wanting. But "He that spared not His Own Son," reveals all we need to know. God has given that which cost Him most to give. If we think of all the ills of humanity, let us think of this too—"He that *spared not* HIS OWN SON." If it does not remove all the mystery, it awakens a trust, which gives birth to confidence, hope, and even joy, and enables us to wait until the shadows are all dispersed. What more can we ask for, or what more can God do, than deliver up His own Son to death for us? Deliver Him up to bear the sin, and be made sin, so that the Cross becomes a double revelation—the meeting of all our need, and of the love that, at such infinite cost, provided for it. And with Him also He freely gives us all things.

Let us face all tribulation, distress, and peril in the light of this love, and in the sure confidence that it brings. For the love of God to be so real to the soul, so powerful—for us to be so possessed by it—that all afflictions can be borne, and no ills disturb our faith and patience, is to leave us master of the situation, and even God's love could do few things greater for us than to make us "more than conquerors."

"And my soul despaireth not,
Loving God amid her woe.
Grief that wrings and tears the heart,
Only those who hate Him know.
Those who love Him still possess
Comfort in their worst distress."

God! God!! God!!!

O Thou Eternal One! Whose presence bright
 All space doth occupy—all motion guide;
 Unchanged through times all devastating flight;
 Thou, only God; there is no God beside;
 Being above all beings! Holy One;
 Whom none can comprehend and none explore,
 Who fill'st existence with THYSELF alone,
 Embracing all—supporting—ruling o'er—
 Being whom we call God—and know no more.*

The universe in its massiveness, immensity, and grandeur created out of nothingness is the magnificent witness to the glory of omnipotence. The heavens are the tracings, the beauties wrought by the fingers of God (Ps. viii. 3). We stand amazed at the grand result, and with Seraph and Cherub adore and worship. The great fact in the universe is GOD. The all-controlling power in the vast scene of creation is GOD. Other powers and forces there are, but behind them all, and above them all, is GOD—their Sovereign Master—the Universal Lord.

The universe is filled with the presence of God. He is everywhere (Ps. cxxxix.). Were it possible to reach beyond the bounds of creation and enter inconceivable, infinite space, you would find God there. He is Omnipresent. Darkness cannot hide Him. He is Omniscient. He scans the flight of the Archangel, and notes the least movement of the tiniest insect. Seraph, Cherub, angel, man, winds, and waves are the servants of His omnipotent will.

He everywhere hath sway,
 And all things serve His might.

Great and small are relative terms, and apply to creature-estate—not to deity. Limitations, degrees, measurements, proportions refer to us, not to God. In the infinitude of our God restrictive terms have no signification, no existence. We meas-

*This refers to the inscrutibility of God's being and does not deny the revelation God has given of Himself in Jesus Christ.

ure things and pronounce them great or small as they affect us. Trial, difficulty, sorrow, leave their impress on the spirit in great or less intensity. But how insignificant are things, and persons, and adverse circumstances when measured by the greatness of God "with WHOM we have to do."

A continuous vision of God would make us spiritual giants. Were God Himself in His greatness, in His glory, in His moral perfections filling our souls, we would *necessarily* be taken out of our littleness and become great in His greatness while earth's difficulties and passing shadows and sorrows would be estimated as veriest trifles. We see God Who is *invisible* (Heb. xi. 27). The infinitudes of God are open to us. His wealth of love. His wealth of riches, His wealth of power, His wealth of goodness are at our immediate disposal. God is for us. God's answer to our suffering moments is to point us to a weight of glory lying ahead (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18). Beyond the growing knowledge of the wondrous fact—brought to God by the death of Christ (1 Peter iii. 18), further progress in our time state and condition is impossible.

In the prophetic crisis nigh at hand, the godly will have their faith tested to the uttermost. In the satanic sphere of operation we witness, "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." Amidst the horrors of that day, though the convulsions of nature might be most appalling, yet God remains (Ps. xlvi. 2, 3). His creation may be wrecked, but His Throne abides. The Creator is omnipotent. He makes *other* worlds which endure for ever (Rev. xxi. 1). Amidst the overthrow of all that seems most stable faith rises to its grandest, "therefore will not we fear." God in Creatorial might is the refuge, strength, and help of His people. Human resource and refuge fails, and nothing remains but God—faith's great stronghold in the day of trouble. In these times of stress and trouble (and worse is predicted in the Word), the one grand resource for the church and the individual is to get a moral grip of God.

O God, great in Thy greatness! O believer, feeble in thy weakness! Cling to God, cling hard, cling instantly and continuously. He will never, no never, fail thee. Creatorial omnipotence is at the instant disposal of the weak and tried and suffering saint who clings to God!

WALTER SCOTT.

Notes : Biblical and General.

We are not raising the price of this magazine, but it will, probably, be necessary, owing to the shortage of paper and increased cost, to reduce the number of pages slightly, later on. We are sure we can count upon the sympathy of our readers in this matter. Hitherto we have not made any alteration, in spite of the greatly increased cost of production.

* * *

Theologians are prone to draw certain inferences from the fact that in the parable of the Prodigal Son there is no reference to propitiation, or any need for it. They all seem to overlook the fact that Luke xv. contains, strictly speaking, only one parable, though presented in three parts. And, therefore, if we are to gain a right apprehension of its teaching we must not look at the history of the Prodigal by itself. The Shepherd seeking the lost sheep ; the woman in search of the lost piece of money ; and the father receiving back his son, are three parts of one whole. It will be seen that all three persons of the Trinity seem to be involved. The Shepherd is Christ, Who came into the world to save sinners, and to give His life a ransom for all. The woman with the candle represents the operations of the Holy Spirit in the sinner's heart. And the father represents God receiving back the one who turns to Him. Unless Christ had come forth and died, God would have had no righteous ground for forgiveness ; and unless the Holy Spirit works, the sinner has no desire to return. The one parable is therefore complete in three parts. The first part involves propitiation by the Son ; the second part, regeneration by the Holy Spirit ; and the third, God the Father's reception.

The teaching of a former generation that God was full of *anger*, and that Christ in His love offered Himself to appease it, may be so presented as to become a mere theological figment. But that Christ died to satisfy divine justice, so that God might be just, and yet the justifier, is the plain teaching of Scripture. And there would have been no parable of the Prodigal Son without it. To affirm, as someone has recently done, that " The atonement is more, far more, and far better, than a sacrifice to satisfy God's *justice* ; it is a sacrifice to satisfy His love "—is to put things as much out of proportion on one side, as to repre-

sent God as angry and Christ as merciful, does on the other. The Cross is the manifestation of Divine righteousness, as well as of Divine love ; both were equally displayed there ; and there is no need to exalt either at the expense of the other. God and Christ were perfectly at one as regards both.

* * *

We may well rejoice in the fact of a day being appointed by public proclamation on the part of the King for the nation to seek God's help and guidance in the present war, though we could have wished it had been a week day instead of Sunday. The cessation of all business on an ordinary work day would have been a more impressive witness to the nation's recognition of its need and helplessness. How many, who seldom, or never, attend any place will be present on the forthcoming occasion remains to be seen. It has recently been stated, " that careful investigation proved that not more than ten per cent. of the men of Great Britain were in any real relationship to organised forms of religion." The speaker, a principal of an Oxford Theological College, declared, " There will need to be a changed attitude on the part of theologians in regard to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Bible." If there needs to be a change upon such fundamental truths things are in a sorry state, but we are thankful for any awakening to the fact.

* * *

We were glad to meet with such an outspoken denunciation of Christian science as the following from a leading American Christian : " There never was anything so antagonistic to the Christian religion. It is more so in its results to Christianity and Christ than Ingersollism is. If you do not believe that it is because you do not understand Christian science, or have not thought it over and through. There are a number of deceived persons whose feelings I would not want to wound, but I profess to understand Christian science to the very bottom of it. I paid one hundred dollars for lectures, and am acquainted with the leading advocates and professors of it and know all about it that anybody knows, and I tell you that in fact it is evil, only evil, and that continually. There is a personal God or there is no God. There is actual sin or there is no sin. There is prayer or there is no prayer ; and if Christian science is true, there are none of those three things."

Prayer :

The Lord's Example.

By WILLIAM JEATER.

The influence of example is an important factor in the life of every one of us. Good or evil alike often leads to an imitation as *unconscious* as that of a little child who fashions his words and his acts upon the pattern of those about him. Or it may be that the example appeals to us, and we endeavour to be what others are, or to do what others have done. Many of the deeds of self-sacrifice that to-day stir our hearts will probably be found to have their origin in the example of others, rather than in the mere call of duty. This is a principle of action inherent in human nature, and the Lord Jesus did not hesitate to appeal to it. In His day, as to-day, example was better than precept. "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done" was a word that had wider applications than the act of washing one another's feet. And Peter, with his mind full of holy memories of that incomparable time when the Lord walked and talked with them, wrote that Christ had left them an example, that they should follow in His steps. And both Peter and his brother Paul knew that they and those to whom they wrote were examples to others for good or ill. Thus Peter charges the elders to be examples* to the flock, while Paul boldly appeals to himself (Phil. iii. 17) and to others (2 Thess. iii. 9, and 1 Tim. iv. 12, Tit. ii. 7), as being examples or patterns.

It will not be without profit, therefore, if in the matter of prayer we consider what the example was that the Lord Jesus set both His disciples and us, who, too, may claim that name of privilege. Not that what He did in this matter was designedly an attempt to teach by pattern. It is the unintentional example

*Tupoi: the word tupos (whence "type") is indifferently translated **example** and **ensample** in the A.V. See, for instance, 1 Cor. x. 6, as compared with v. 11, and 1 Thess. 17 with 1 Tim. iv, 12.

that counts most—the act that indicates what a man is, rather than his conscious deportment or deed because he knows that others are watching him and may be influenced by him. And it is because the Lord's habit of prayer was the expression of His own inner life and of His unbroken relation to His Father that it will count with us, and, it may be, lead to the cultivation of the same gracious habit.

Those of us who believe—in spite of modern theories about “the growth” of the gospels—that each gospel has a purpose different from the others, will not be surprised to learn that they are not alike in the emphasis they put upon the place that prayer had in the life of the Lord. If Matthew gives us the King, and Mark the Servant, Luke the Son of Man in grace and humility, and John the Son of God in His mystery and dignity, we shall naturally expect to find that it is Luke who speaks most often of the Lord at prayer. And though our *à priori* inferences are often disappointed it is not the case here. In the Kingly gospel we are indeed told that Jesus went into a mountain apart to pray, but apart from this,* it is in the Garden of Sorrow alone that we read of His praying. The mountain incident is referred to in Mark, who also tells us—and it is a memorable record—that even after a day of strenuous toil, Jesus rose a great while before day and went out to a solitary place to pray. It was the Divine Servant's preparation for the ensuing day of toil. Mark also tells us of the Garden, and that covers his record on the matter. John never uses that word for prayer which underlies the quotations already made—a word that may be described as the ordinary word, equivalent to our own word “prayer,” (as distinguished, say, from phases of prayer, such as “supplication,” “intercession,” etc.). In the discourses of the Upper Room and in the prayer of the 17th of John, to pray is always “to ask,” or “to ask for.”

It is in Luke that we most frequently read of the Lord Jesus as praying. I have said that if this be the Gospel of the Son of Man we should expect to find it so. Yet we have to admit that

*Children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but this was a benediction of the child.—Matt. xix, 13.

we soon touch mystery. It must be so. We cannot keep the facts relating to our Divine Lord in compartments and say, "Here He is Divine; and here He is human." The New Testament itself never so distinguishes; the Gospel of Service in its very first line speaks of "the Son of God;" the Gospel of the Divine Word tells us that He "became flesh,"—that He was wearied with His journey. And so, though we think of Him as truly man, and, as true man, dependent and prayerful, we remember too that He was always the Son of the Father, and that needs which in our case arise because of the presence of sin, had no place with Him who was "holy, guileless, undefiled, and separated from sinners." Perhaps in this difference between Himself and His disciples is found the explanation of a striking feature of the Gospels—namely, that they record no act of prayer common to Him and the disciples. Social prayer, or family prayer with Jesus as Head, is never hinted at; He does not pray *with* His followers, though He prays in their presence. He never "leads their devotions," as a teacher might pray with those whom he had instructed, voicing their common needs and confessing their common sins. For the prayer of God's children must always have, expressed or implied, the confession of sins, and the presenting of needs that arise because of our sins. We cannot conceive of His taking upon His lips the stricken confession of David (Ps. 51) or even the language of Paul (1 Tim. i. 15). Analogous to this is the further fact that unlike Paul, who begs the prayers of his friends in a manner that rises almost to agony, the Lord Jesus never asks for the prayers of others in His behalf. It is an instinct with us to do so; it is a source of joy and of strength to know that others remember us in their prayers. Not so, our adorable Lord. And at a time when the humanity and the human experiences of the Saviour are rightly receiving much emphasis of statement, it is well to remember that man though He was, His was a manhood unsullied, and His a relation to God unbroken.

There are several incidents in Luke's Gospel that may be described as crises in the life of the Lord, and these are all accompanied by prayer. I do not speak of the Cross itself, and of those ejaculatory prayers that form part of "the Seven Words,"—the "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," or the committal of Himself into His Father's Hands. The

Cross and its incidents stand alone. But at and after the public appearance of the Lord there came occasions of great moment, both for Him and for all that He stood for. Every such occasion was met in the attitude of prayer.

(1) At His baptism He was praying, and the heaven opened upon Him (Luke iii, 21).

(2) Before He chose from His disciples the twelve apostles, He continued all night in prayer to God (vi, 12).

(3) He was "alone" praying at Cæsarea Philippi (though the Evangelist strangely adds that His disciples were with Him), when His question led up to Peter's great confession, and to the first intimation of the Cross and the Resurrection (ix, 18).

(4) Eight days later, He went up into a mountain with Peter, John, and James to pray. And again the Evangelist separates the Lord from His disciples. "As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was changed." It was the glory of the transfiguration (ix, 28).

(5) As in His glory, so in His humiliation, there was prayer. And still He prays alone. He was withdrawn from the others about a stone's cast, and prayed. And here only we are given the words of the prayer. We know the burden that was on His heart; we hear the very words that in Gethsemane ("the Olive Press") were pressed from His lips in His agony (xxii, 41-44).

But His life did not consist of a series of crises. It was not a round of sensational incidents. He would be remote from us and from our experiences if that had been the case. With Him as with us, there was a daily round and a common task, though the days for Him were strenuous and the toil was heavy. His ministry of healing was not a mere exercise of miraculous power: "He took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses," is Matthew's statement in an Old Testament quotation. And His teaching must often have seemed to Him like His own parable of the Sower, wherein the seed fell upon stony ground, by the wayside, or among thorns. From Mark we learn that prayer preceded His toil; from Luke v, 16, that prayer closed the day.

Luke's statement is of great value. Too often we are content with prayer before some endeavour or some act of service to

which we are called. The sense of insufficiency, of unworthiness leads us to the throne of grace that we may find "grace to help." And that is well. But prayer is needed after our work. There may come a subtle sense of elation. The very consciousness of help granted to us, or the knowledge that God has graciously used us to further His work, may lead to a mood of heart that will be positively harmful. Still more subtle, and still more dangerous is a sense of depression, which we may easily mistake for humility of spirit, when it may really be that we are disappointed at the non-fulfilment of anticipations of possible achievement. The refuge from either assault is prayer, humble and earnest, when, to use Mark's phrase (vi, 30) we return to our Master and tell Him all things, both what we have done and what we have taught.

There is one other incident in Luke's Gospel that we have not yet glanced at—that occasion when the Lord was praying in a certain place, and one of His disciples, on His ceasing, asked that He would teach them to pray (xi, 1). There is nothing to mark off the occasion, but its very absence of incident constitutes its value. For it indicates that it was just an ordinary event in an ordinary day. No special stress of circumstances had brought him to His knees; there was nothing to make the day different from those that preceded or followed it. Yet there was the resort to prayer. And for us that may be the most important lesson of all. Occasions of great joy, when the sense of some mercy is very vivid and real, or occasions of perplexity, sorrow, or need may alike bring us in thanksgiving or in prayer to God. But the days that do not count, when nothing in particular happens, and we are conscious neither of mercy nor of need, may have their own special peril, in making prayer perfunctory or formal, when, as George Herbert puts it, "though my lips went, my heart did stay behind." It may have been on just such a common-place day that the Lord Jesus was praying, and praying in such a way that one of His disciples asked that they too, might be taught how to pray. It lies beyond the scope of this brief paper to deal with His answer—the prayer He taught them. Suffice it to say that to whatever extent it has been misused, or treated as a sort of incantation, at least by the way it puts first things first, it is a prayer that teaches how to pray.

One other word may be added. With the exception of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, where the words are given, we have only the bald fact recorded that the Lord prayed on such and such occasions. And doubtless we long to know what was the burden of His prayers—prayers that called for rising before morning broke, or that caused Him to continue through the night. We have to be content with the veil of silence that has fallen upon the occasions. And beyond all question there is divine wisdom in the withholding. In the wondrous communing of the Upper Chamber—the prayer of John 17—there is little that we can take up and use as our own prayer. It is the language of One Who, even when in this world, might be described as being “in the bosom of the Father.” It is language so intimate, so holy, that we can only stand by with uncovered heads. It was a true instinct that led the Revisers, in the Jerusalem Chamber, when they reached that wonderful chapter, to precede their work of revision with special prayer. And it may be that the other prayers of the Lord Jesus, if they were known verbally, would seem so remote from our needs that they would not greatly help us. The *fact* of His habitual prayerfulness we know; the phrases or the burden of His prayer we do not. But this prayerfulness is the great encouragement to us. It is not too much to infer that, humanly speaking, it was because of this habit that He moved through life—notwithstanding all that it meant for Him—with such evenness. It was not the imperturbability of the Stoic; none was more sensitive than He to the sins, the sorrows, the rebuffs of life. But because His life had its secret source in the presence of God, He was never taken unawares, and was never either elated with success nor depressed by apparent failure.

“Habitual prayer,” said one, “adds beautiful lines to the face.” It may be. It certainly adds a beauty to life, the source of which is perhaps unintelligible to the world, but that we recognise as being in kind like the grace and beauty that shone over the whole life of our Master and Lord.

“Be with Jesus in prayer, and verily shalt thou one day be with Him in Paradise.”—*Extract.*

Studies in Isaiah.

Chapter VII. (continued.)

The Double Sign.

Verse 10: Moreover Jehovah spake again to Ahaz saying :

Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God;
Ask it in the lowest deep,
Or ask it in the height above thee.

And this is the answer: "*I will not ask, and I will not tempt Jehovah.*" Now that is exactly how Satan and his subordinate spirits ever speak in men even to this day. He never shows plainly the evil that he is pressing, but hides it up under beautiful religious words; so that one would think that it was a very angel of light that was speaking. Who so pious as Ahaz! Ask a sign! Far be it; for that would be to tempt Jehovah—even the Jehovah who had directed him to ask; nor does he say anything as to his heart's confidence fixed all the time on Assyria.

Ahaz has gone to his account long ago; but the spirit that governed Ahaz at that moment has lived on, and may often be heard to-day saying, in effect: "I am far too humble to take God at His word, and to confess that He hath given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. No, no; that would be too presumptuous altogether." It is the same beautiful, religious Satanic modesty of Ahaz, and it shows that these speakers, too, have another confidence—their "Assyrian"—that shall fail them in the final hour of their need.

But the Spirit of Christ in the prophet answers:

Verse 13: Harken then ye house of David,
'Tis a trifle ment to weary—
Mortal men as frail as ye are—
Dare ye weary my God too?

There, in that weary God, we may see the same One Who, seven centuries later, was seated one noontide on the wellside at Sychar, "*weary* with His journey" (John iv.). Not merely weary with the distance travelled. He entered, I doubt not in His grace, into that sinless infirmity, and His holy Body knew literal weariness; but in John's gospel, where He is the One Who

“ fainteth not neither is weary,” we must look deeper to get the truth. It was the same spurious religion, the same false Ahaz-like piety of Judaism, that at that time, too, refused the love He longed to give. It was His “ journey ” through such a scene that wearied Him ; as it was the confidence of a poor outcast sinner (like some of my readers) that refreshed Him, giving Him meat that His disciples knew nothing of. One may be quite sure that He has very much of the same “ weariness,” and surely a little of the same refreshment too (God be praised) even to-day.

But this brings us to Jehovah’s answer, which is of incalculable importance. I attempt a paraphrase, keeping as close to the literal as possible, while endeavouring to retain something of the rhythm.

14: Therefore Adonai* shall give you a sign:

Lo, a pure virgin shall mother a son,

Whose is the name—

’Tis his name alone—

Immanuel.

15: Milk† and sweet honey shall the child eat,

So shall he learn all the evil to shun—

So shall he learn all the good to select.

16: But ere the lad shall this knowledge attain—

The land of two kings—thine abhorrence and dread‡—

Desolate shall be.

17: Then shall Jehovah on thee too bring down—

On thee and thy people, the house of thy sires—

Days of such sorrow as never have been

Since the day that Ephraim shattered the tie

That bound him to Judah.

Dost thou desire to learn the man’s name?

Who is the hope of thine heart? ’Tis the same:

Assyria’s king.

We must bear in mind that, in accord with the commission the prophet is carrying out, it was intended to give light and comfort alone to faith, leaving hard hearts the more hardened—closed eyes the closer shut. Thus it is not, nor was intended

*That is “ The supreme Lord of all.”

†Most literally “ **Curdled Milk** ;” but it is used in poetry for any milk. Gesenius’ Lexicon.

‡The one word rendered in A.V. “ abhorrest ” has in it both ideas of “ fear ” and “ hatred.”

to be, understood by the careless, nor without difficulties. Nor does The Holy Spirit, when referring to this sign in the gospel of Matthew, solve these difficulties at all; or unravel the knot, as we may say, but cuts it, with one stroke, in the word, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with a child and bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us."

This is absolutely final for faith, as regards the prophecy of the virgin's son. No room is left for question, or the slightest uncertainty. The sign is Jesus and Jesus alone. But when we consider the context: that there was a sign offered to—and, in spite of his refusal, even forced upon—Ahaz himself; when we consider the apparent close connection between verses 15 and 16; then the prophecy reads (on the surface), that before the very son of the virgin shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good—that is, before *Immanuel* has arrived at years of discretion, both Syria and Ephraim would be devastated; and it is *of this devastation that the birth of Immanuel would be a sign*. I say this is the way a superficial reader would understand the Scripture, and it is the way our modern theological critics read it to-day.

But the birth of Immanuel, which did not occur till seven centuries later—long after Ahaz had passed away—could by no possibility be a sign to *him*; nor, in that case, if that were all, was there any sign at all of the desolation of Syria and Ephraim, since that took place seven centuries before Immanuel's birth; within a few years of the time of this interview—indeed before a child that *might* have been born about this time, should have passed out of infancy; as will be seen by reference to 2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 9.

Are we not compelled then to recognise once more what is frequently, if not invariably, the case in prophecy—a near-by shadowy, and a far-off final and definite, fulfilment? This very prophet will provide examples of this, as even Delitsch remarks when writing on chapter xxxv. 8-10: "a *prelude* of the fulfilment is seen in what Ezra speaks of with gratitude to God in Ezra viii. 31." The return of the exiles under Ezra was looked upon by many as a complete fulfilment of the prophecies fore-

telling the recovery of scattered Israel ; it resulted in disappointment ; yet it might be looked upon as a *shadowy* fulfilment, giving a kind of feeble pattern of the final, which is even yet to come.

So in this case, there must have been a historic fulfilment for Ahaz himself, which was yet by no means a strict fulfilment of the deeper divine intent (nor would it be taken for such by the "opened ear")—in which some child should be born who should indeed be a sign to Ahaz ; and before *this* child, of *near*-fulfilment, should attain to years of discretion, the two countries, now in alliance against Judah, of whose two kings Ahaz stood in guilty terror, would be desolated. This leaves the true Sign—the definite fulfilment, for some future day, to be fulfilled in due time as we know.

For it is absolutely certain that both such events have actually occurred. In the next chapter Isaiah becomes the father of a child, who is also a *sign*, as we are divinely told in chap. viii. 18 (and it is the fact that God tells us that the child is a sign that justifies this interpretation) the mother being at that time, when he was speaking to Ahaz, an unmarried young woman, the "prophetess." She conceives and bears a son, but he is not, nor is he called, Immanuel. Thus this near-by fulfilment by no means satisfies the requirements of verses 14 and 15. The threatening name given to Isaiah's son of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz ("speed to spoil ; haste to make booty") can not possibly be made into the comforting Immanuel ; nor, as far as we know has any child, that was ever born, been called *by divine direction*, Immanuel ; so that there has never yet been, even to this day, apparently a literal fulfilment of this word, "and shall call his name Immanuel ;" unless indeed "Jesus" and "Immanuel" are precisely the same.

That is exactly what they are ; and that little child in Bethlehem's manger, being called Jesus, did fulfil, in the most clear, simple, unstrained, yet marvellously divine way, the prophecy, "His name shall be Immanuel."

For, while it is quite true that there were many children called Jesus,—it was not an uncommon name : Joshua is but a form of it—no child had ever been so called *of God*, as was this, for it means Saviour ; and of no child ever born did, or

could, God say, "Call him Jesus for he is Saviour." All were *sinner*s by their very birth, from their descent from the one father Adam, not Saviours. But here is One of Whom God Himself says He must be called Jesus, for He is not a sinner, but a Saviour.

But Saviour is in itself a *divine* title, never to be taken by any less than God Himself, as it is written: "I am Jehovah, that is My Name, and My glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah xlii. 8). But in what does Jehovah's peculiar glory consist? Well, again it is written, "I, even I, am Jehovah, and *beside Me there is no Saviour*" (chap. xliii. 11), that is, beside Jehovah there is no "Jesus," or there is *no Jesus but Jehovah*; so that little Child, since owned of God as Jesus-Saviour, is Himself none other than God, for to "save" is the glory that He will never give to another. But He gives this divine name to a *human* child, for He is

"Hushed to rest upon a lowly virgin's breast."

The virgin's breast; the swaddling clothes; the manger—do they not all witness as clearly as they do sweetly, that He is "with us?" Most surely they do. Then it follows that the Name Jesus is in itself precisely and literally "*God with us*," or "*Immanuel*."

(To be continued.)

Christians may surely learn a lesson, from what is being done by the German propaganda amongst the Allies, as to the value of spreading the truth by the printed page. The demoralisation of the Russian army, and, to some extent, the Italian also, has been brought about by such means. We read, the other day, that the Germans "even invented shells which opened out in the trenches like Christmas crackers with papers inside them." In this way views were instilled into the minds of the Italian soldiers calculated to make them offer less resistance. And Germany's success in Italy has been due more to that reason than any other. The printing press is thus becoming a vital agent in the war. In the war with evil and error, it is also a vital force, and may we who believe not be less zealous in the employment of such means of spreading the truth than those are who seek to propagate falsehood.

Tom Paine's Death-Bed.

Stephen Grellet, the earnest-minded member of the Society of Friends, who labored for the Lord in all classes of society, in many lands, recorded in the course of his diary, the death of the notorious Tom Paine. The event occurred in 1809, at Greenwich, New York, whither Grellet had gone to reside. The entry in Grellet's journal is as follows :

"I may not omit recording here the death of Thomas Paine. He was mostly in a state of stupor, but something that had passed between us had made such an impression upon him, that some days after my departure he sent for me, and on being told that I was gone from home, he sent for another Friend. This induced a valuable young Friend, Mary Roscoe, who had resided in my family, and continued at Greenwich during part of my absence, frequently to go and take some little refreshment suitable for an invalid, furnished by a neighbour.

"Once when she was there, three of his deistical associates came to the door, and in a loud, unfeeling manner, said : 'Tom Paine, it is said you are turning a Christian, but we hope you will die as you have lived ;' and then went away. On which, turning to Mary Roscoe, he said : '*You see what miserable comforters they are!*'

"Once he asked her if she had ever read any of his writings, and on being told that she had read but little of them, he inquired what she thought of them, adding, 'From such a one as you I expect a correct answer.' She told him that when very young his 'Age of Reason' was put into her hands, but that the more she read in it the more dark and distressed she felt, and she threw the book into the fire. 'I wish all had done as you,' he replied, 'For if the devil has ever had any agency in any work, he has had it in writing that book.' When going to carry him some refreshment, she repeatedly heard him uttering the language, 'O Lord ! Lord God !' or 'Lord Jesus ; have mercy upon me !'

"It is well known that during some weeks of his illness, when a little free from bodily pain, he wrote a great deal ; this his nurse told me, and Mary Roscoe repeatedly saw him writing. If his companions in infidelity had found anything to support the idea that he continued on his death-bed to espouse their cause, would they not have eagerly published it ? But not a word is said ; there is a total secrecy as to what has become of these writings."—*Extract.*

We wish to call the attention of our readers, who reside in the neighbourhood of London, to some special meetings arranged for Saturday, January 5, at Kingsway Hall, when addresses will be given on various aspects of the war in their spiritual bearing and opportunity afforded for prayer. Times—11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2.30-4, 5-7.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 2.

FEBRUARY, 1918

Price 1d

I Will Come Again.

The Lord's Coming in Relation to Israel.

Israel's special position. God's purpose with regard to this elect people. His promises concerning them. Prophecies already fulfilled. Their past and future history. The Lord Jesus Christ their Messiah.

Recent events have tended to fix our attention upon Israel more firmly than ever. All students of prophecy are eagerly watching the course of events in the Holy Land, and as we write, the news is expected any moment that the British nation is in possession of Jerusalem. *When one is able to couple with this the authoritative statement of the Secretary for Foreign affairs that the British Government would favour the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine, we can see how near we may be to the long expected return of that nation to their own land. It is very opportune therefore that our subject, in continuation of the articles on the Lord's return, happens to be, The Lord's Coming in relation to Israel.

1. Let us see, first, the unique position this nation holds. They are the descendants of Abraham, who was called out by God from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, at a very critical period of the world's history. Man's idea to build a city and a tower "whose top may reach unto heaven," had just been frustrated, God had confounded their language, and scattered them abroad. He now begins again with one man, to whom He gives promises, and who should be the progenitor of a nation through whom the promised Deliverer should come into the world. All God's thoughts for man, *in regard to the earth*, were to be fulfilled through them.

*See "Notes: Biblical and General" p. 32.

In Exodus xix. 5-6, we have a remarkable pronouncement on the part of God. "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: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

From Deut. vii. 7-8 we learn that this nation was the special object of God's love. In Isa. xliii. 21 we read, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." Rom. iii. 1-2, tells us that a supreme mark of God's favour toward them consisted in this, "That unto them were committed the oracles of God." They were the writers and custodians of the Holy Scriptures, as inspired by God. While, in Rom. ix. 4-5, the apostle of the Gentiles sums up their unique privileges by saying:

"To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Can anyone, then, help feeling interested in this wonderful people, marked out for such a commanding position, amongst the other nations, standing in a closer relationship to God than any other, and through whom have been given to mankind both the Scriptures and the Saviour of Whom they testify? Well may God declare, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). And this accounts for the unequalled calamities that, again and again, have visited them, and the sore tribulations which have been more or less their lot for ages. It is because of their very privileges and nearness to God, as His chosen earthly people, that they have incurred such discipline and such disaster.

2. Can we discover God's purpose with regard to them? There are passages which seem to make it perfectly clear that He intends to take possession of the earth through Israel, making them the centre, and also the medium of blessing to all nations. There is accumulative testimony as to this. We have already seen that it was man's idea to make a city and a tower as a centre, evidently quite apart from God, and, indeed, to secure themselves against future judgment and scattering. God upset all these plans, and immediately proceeds to select one man and

make of him a chosen nation, and He intends to vindicate His title to the earth through it. In this connection it is significant that in the passage already quoted from Ex. xix. occur the words, "All the earth is mine." Again in Numb. xiv. 21, we find a declaration on God's part which seems to have little relevance to what had taken place, but in the light of what we are affirming seems full of suggestion: "As truly as I live *all the earth* shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Why did God say this, except that the failure of Israel to take possession of the land seemed for the time being to frustrate His purpose to assert His title to the earth through them? So in the presence of their failure He re-affirms His purpose, and also His determination to make it good. And so, in harmony with this idea, we find when the succeeding generation are about to enter the land God adopts a new title. The ark of the covenant is said to be "the ark of the covenant of *the Lord of all the earth*" (Josh. iii. 2).

Does not all this help to explain that remarkable statement in Deut. xxxii. vv. 7-8?

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people **according to the number of the children of Israel.**"

The whole earth was parcelled out with a view to Israel becoming the centre, and in relation to God's purpose concerning them.

Is it not equally clear that all this was in God's mind when He called Abram out, and declared that in him should "*all families of the earth be blessed*:" with this further promise, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, *all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession?*"

Isa. xliv. 8. reveals to us a further purpose God had in raising up the nation of Israel. They were to be His *witnesses*.

"Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and His redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; **and beside Me there is no God . . . ye are even My witnesses.** Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God. I know not any."

They were thus the called and chosen witnesses to the one true God in opposition to all the idolatry around them.

God's purpose then, is to bless the whole earth through Israel; and this thought is confirmed by many other passages of Scripture. Notably, Isa. ii. 2-4, xi. 9, xxv. 6-8.*

But above all, and as a means of accomplishing His plans already mentioned—and other plans, too, on an even vaster scale—God called out and separated the nation of Israel to be the channel by which His beloved Son should become a man, and be brought into the world. We have already seen how the apostle Paul refers to this, in the words already quoted: "And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." What supreme honour God has conferred upon this nation above all the nations of the earth!

3. Having seen what God's purpose is, let us now look at the special promises He has made to His ancient people. These promises were made to Abraham and David, and are unconditional.

To Abraham God said, "And I will make of thee a great nation . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This is recorded in Gen. xii. 2-3. In Gen. xvii. we find a further promise. "*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION.*" In Gen. xxii. all this is confirmed by an oath, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord," and with this addition: "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." So that here we have a three-fold promise: (1) Israel is to become a great nation, (2) the land of Canaan is to be theirs forever, (3) they are to be supreme, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

In Psalm 89 we find other promises made to David, for in him the Kingdom was established. They are of a double character, and are three times repeated. In verse 4 we read, "*Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*" See also vv. 29 and 36. The fulfilment of both these promises is connected with the mercy and faithfulness of God (vv. 1-2) and are the subject of a covenant (v. 3) Look, too, at the utterances contained in verses 19-28. All of which, doubtless, have in view One even greater than David, even

*This shows that the preaching of the gospel in the present dispensation is not the means God will use to this end.

David's Son and David's Lord. The declaration, "I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the Kings of the earth" can refer, as to its ultimate meaning, only to Christ.

Such then are the promises made by God to the fathers, and which yet remain to be fulfilled, in their entirety, to the restored nation of Israel. These promises are abundantly confirmed in many a prophetic utterance in Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., as we shall see later on. If it be asked, how do we know that Israel still has a future? Romans xi. 25-9 is the answer.

4. Let us look now at the past, present, and future history of this nation, to whom God has given such testimony, and for whom there is in reserve such a glorious future.

The history of this people is mainly the subject of the Old Testament. There we learn about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the progenitors of the race. We are informed as to the sojourn in Egypt for over four hundred years, of their wonderful deliverance (which became a type of Redemption through Christ's death and resurrection) and how, at last, they reached the land of promise. But, unhappily, it is a record of failure on their part, again and again repeated. They fell into grievous sin, they adopted the ways and customs of the heathen around them, and, instead of being God's witnesses they forsook the worship of the one true God, and became idolaters.

All this was borne with for a long time, but at length the kingdom was rent in twain and eventually ten of the tribes were carried away captive by the Assyrians. 2 Kings, chapter xvii., contains the sad record. The remaining tribes continued in the land, but in the end were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. There they remained seventy years, according to the Word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah the prophet. (See chap. xxv. 11, xxix. 10.) At the end of this period a remnant returned, and the inspired record closes soon after this event, and does not recommence until the long promised Deliverer appears. The nation, after witnessing the most marvellous works of mercy, and after abundant evidence had been given by miracles and signs, rejects Him, and is finally scattered. The predictions contained in their own Scriptures were fulfilled. (See Lev. xxvi. 31-4; Deut. xxviii. 37, xxix. 24-8, etc.; Luke xxi. 22-4.)

Their history since has been one long series of calamities.

And although in England, and occasionally elsewhere, they have prospered for several generations, yet in other parts, even until quite recently, they have been subject to violent persecution. The curse pronounced upon them by God has indeed come to pass. Yet God has never forgotten His promises and He will yet make them good. Hosea iii. 4 describes the present interval. Yet the very next verse foretells their future blessing. What a wonderful statement is also contained in Amos ix. 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." And immediately follows a description of their future blessing and greatness.

God's oft repeated promise is that if they will only turn to Him in the land where they are captives and strangers and confess their sins, He will yet restore them. (See Lev. xxvi. 40-5; Deut. xxx. 1-3.) We might have imagined that such gracious words would have led them to repentance long ago, but such has not been the case. Later on it may be so, but in the meantime a portion of them will be restored to their own land in unbelief. That will be a fateful time. In Zech. xii. 2, we read, "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about." And again, "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." Again, "In that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (v. 9). In Chapter xiv. of the same prophecy we read, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle . . . then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." It is manifest that nothing of this kind has ever yet happened in Jewish history. It will be fulfilled in the near future.

Just previous to this the leaders of the nation will have made a league with Antichrist, according to Isaiah xxviii. 14-15. But in verse 18 of this same chapter God declares that this covenant shall not stand. It is Antichrist himself who breaks it, as we learn from Dan. ix. 27.* The abomination of desolation will be

*It is really the head of the Western power referred to here, but Antichrist is in league with him

set up, referred to in Matt. xxiv. 15, and this will also be the time of Jacob's trouble. This will occur during the latter half of Daniel's 70th week, or the forty and two months, of Rev. xiii. 5, during which the first and second Beast of that chapter will exercise supreme power. The condition of things as far as the Jewish people are concerned seems to be very much the same as when our Lord was here. There will be a faithful remnant; while the mass of the nation will be allied with the enemies of God. Thus in Zech. xiii. 8-9 we read:

"And it shall come to pass that in all the land . . . two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the **third** part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

(The further consideration of this subject must be left over to another time.)

Christ's Coming Reign.

The glory crown we long to see,
 Upon the once thorn pierced brow,
 We wait the time when every knee,
 To Jesus' name shall humbly bow.

Our longing souls await the hour
 Of triumph, perfect and complete,
 When all shall know His kingly power,
 And worship at His holy feet.

When He whom men despised, disowned,
 Shall be acknowledged Lord by all;
 By God the Father be enthroned,
 And thrones and pow'rs before Him fall.

When He shall take His rightful seat,
 While all shall own His gracious sway;
 His foes shall lie beneath His feet,
 And kings to Him their homage pay.

All praise and glory be to Thee,
 Blest King of righteousness and peace;
 Thine, Thine shall be the victory,
 Thy kingdom one which ne'er shall cease.

E. L. W.

Notes: Biblical and General.

The Occupation of Jerusalem by the British.

It became known on Monday, December 10th, that the British had captured Jerusalem. The news caused a thrill to pass round the world. In London, "in dimly lit alleys and squares of Jewry," it is said, "the tidings circulated, and there were scenes which recalled the rejoicings of Nehemiah's day, when the feast of Tabernacles was kept by the returning exiles." It is the most striking event of modern times, and may result in consequences more momentous and far reaching than any event for fifteen hundred years and more. "By a wonderful coincidence the surrender took place," says the *Jewish Chronicle*, "on the anniversary of the victory of the Maccabees." Judas Maccabæus conquered Jerusalem and purged the Temple of Greek idolatry 2000 years ago. There is a tradition that no oil was left to light "the Lord's eternal lamp," but, on searching, one single jar was found bearing the High Priest's stamp. But its oil could only last one day. The tradition is, that by a miracle it was made to last eight whole days, and this "saved the perpetual lamp in the Temple, and thus caused a great light to shine for all time over all Israel." Whether this be true or no, it is true that the One Who is the Light of the World came through Israel, and may it soon, as a nation, be rejoicing in that light. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The Jews seem to be greatly impressed with the British Government's declaration as to Palestine becoming a national home for them. There are, of course, many difficulties to face. Jerusalem is a sacred city to Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans alike. It is stated "that it will be the first aim of Jews . . . to live in a spirit of absolute brotherhood with their Arab and Armenian neighbours." These are good intentions, but are they possible of achievement? Each party will have its separate interests and beliefs to safeguard. Then there is the indifference of the Jews themselves. The *Jewish Chronicle* asks:—

"What has been the effect, let us ask ourselves, upon the average Jew in the street, in every-day life, in social circles, on the Jews one meets in private converse? What has been the response to that epoch-

making event, the passing of Jerusalem from Turk to Briton, precluded as it was by the cornet-tones proclaiming the time at hand for the National emancipation of our people? One meets the average Jew, and he treats the whole matter with a sneering joke. He is going to Palestine—‘Oh, yes, I think so!—with a return ticket!’ Or he likes ‘the Pictures’ in London rather better than on the banks of the Jordan, or, again, he has not gone ‘meshugah—yet.’”

Then follows this remarkable pronouncement respecting the Jews as a whole, and what the writer terms “the remnant of our people.”

It may be that we are a peculiar people, not merely in character, not merely in our relation to a Divine purpose, but that we are peculiar, inasmuch as we are the eternal paradox of the world. With any other people, it could not be so; but with Jews it may be that exactly because the National spirit is not general among us, that because it is the prized possession of the few, therefore its strength is so unassailable; that two thousand years of degradation have not been able to overcome it, and that it will survive the cankerous evil that now besets it in its own house. It is the remnant of our people—and not our people—that has ever been the salvation of the Jew.

These are remarkable words. Can we forget how much the Bible has to say about the *remnant*? The prophets refer again and again to this remnant in connection with the last phase of Jewish history before their final deliverance. In our Lord's own day, it was only a remnant who believed. Is not the thought of the remnant linked also with our own day, and with Christianity? Christians (so-called), as a whole, are as lukewarm and indifferent as the average Jew may be, and it is only the remnant that preserves Christendom from becoming, what it will be ultimately, a putrid carcase.

Well may the writer, we have quoted above, conclude, “*It is not, therefore, for nothing that in the most solemn moment of all the year we pray, not for the House of Israel, but for the remnant of Israel. For we have nothing to fear—if the remnant but be true and sound.*”

But we know that, in spite of all human failure and indifference, God will eventually achieve His purpose concerning Israel, and part of that purpose is that there should be a saved *nation*, as well as a remnant. As it is written, “And so *all* Israel shall be saved . . . (i.e., they will be saved nationally) . . . There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

There is a remarkable utterance in the prayer offered by Daniel, as recorded in Chapter ix. of his prophecy. Daniel is meditating upon the great evil that had come upon his people, according to all that had been written in the law of Moses, and he exclaims, "Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth." (Chapter ix. 13.) What importance Daniel attached to prayer! Nothing else could take its place. In his estimation it was the only means of averting a threatened calamity, or remove it when it came. Yet this one essential thing had been omitted. "Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God." Is not history repeating itself in the postponement of a day of national prayer in connection with the present war. The war has been in progress for over three years. "Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God." Oh that the nation might really turn to God on the day that has now been appointed. And may not Israel as a nation also take to heart these words of the prophet Daniel uttered so long ago?

* * * *

It is distressing to see how little regard is now paid to the teaching of Scripture by public men who attempt to influence legislation or to reform existing laws. The Bible was at one time the basis of those laws. The proposed alteration in the law relating to divorce proves that it is in danger of being so no longer. In the report issued by the Royal Commission the excuse is made that such a conflict of opinion "has existed in all ages and in all branches of the Christian Church, among scholars and divines equally qualified to judge," that these opinions cannot be allowed to influence the decision, and it proceeds to recommend the legislature to act upon an "*unfettered* consideration of what is best for the interest of the State, society, and morality, and for that of parties to suit and their families."

Now, whatever difference of opinion may be expressed by Christians, there can be no difference of opinion as to Christ's teaching on the subject, and therefore for the legislature to "act upon an *unfettered* consideration of what is best for the interest of the State" is to cast aside the plain declaration of Christ. And to talk about acting in the interests of society and morality

after that, is simply to throw dust in people's eyes. Moreover, it becomes pure blasphemy, for did not the Son of God know what was in the interests of morality?

Here are His own words upon the subject: they are in reply to the question addressed to Him by the Pharisees, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

"And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matt. xix. 3-6.

And then our Lord added, speaking with Divine authority:—

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (v. 9).

Without entering into details, it is well known that the report referred to contains suggestions which are absolutely opposed in principle to the above teaching. How sublime that teaching is! lifting the holy institution of marriage far above the sordid ideas and aims so prevalent to-day in regard to it. Marriage is seen to be a Divine institution, and infinitely more than a human and legal contract or social arrangement. And the very essence of it all is revealed to us in words twice repeated—"they twain shall be *one flesh*." Did men and women but realise this, how much more noble, and fruitful in happiness, would marriage become! Moreover, God is a party to the compact. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." It is one of the signs of the last days that man ventures to lay his impious hands upon an institution which is not only divine in its origin, but the oldest on earth. And it will indeed be a sad day for this country if the British House of Commons bases its enactments upon principles that are a direct violation of Christ's own teaching.

* * * *

In view of the recent declaration on the part of the British Government that they regard "with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," a special interest attaches to the article in this number on the nation of Israel and God's purpose concerning it.

The following is what was submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet :

“ His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

In connection with this decision, which may have such far reaching consequences, the following incident is related :—A Russian chemist who had discovered a new explosive offered it to the British Government. It was accepted, and when asked what reward he claimed, he is said to have stipulated that the British nation should do all in its power to give effect to Jewish national aspirations as set forth in the above announcement.

* * * *

We wish to call attention to a new book by Mr Walter Scott—*Bible Words and Biblical Notes*. There are more than 300 “ Words,” gathered from all parts of the Sacred Volume, briefly explained and alphabetically arranged. Also more than 400 “ Notes.” Price, 2/6. By post, 2/9. From the author, Hamilton House, Carlton, Nottingham.

The War and Scripture.

Here is God’s witness, truth is justified !

The hateful strife proclaims the Scriptures true !
 Cain’s envy rampant ; evil deified ;
 From fiercest lust enthroned, the crimson tide
 Pours forth—as ’neath man’s jealousy Christ died ;
 The old lines on sin’s face displayed anew ;
 But Christ’s grace the souls rest whate’er betide.

WILLIAM OLNEY.

Isaiah.

Chapter VII.—(Continued.)

Evidently this most precious "sign," so filled with truest, sweetest comfort, was never intended for that unbelieving Ahaz at all: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz was far more suited to his condition. But to the open ear of penitent faith it would revive hope in the long-awaited fulfilment of that first promise that sounded in the opened ears of our first parents: that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head; a promise on which the hope of the race had really depended, whether intelligently or not, for ages—a hope held by a few amid all discouragements—now at last, it is so far made clear *how* this seed is to be the seed of the woman, not of the man—of Eve, not of Adam—by His being the Son of a virgin-mother, and so Immanuel.*

*But, I believe this was not the first time this promise had been echoed, although in a strangely hidden way, and where one would little expect to find it: in the very names of towns of Israel's land—so utterly uninteresting and meaningless as they seem to us. Some years ago, I was endeavouring to get the meanings of those names with which the book of Joshua is so largely filled, with, I must admit, but small success, when I was startled by the significance of one short verse of only three names. Joshua xix. 4 reads (leaving out the copulas) **El-tolad; Bethul; Hormah**. Now all these are so simple and clear as to leave no doubt whatever as to their meaning. **El-tolad**: **El** is "The mighty God." "**Tolad**" is the third person, singular, feminine, causative, future of "**yalad**," to bring forth, or bear (a child), and would literally read, "she shall be caused to bear (a child)." So that the two parts of this compound word would together read "The mighty God shall cause her to bear (a child)." But who is it that God shall thus cause to bear? It must be a unique birth to be thus introduced, as demanding the intervention of God—the Mighty One. It is; for the next word is **Bethul**; which means "a virgin." Thus the two words read unequivocally, "God shall cause a virgin to bear." My reader may imagine my astonishment—I may say awe, mixed with thankful delight—when I saw this. But further, who shall this virgin bring forth? The third word supplies the answer: **Hormah**. Now this is one of those strange words that have two diametrically opposed meanings. The root is simply "to devote" or "consecrate" to Jehovah, to be dealt with by Him alone according to the nature He finds in it. If it be clean, then was it altogether "holy unto the Lord," available for "an offering of sweet-smelling savor" (Lev. xxvii. 9 and 28). But if lawless—if "sin," then, as was Jericho, it was a curse—a **hehrem**—a word from the same root and having the same significance as **Hormah** (Joshua vi. 18, etc.). So the three words would read "God—the mighty

One—shall cause a Virgin to bear One devoted—One infinitely holy in Himself, and so an offering to God for a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. v. 2) ; yet, in another aspect, when made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21) a Curse (Gal. iii. 13)”—both contrasted conditions told in the one word, “**Hormah.**” May we not ask, Can such beauties—such glories—be accidental? If so, then doubtless the rose and the lily came by accident, and the less marvellous intricate movements of your watch have all come together solely by accident. We must leave such “great faith” to rationalism and infidelity, for surely it cannot be found “in Israel.”

Next we are told—strangely told, I think we may safely say—that the virgin’s son shall feed on milk and honey. Let the closed ear hear only the superficial natural meaning of the words: this demands no exercise, no confession of dependence, no drawing near to Him whose joy it is to teach; but at once there is a necessity for finding some other reading than that the feeding on this food should *give* Him intelligence. So many commentators turn it into “Curdled-milk and honey shall He eat *at the time* that He knows,” etc. But, turn it as you will, no true fulfilment can be found of this prophecy in Him Who “came eating and drinking,” so that they said “Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber.” *That* is not “curdled-milk and honey,” surely.

But let the ear of the inner-man of the *spirit* be opened, and a deeper spiritual meaning than that on the surface is discerned; and we see the Child Jesus ever feeding, in the truest sense, on that truest food, the *milk* of the Word, sweeter to Him than *honey* or the honeycomb; and, *by that word* learning morning by morning with wakened ear “to refuse the evil and to choose the good.” Where else, save in the volume of the book (Ps. xl) could it be learned that for Him the good would consist in giving “His back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked out the hair, to hide not His face from shame and spitting,” and thus to the cross? Peter judged this by no means good (Matt. xvi. 23), for Peter had not as yet fed on that “milk and honey;” but He was not disobedient, nor turned away back (Isaiah i. 4-6), to Him it was the “good.”

Thus how perfectly appropriate is the most simple and literal reading of the text “milk and honey shall he eat *in order that* he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.” By what He thus fed upon did this perfect human Child learn of the

path laid out for Him—a path that indeed led to life, but only by the way of death and the cross (Ps. xvi. 11), for so only could we, poor sinful men, share that life with Him.

Was then that path, so “uncheered by earthly smiles,” and that “led only to the cross,” really good? Oh, let the Voice that was heard whenever its earthly end was in view, answer. Twice the very heavens opened under the weight of God’s delight: First, when He joined His poor sheep in the river of *death*—Jordan; and being baptised therein, in figure fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. iii). Then, on the holy mount, when they spoke of His *decease* that He should accomplish at Jerusalem, then God proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”—surely He had chosen the “good,” in the very path of the cross.

And how shall you and I, dear reader, acquire the same intelligence as to what is really good, and what is really evil, amid all the confusion of this day? Will it not be in the same way, by the same feeding, morning by morning, on the same “sincere milk of the Word?” Shall our “good” then be found in quite a different path from His, or will it be the same as His in measure? Will it be merely in some religious profession—some Church association of the day: respectable, decent, religious—the Church in which less and less is ever made of that “beloved Son”—the Church in which Christ is by no means “all”—the Church which is really indistinguishable from the world, and has become altogether “the camp”—the Church where no shame shall meet us: no reproach be ours; but rather honour and praise of men? Has the cross then at last become popular, and its offence ceased? May we in these days live godly in Christ Jesus, and yet escape altogether the persecution so surely promised to all who even *desire* to do so? (2 Tim. iii.). Oh, folly, folly! Feeding on that same food, we too shall learn the same lesson, we too shall find the “good” in going forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach—the evil, in conformity to this present evil world, even though it has put on a religious apparel:

Yet not in pride nor pharisaic separation

Will we go forth to Him without the camp;

His holy beauty all our occupation—

His blessed Word, our only guide and lamp.

The Effect of Infidel Criticism.

We have received the following communication :

Remark is made in October number of "The Faith and the Flock," regarding the issue, about fifty years ago, of a number of theological works, of which the one entitled "Essays and Reviews" may be taken as a type. The quotations given from a writer of that period, warning of what would result from the spread of infidelity by their means, remind one of what still another who dealt with the question also wrote at the time. Mr J. N. Darby's observations on the notorious "Essays and Reviews" are remarkable in many ways. In none more than in the manner in which he so carefully estimated their general effect, and also what one might term their historical perspective.

To take the latter point first—the time of their publication meant everything. Of no outstanding merit in itself, a retrospective review of the theology of last century raises the significance of the book into something like unique importance. As we look back, it will be seen that we in this country stood at that very period at the parting of the ways. This nation was even then passing through its greatest crisis in religious thought. This Mr Darby clearly discerned. Hence his warning of the seriousness of the issues raised. What was then being attempted by "Essays and Reviews," and such works, was, he declared, "the popularising of the infidel conclusions of German research."

As to the general effect, disastrous consequences for the people at large would follow. It may be as well to remark that it is not so much that Christians themselves are in danger of having their faith overthrown. That is hardly the question; but rather how infidelity affects the people, the general public.

"Where there is divine faith," says J. N. D., "infidel reasoning cannot do much. But the mass may have educational faith in the scriptures, so that they are respected as true and have a hold on the conscience. They cannot have by this the proof that the believer has, in that the word has divinely reached his own conscience. But when the confidence of those who are believers in the word by habit and education

merely, is gone, you have to begin further back in the matter: the population are tending to apostasy, not mere heart unbelief; **and that is what Satan is seeking to do now.**"

This matter of infidelity, and how it affects the masses, Mr Darby gave much consideration to. He was profoundly convinced, like the writer quoted by your contributor, that popular scepticism invariably reacted disastrously on society at large, that "the absence of faith is the destruction of society." What would be the result among men in general when "the ever-living power of faith is gone, that which holds man subject to something superior to himself?" They would also come to "speculate on the sanctions of social life; what links man to man would be gone, and self be dominant." The mass of men would turn indifferent to all but material considerations. On this state of things invariably "despotism or anarchy ensues." This is instanced by historical examples:—

"How long did the Roman Empire survive Lucian, who was but a sign of the times? or the French monarchy the Encyclopædists? On the fall of Rome, Christianity came in as a bond; now I see not what will, save the faithfulness of God, and the Lord Himself from heaven." . . . "The fact is that if the mass of the people become sceptical—if this pervades the population—not only merely religion but the State is near its end. By that I mean society."

As to the future, Mr Darby ventured to predict:—

"Those who buy the truth and sell it not will hold to it, and take Christ's word as the revelation and standard of it for their hearts. Many will take refuge in it too from sorrow and passion's rage on the other side when the dissolution looked for takes place. But the present working will be this: the philosophical indifference of rationalists will palsy sturdy Protestant orthodoxy, which till now held its ground against Popery. Popery (which does not rest on truth a bit more, but on authority, and in its nature is essentially infidel) does know what it wants, and what it wills, and will pursue it constantly, cleverly, and energetically, and all hold of truth will be gone in the country. For the soul that loves the truth, I believe this present is a very bright and blessed time. I admit that what old associations may attach men to is disappearing. Everyone sees it, though how much we have to thank God for that in this country it is peacefully; though I doubt that Christian or religious liberty will last very long as it is now. We are in serious, most serious times. There must be reality. When conventional systems are crumbling around, and evil raises up its head, may men be seen who can walk peacefully because they possess what can never crumble, till God makes all things new, according to the truth He has revealed."

The Book of Psalms.

By WALTER SCOTT.

Psalm 17. "Hear the *right* O Jehovah" is the cry of the Messiah oppressed and compassed about with "deadly enemies" (verse 9). But while He is the Chief Sufferer there are others who in their measure share it with Him: See verses 7, 11, "them" and "us." Christ is not entirely alone in the circumstances contemplated in our Psalm. In the previous Psalm the opening verse defines its character. There Christ is alone, and necessarily so as He treads the path of faith and perfect dependence as a man. "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my *trust*." Those two words, "right" and "trust" characterise respectively those Psalms.

In Psalm xvi. Christ does not look for deliverance on earth. Had He done so, then the path of absolute confidence in God would not have been trod from start to finish. Not earthly deliverance, but death, resurrection, fulness of joy, and the highest character of blessings at God's right hand constitute the grand consummation of the life of the Son of Man. All this, and more, forms in its measure our goal of hope as we tread in His holy footsteps.

In our Psalm the end is very beautiful, and quite in keeping with the character of the Psalm itself. "As for me," in contrast with the aims and portion of the wicked in this world, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." The Lord in the midst of evil and wicked men (verses 9-14) maintained in unswerving fidelity the righteousness of Jehovah. He could, and did, appeal to Jehovah—for the covenant people are in the forefront of this Psalm. "*Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence.*" In fullest measure such a prayer could alone come from the heart and lips of the only truly righteous One; in degree, when conscious of personal integrity, we can appeal to God as He did. Christ was tested and tried inwardly and outwardly (verse 3). Is not Christ the perfect Man of James iii. 2? See in corroboration verses 3 and 4 of our Psalm. "*Hold up my goings in Thy paths.*" This

was the constant attitude of our Lord at all times and under all circumstances. Satan sought to weaken His confidence in God (Matt. iv. 6). But God Himself and His written Word were ever the practical strength and moral safe-guard of the Lord in His rugged path of obedience. He would devote Himself to carry out His Father's will at whatever cost to Himself. The Worldling had his position (verse 14). Let them have it. Christ and we in association with Him have our special portion which none can rob us of. "As for me I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Enough, Lord, such a prospect is the best, the richest, the grandest conceivable!

DIVISIONS.

1. The Appeal of Righteousness—Verses 1, 2.
2. The Righteous One tested Within and Without—Verse 3.
3. The path of Righteousness and how sustained—Verses 4-14.
4. The grand End of such a path—Verse 15.

GOD'S REST.—He had hallowed the seventh day, in memory of His having finished His creation-work. He rested then. And having rested, He enjoyed His rest, walking with the creature His hand had made, in His own image, after His likeness, in the garden which He had formed and furnished for him. But when sin entered, and the Creation-Rest was gone, the Lord God began not only at once to work, but to work for His self-ruined creature—as we read, "The Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them," clothed the man and the woman who had now reduced themselves to the condition of guilty, exposed sinners. Wondrous display of God! The One Whose fingers had just garnished the sky above us,—the glorious Frame of the heavens and the earth, and whose creatures were filling and furnishing the ground we tread on, now turns His hand (to His praise be it remembered for ever) to make a covering for a sinner. God in grace, the Father of our Lord Jesus, thus began to work. And now, on this model, Christ had come forth to work, as the healed cripple of this chapter witnesses (John v.), so that standing at the margin of this mystic water, and with the healed man before Him, He could say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

J. G. B.

Questions and Answers.

With reference to the statement contained in the last verse of Ephesians ii., "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," we are asked if God dwells in an individual in this sense, or if it is in a band of Christians; and whether God continues to dwell in them if they are not of one mind?

Ans. : It is quite true, God does dwell in the individual, but the reference in Ephesians ii. is to the Church. It is evident the apostle is addressing them collectively when he says, "Ye also are builded *together*." The Tabernacle and Temple of old were God's habitation, but on the day of Pentecost a new habitation was formed, composed, not of materials, but, of living persons. This was inaugurated by the descent of the Holy Ghost. What it was at the beginning it is now, for the Holy Spirit has never been withdrawn. But there is this difference, that, sin and failure having marked the Church's history, and consequent confusion, the free play and exercise of His power is limited, and His presence is by the mass of Christians unrealised. But the Church has not ceased to be God's habitation, and His presence is still known to those who seek it, and are faithful. Here, in Eph. ii., it is not a question merely of some local gathering of believers, but what is true of the Church, looked at from a divine standpoint. Every local assembly should seek to realise it. If sin is allowed and unjudged, of course, God would withdraw His presence. Assemblies have perished because of this in past times, but the one assembly still remains God's habitation.

Ques. "Is it scriptural to say Christ died for the sins of the world, or that He bore the sins of the world? If Christ did not die for the sins of the world, how could an unbeliever's sins be forgiven? Will you also please say if an unbeliever will be judged only for the sin of Christ rejection?"

Ans: Scripture nowhere says Christ died for the **sins** of the world, or that He bore the **sins** of the world. It does say, "Behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the **sin** of the world." But between sin and sins there is a great difference. No man living is responsible for the fact of sin being in the world, and he will not be judged on that ground. The ground of

judgment is the sins each one has committed. Christ died for **all**, and consequently all who pass away before reaching an age of responsibility will reap the benefit of His death. But the moment a person reaches the age of responsibility—and God alone determines that—he is responsible in two ways—viz., for the sins he commits, and to believe God's testimony concerning His Son. Propitiation has been made, on the ground of which **all** may be forgiven, but they only are forgiven who repent and believe. Had Christ borne the sins of the world—then everybody would be saved **volens volens**. God would have no ground of judgment, for how could He judge a person for sins already borne and atoned for ?

As to the second part of the question, an unbeliever's sins are forgiven when he believes. On the ground of Christ's one offering God can forgive **all**. He waits for men to turn to Him and receive His forgiveness. This is conversion. But if a man does not believe and turn, he remains unforgiven.

It is quite a misrepresentation of Scripture to assert that the only sin an unbeliever will be judged for is the sin of Christ rejection. In that case it would be better not to send the gospel to the heathen, for they cannot reject what has never been offered them, and therefore, according to this theory, they would be saved. Whereas if you send the gospel to them and they reject it, they are forever lost. But apart from this, the Bible is perfectly plain that sins are the ground of judgment. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against **all ungodliness and unrighteousness** of men." "God, who will render to every man according to his **deeds**." "As many as have **sinned**, without law shall also perish without law." (Rom. i. ii.). In Eph. v. 5, the apostle mentions various sins, and then adds, "Because **of these things** cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (v. 6). See also Col. iii. 5-6, where we find a similar statement.

"How constantly God in His Word tells us to *ask*. In James i, 5, we read : 'If any of you lack . . . let him ask.' We may leave out the word 'wisdom' for it holds true as to anything we may lack. Whatever you may feel you lack, *ask* Him to supply your need. Do you feel your weakness? Ask him for strength. Ask Him to enable you to do what seems now so hard to yourself. Do you ever feel disinclination for prayer or reading His Word? Ask Him for the desire. Do you feel you need more of His Holy Spirit, because the flesh is so strong? Ask, and He will give it. And in all your asking *expect* Him to answer, and act as if He would do so—this is faith. This is how Mary did (John ii). She just mentioned the need and she expected that He would supply it. And this is what we are constantly told to do in this passage in James. Verse 5 tells us to ask, verse 6 says '*Ask in faith*.'"

The Epistle to the Colossians.

W. W. FEREDAY.

Chapter i. 23-29.

A warning is added. It was necessary, the circumstances of the Colossians demanded it. Not that they had yet been beguiled from their steadfastness (chapter ii. 5), but they were giving heed to teachings which might lead them utterly astray. The proof of reality is continuance. Those who have Christ as their life will continue; those who have profession only will pass by the warnings and perish in the way.

“ If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven ” (chapter i. 23).

The hope of the Gospel is a heavenly Christ, and our participation with Him, through grace, on high. This is in contrast with the hope of Israel, which was a Messiah reigning in their midst here below. In such a world as this, nothing is easier than to drift away from the influence of the heavenly, for it is invisible. Only by the Spirit's power is it possible to persevere upon so exalted a line. Paul did so persevere, and would have the Colossians do likewise.

The Gospel is a ministry universal in its application; it is God's proclamation to every creature, albeit (to our shame be it said) every creature has not yet heard the joyful sound. The Apostle Paul loved to preach it, knowing its perfect suitability to meet men's deepest need. Never has there been a more fervent gospeller. But another ministry had also been committed to him, more limited in its scope, but none the less important, though but feebly understood in our time. It was the ministry of the Church. This double ministry corresponds with Christ's two headships, and with His twofold reconciliation.

Thus we read: “ Whereof (i.e. the Gospel) I, Paul, am made a minister, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which

hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints : to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory " (v.v. 23-27).

The very painfulness of this path the apostle thus regarded as privilege. He was a sharer in the afflictions of Christ. Only the Saviour Himself could suffer atoningly, but it was open to Paul, or any other, to follow Him in His path of self-sacrifice for the good of others. Paul did thus follow Him. In his earnest quest for Christ's members, manifold sufferings came upon him. In this connection, he uses language in 2 Tim. ii. 10 that the Saviour Himself might well have used as He stepped up to the Cross of Calvary—" Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Let us note this carefully, that it was the heavenly and separative character of his ministry which aroused such widespread rancour against the apostle. Jews could not tolerate that which made nothing of their fleshly rites and performances, and Gentiles fiercely opposed that which took men clean out of their old associations, and made them think and speak of heaven above. Had he contented himself with simply preaching salvation from hell his path might have been less thorny. But this would never have satisfied the heart of the apostle.

As minister of the Church a special stewardship was committed to Paul. He completed the word of God. This does not mean that he wrote its last book. That service was reserved for John. But Paul completed its subjects. The Revelation is, after all, the development of subjects already spoken of in earlier Scriptures. But Paul's epistles introduce to us new themes altogether. The word of God could not be closed until the mystery had been told out. For this Paul was divinely chosen. Only in his writings do we find the truth of the Church unfolded. In Eph. iii. 2-11 he insists upon the special place which was accorded to him in the ways of God in connection with this great service. In the preparatory ages of the world's history " the mystery " was hidden in God ; now all is declared, and God would have all His saints know His thoughts of infinite grace.

Only one side of " the mystery " is touched upon in our

chapter—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Old Testament speaks of glory yet to be resident in the midst of Israel, and shining forth to all the nations. But that Christ should be "in" Gentiles, filling them with anticipations of glory above is a new thing, and immeasurably more wonderful and blessed.

And so the apostle preached. God's matchless grace commanded his whole moral being. He pressed his twofold ministry in every quarter. Christ was the centre and sum of all that he had to say.

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (v.v. 28-29).

The warning and teaching here is not of sinners, but of saints. The prime object for which all gifts have been bestowed by the Head is "the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. iv. 12). The salvation of sinners, however important, is never set forth in Scripture as the ultimate end of divine operations. When sinners become transformed into saints through faith in the Lord Jesus, it is the will of God that they should be instructed and fashioned. For lack of this, Christendom is to-day full of spiritual weaklings. Forgiveness may indeed be known, but what of the new place in Christ risen, and what of the Church with all its wonderful associations, privileges and responsibilities? To these things the mass of true believers are virtual strangers.

It was Christ who wrought in Paul—"Mightily," he says. So it must ever be. Only as Christ works in human flesh and blood can anything be effectually wrought for God.

(To be continued.)

"Have you ever been struck by the fact that Christ does not fill the waterpots with wine straight away? He says first, 'fill the waterpots with *water*,' and then the *water* is turned into *wine*. Water, in Scripture, is often a symbol of affliction. And a very apt one it is, for *tears* are composed of water. The underlying thought of the *water* being turned into wine is that Christ can turn sorrow into joy. We read, they filled the waterpots to the *brim*. The more sorrow, the more joy."—*Extract*.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 3.

MARCH, 1918

Price 1d

“I Will Come Again.”

The Lord's Coming in Relation to Israel.

[SECOND PAPER.]

We will now consider further the future of Israel.

How good to remember that they will one day adopt the language of Psalm cv., and say,

“He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.

“Which covenant He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac;

“And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:

“Saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.”

God's everlasting covenant with Israel is to give them the land of Canaan as a possession for ever. There could not be stronger, or plainer, language than that just quoted. Seeing then that Israel is not in possession of the land at the present moment, and has not been for nearly 2000 years, it follows that, unless God's word is utterly to fail, Israel must have a future.

In Romans xi. we read that “God is able to graff them in again:” that “all Israel shall be saved,” i.e., they shall yet be a nation; that God will “take away their sins,” and that “they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

Everyone acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures will realise that no part of Israel's history has ever yet answered the descriptions there given. Nor have the promises of God ever been fulfilled. All nations have not yet been blessed through them. They have not been in uninterrupted possession of the land. David's throne has long since disappeared, and his seed has been dispersed for many generations. The glowing predic-

tions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets have never yet been realised.

The Bible speaks with no uncertain voice of a coming restoration. This recovery—which will eclipse all former conditions and experiences of the nation—is as clearly foretold as was their overthrow. If certain predictions have been fulfilled in the past history of the people, why should not this other? The following table will show how God's word has thus far been fulfilled:—

Genesis xv. 13-16—fulfilled Exodus xii.-xiv.

Isaiah vii. 8—fulfilled 2 Kings xvii. 22-3.

Jeremiah xxv. 11—fulfilled 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17-21; Ezra i. 1-3.

Zech. ix. 9—fulfilled Matt. xxi. 5.

The following passages contain statements which are being fulfilled before our eyes: Lev. xxvi. 31-4, Deut. xxviii. 37, Hosea iii. 4-5, Amos ix. 9, Jer. xv. 4, Luke xxi. 24, and Micah iii. 12. The higher critics sometimes tell us that the prophets had to do with present events and were only writing history. In fact, that they wrote *after* the events supposed to have been foretold. This cannot be said of predictions made hundreds and thousands of years ago, and which are being verified *now*. Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Micah, Luke, were written long enough ago, and moreover, they contain predictions as definite as any in Daniel and elsewhere, and these are being fulfilled. If predictions have been fulfilled in one case, of which we ourselves are witnesses, why not in others? Having proved that the past history of Israel has been a fulfilment of prophecy, let us see what the Bible has to say as to the future of Israel. That also must be a foretelling.

1. *As to its restoration.* This is indicated, under certain conditions, as early as Deut. xxx. If in their dispersion they returned to the Lord, and obeyed Him, "then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and will gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee (vv. 1-3). In Isaiah xiv. we read, "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the people shall take them, and bring them to their place" (vv. 1-2). Chapter xi. of the same prophecy tells us, "and it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand

again the *second* time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, . . . and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth" (vv. 11-12). "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Ch. xxvii. 6). Again, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." See also Jer. xvi. 15; xxxiii. 26; Ez. xxxvi. 24; xxxvii. 12-14; Joel iii. 1; Amos ix. 11-15.

From all these passages we see how clearly the restoration of Israel is foretold. It must take place in order that God's reiterated promises may be made good, as well as the many predictions to the same effect with which the Prophets abound. It may well be asked, *If the history of this people during the past eighteen hundred years, so full of woes, disasters, and sufferings, is a literal fulfilment of what had been foretold, and if the land itself, left desolate for so many generations tells the same tale, why should not equally clear predictions of their restoration and final blessing be accomplished?*

2. The following events will happen between the return of the people to their own land and the advent of Christ:—

(a) The last week of Daniel's seventy weeks will run its course. (See Dan. ix. 24-7.)

These seventy weeks are divided into three very distinct periods. Seven weeks, or 49 years, connected with the building of Jerusalem; sixty-two weeks which brings us down to the first advent of the Messiah and His rejection, and one week still remaining. The language is unmistakable. "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off. But this accounts for sixty-nine weeks only. The remaining week has to do with a different series of events altogether. In fact, there is a break between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth which covers the whole of the present period, during which God is gathering out a people to form the Church, and share Christ's *heavenly* glory, and is not dealing with Israel directly at all.

In verse 27 of Daniel ix. we read of *one* week, and this is the last of the seventy. Christ is not mentioned here at all.

Christ's people (in spite of all the historical school have written on the subject) never came or destroyed the city and the sanctuary, and Christ Himself never made a covenant for one week. The *people* of the prince that shall come are the Romans, and the prince that shall come is the last head of the Roman Empire.

There is an important distinction between vv. 26 and 27. In the former it is the *people* of the prince, who are mentioned, in the latter it is the prince himself. "He shall confirm a (not "the") covenant with the *many* (in contrast with the godly remnant) for one week." In the midst of the week he breaks it, and sets up the abomination of desolation. (See Dan. ix. 27; xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15.)

(b) Antichrist will also be on the scene, and an active agent in all that is going on. He is in co-operation with the Imperial head of the Roman Empire. His character is depicted in three passages of Scripture:—Dan. xi. 36-7; 2 Thess. ii. 3-10; and Rev. xiii. 11-16: an attentive study of which will reveal the correspondence existing between all three descriptions. He will be at Jerusalem, and not only cause an image of the Beast to be erected in the temple there, but will exalt himself above all that is called God, sitting in the Temple of God, and showing himself that he is God. Energised by Satan, he will work miracles, and by his power and signs and lying wonders deceive them that dwell on the earth, and if it were possible, even the very elect.

(c) During this period will occur that time of unexampled suffering referred to in Scripture as "the great tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21), and "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 3-7). What will happen then is foreshadowed in the persecution that came upon any who refused to worship the image of gold Nebuchadnezzar set up. Our Lord tells us that unless these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, "but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

(d) It is at this crisis the Lord Himself appears for their deliverance. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4). Matt. xxiv. 29-30 confirms this. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the

Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven." At this time all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle. Earth will be arrayed against heaven. Rev. xix. shows us the Beast and the false Prophet as the leaders of a world-wide insurrection against God's Christ, and Christ is seen coming out of heaven to destroy them. Zechariah also tells us, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. xiv. 3).

3. *There will be a new covenant established with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.* The terms of this covenant afford the clearest evidence of the future blessing of Israel, and that their existence as a nation in their own land is yet to become a fact.

"I will put my laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—(Jer. xxxi. 33-4.)

Whenever has this prediction yet been fulfilled? Both the context in which it is found and the contents of this new covenant make it impossible to apply it in its entirety to the present day of grace, though, of course, we come under the blessings of the new covenant.

The following facts prove that it actually refers to literal Israel:—

(a) The entire chapter is concerned with the nation of Israel—the literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with no other. The nations are addressed as quite distinct (v. 10). Again and again the future restoration of Israel is referred to (vv. 6-12, 21, 27-28). This can have no meaning as regards Gentiles.

(b) The covenant is said to be "with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Where does this distinction exist today in the Church?

(c) Has there ever been a time when it was no longer necessary to say, Know the Lord, because everybody knew Him?

(d) This view is abundantly confirmed by what the Apostle

Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans, chap. xi. In that chapter he is drawing a distinction between Israel and God's present dealings with the Gentiles, and tells us that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in:" and then he adds, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

4. Christ will be their King. It was predicted of Him at His birth. "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." He was confessed when on earth, not only as Son of God, but as King of Israel (John i. 49).

In Zech. xiv., the chapter we have already quoted from, and which tells us that "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," it also declares, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one" (v. 9). It is clear, then, that when Christ appears to the world, He comes in direct connection with His earthly people, and with the intention of reigning over them.

5. Scripture is full of the future glory of God's earthly people, and also of the additional fact that all nations are to be blessed through them. Passage after passage in Isaiah and other prophecies depicts Israel's blessing, but almost invariably the nations are included. (See Isaiah ii. 1-5; xi. 1-9; xxv. 6-8; etc.). If there is one thing more clear in the Bible than another, it is that world-wide blessing is to come through a restored and regenerated Israel, and not through the preaching of the gospel in this present dispensation.



"The Church of God, which is Christ's body, is not composed of churches, but of members, united together by that blessed Spirit, which unites all to Christ, the Head. Hence the 'church,' or 'assemblies,' are only local gatherings of so many Christians, as find themselves, in the providence of God, actually together. Each of these would be according to Scripture, and if things were in right order, the church in that place."

Notes : Biblical and General.

The present issue is reduced to 16 pp. This is due to the shortage of paper, and to the extra cost of production. We are sure we can count upon the sympathy and continued support of our readers, under the circumstances; and on our part everything will be done, God helping us, to maintain the quality, even though compelled to reduce the quantity, of the contents of the magazine. A well-known editor asserts that "newspaper troubles will be more serious this year than they have ever been."

* * *

Recently, a correspondence has appeared in one of the daily papers on the subject of the Massacre of the Innocents, and the true birth place of our Saviour. In a letter from a leading and learned sceptic, it was boldly asserted that St Mark's gospel was the only reliable one, that the Massacre was a fiction, because Herod died before the birth of Christ, and neither Philo nor Josephus give it. And another supplemented this by saying that in Acts our Lord is always spoken of as Jesus of Nazareth, and, therefore, He was not born in Bethlehem.

The subjoined replies to these observations, which appeared subsequently in the same paper, are very much to the point:—
One writes—

"Sir H. Johnston pronounces the story of the Innocents a myth, because neither Philo nor Josephus give it! One wonders whether he has ever read a page of Philo. If he had he would not have made so wild a statement. As for Josephus, by the same line of argument Christ never existed at all, since Josephus never mentions Him, the well-known passage in Ant. xviii. being almost universally regarded as an interpolation. If Sir Harry Johnston will procure a copy of the Works of St Augustine, and look up the Manichæan controversy, he will find that Faustus the Manichee anticipated his arguments—if, indeed, they are his—some fifteen hundred years ago."

Another says—

"The references to Philo-Judæus and Josephus are very ill-judged. Philo was a quiet student at Alexandria, the date of whose death is uncertain—it may have been B.C. or A.D.—fragments of whose works have been preserved by the fortunate accident that they interested the later Platonists. Flavius Josephus was a renegade Pharisee who wrote voluminously to effect a certain purpose—his own rehabilitation and

that of his race in the eyes of the Romans, among whom he had settled as the client of the Flavii. Philo, even if he lived to the Christian era, had probably heard nothing of Palestinian events; and the last thing that would have suited Josephus's purpose would have been to draw attention to Christianity."

Attacks, such as these letters are a reply to, afford only another illustration of the flimsy and unreliable character of the objections so often levelled against Scripture. And the credulity of sceptics is the most amazing feature in it all. Quite apart from any question of inspiration, Matthew gives such circumstantial details that it seems almost impossible to doubt the genuineness of his narrative. He mentions the wise men, the assembling of the chief priests and scribes by Herod, his interview with the wise men, and the instructions given to them, what they did when they saw the Child, how they returned into their own country another way, the flight of Joseph into Egypt, the death of Herod, and the settlement at Nazareth. Yet Sir H. Johnston believes all this is nothing better than an ingenious fabrication to make prophecy fit in, but he cannot believe it to be true. Some people's faith (!) is indeed wonderful. Nor does he seem to realise that if his version be the correct one, what a most serious charge lies at the door of the inspired writer. It means that Matthew *deliberately* fastened a most heinous crime upon an innocent person. Scripture asserts that *holy* men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. What becomes of their holiness, if they were capable of sinking to such a level as making a person guilty of an outrage he never committed: for Sir H. Johnston asserts that Herod was dead. His contention not only discredits the character of Matthew, but would, if true, render the whole of his gospel utterly worthless. This is the logical and inevitable outcome of such assertions, and shows how little these critics realise the effect of their assaults upon the Word of God. To us, the very fact—apart from every other consideration—that Matthew, being the man he was, a disciple of Christ, deliberately charges a most prominent person with the slaughter of the innocents, is one of the most convincing proofs that it really happened.

Because Christ is associated with Nazareth, both in the gospels and Acts, we need not conclude that this was His birth-place. It was His adopted place, and intentionally so, and He

accepted the reproach of it: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

* * *

Are Revelation and Inspiration the same? In a letter by a prominent public man, who is also a student, which has recently been published, the two things seem confused. He speaks of "degrees of *revelation*" (italics ours), and then, in the same breath goes on to speak of *Inspiration*. Degrees of revelation there may be, and undoubtedly are, in the Bible. The antediluvian saints did not possess the revelation enjoyed by Abraham, nor did Abraham walk in the fuller light of Christianity. But Genesis is just as much inspired as the Gospels or Epistles. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it abundantly clear that there is only one degree of Inspiration. God equally spoke through prophets, as through the Son. The prophets did not communicate the same message, but the message they did communicate was from God. Whatever might be the character or contents of the message God was its source and revealer, for all Scripture is God-breathed. All writers were "moved by the Holy Ghost," though all were not moved to say the same thing. Degrees of Revelation there are, but not degrees of Inspiration. David spake by the Holy Ghost, Christ spake by the Holy Ghost, and Paul and John spake by the Holy Ghost. Nor is such a view derogatory in any way to our Lord, for it is only what the Bible everywhere assumes and asserts.

It is necessary to affirm this, because many hold very erroneous and defective views on the subject. A fellow traveller, the other day, was asserting that all we needed were the words spoken by our Lord as recorded in the Gospels. He declared it did not matter whether we accepted what Paul said, as he was only a man like ourselves. We felt inclined to ask him if he, or anyone else, could give us another eighth chapter of Romans, or an epistle to rank with Ephesians? His contention was that all Christians could accept the words of Christ, and this would form the basis of union. Such a view dishonours God, and lowers the character of the Bible. David asserts "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me," and our Lord Himself confirms this when He says "David himself said by the Holy Ghost" (Mark xii. 36). The Apostle Paul claims to receive communications

direct from the Lord, and to use words which the Holy Ghost teacheth (1 Cor. ii. 13; xi. 23; xiv. 37; 1 Thess. iv. 15). And this is what the Lord claims for Himself, and what is claimed on His behalf (John xii. 49; Acts i. 2). This is not putting David or Paul *personally* on a level with our Lord. Far be the thought. We are dealing only with the question of Inspiration. And what is here asserted is nothing more nor less than what the Bible affirms again and again. As to Inspiration, then, the whole Bible is equally Scripture and equally inspired—Moses, Prophets, and Psalms alike. But as to Revelation, there is a difference, as much as there are differences of dispensations.*

*The same error and confusion exist in the book of a well known author which we have recently had occasion to read. He asks Bible readers to "get rid of the idea that everything written between the two covers of that Book is **inspired** and **equally inspired**." Again, "They have been schooled to suppose that what a Psalmist or a Solomon may have written is of equal . . . authority with what Christ said and demonstrated."

Concerning the King.

Now risen from the dead
 Thou Lord of Truth and Right,
 Anointed is Thy head,
 And crowned with glory bright.

Majestic King and Priest,
 Eternal joy is Thine:
 Thy people share the feast;
 They taste Thy heavenly wine.

Thou dost a table spread
 To satisfy the poor:
 Who eats this heavenly Bread,
 Shall never hunger more.

To fainting souls, the cup
 Of gladness, Thou dost give;
 In sorrow's night, they sup
 With Thee, and strength receive.

O Sun of Truth and Right,
 Extend Thy healing ray;
 Dispel the shades of night
 And all shall own Thy sway.

W. TAYLOR.

The Epistle to the Colossians.

W. W. FEREDAY.

Chapter ii. 1-7.

A remarkable fact presents itself to us in the opening verses of this chapter—a man filled with deepest concern for the souls of persons to himself utterly unknown. Sectarian, and even parochial, feelings have so long afflicted Christendom that it is somewhat difficult for us to enter into the Apostle's emotions in this case. The fact is, he viewed everything and everybody from the standpoint of Christ. The Colossians had been laid hold of for Christ, and had been united to Him by the Spirit. They were thus Christ's members, and for their good the Apostle longed and laboured.

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Loadicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (vv. 1-3).

It was thus not only over the Colossian brethren that the Apostle yearned, his spiritual affections went out with equal fervour towards all unknown saints in every quarter. To the external sufferings of chap. i. 24, he now adds the internal conflict of chap. ii. 1; both endured for Christ's “body's sake, which is the Church.” It was to the end that they might understand, and have fullest divine assurance, of the mystery of God. The words “of the Father, and of Christ,” are a redundancy which should be omitted. The mystery of God relates to the position in which God has set the risen Christ, and the place and relationship of all saints with Him. The exalted Christ is Head of a body, in which every Christian has his part, through grace. This could only be truly learned spiritually. Intellectually the doctrine might be grasped, but that is not what the Apostle longed for. He wished to see a work wrought in the Colossians' heart. Only as their hearts were knit one to another in love could they enter into the mystery of God. The spiritual apprehension of their union with Christ would safeguard them against all the machinations of the enemy, both within and without. When once our

souls grasp the divine fact, that beyond being dead and risen with Christ, we are in union with Him as His body, set above all angelic power, and blessed with all the fulness of the favour of God, we crave no longer for things below. The things of another world attract us. The exalted Christ fills our souls' vision, and from Him, as the inexhaustible treasury of grace and blessing we draw all we can possibly need. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in the mystery of God. No branch of human study can furnish our minds with such profound depths as are found therein. And whereas human research, whatever direction it may take, has a tendency to ensnare the soul in the meshes of error, the knowledge of the mystery floods the soul with light and truth.

It was because of the fear that the deceiver might lead the Colossians astray that the Apostle dwelt so considerably on the personal and acquired glories of Christ, and the Church's union with Him. Instead of making a frontal attack upon anything, he presents that which would secure their hearts by filling them with better things.

“ And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving ” (vv. 4-7).

The Colossian saints had not got turned aside from Christ (for the Apostle could still speak of their “ order ”), but they were lending an ear to things which were disastrous in their tendencies, whether they perceived it or not. Here we may observe the subtlety of Satan. He is ever seeking to engage the minds of God's saints with notions which appear harmless enough to the unpractised eye, but which, if followed out to their logical issue, would result in their spiritual ruin. As the dispensation draws to its close, we may expect increased energy of this kind on the part of the enemy. But we have received the Christ—Jesus the Lord is He; it is ours now to “ walk in Him.” God has rooted us in Him by a sovereign act done once for all; it is our responsibility to build ourselves up daily in Him, drawing our spiritual nourishment from Himself alone. These simple lessons the Colossians

had been taught ; we have been taught them also. Never should we look outside of Christ for anything. " Christ is *all* " (Col. iii. 11). In measure as we stand firmly where God has placed us, our souls will abound with thanksgiving. For how richly have we been blessed ! What favours have been granted to us ! What sufficiency there is in the Christ with whom we are eternally one !

Kept.

By J. HARROD.

The glorious possibility and privilege of even the babe in Christ to appropriate the truth of 1 Peter i. 5, that we are not only saved but kept, is generally understood, but the sense of security contained in the alternative rendering as given by Paul in 2 Cor. xi. 32, and the corresponding assurance enjoyed, as a natural outcome of the precious truth revealed thereby, are such that perhaps it is worth while looking at these and other instances where the same word is used.

It is in 2 Cor. xi. 32 that we get the full meaning and rendering of the word, where the apostle records the simple methods God used to effect his deliverance.

" The Governor . . . KEPT the city . . . WITH A GARRISON . . . "

There must have been something exceptional in this deliverance, for Paul to select it for special mention. Possibly it was his first actual experience of God's care in face of open hostility after his sojourn in Arabia, and as a new convert the impression of what God wrought, even for one so young in the faith, was never effaced. This is a truth which young believers would do well to take in, as it shows that from the very moment of decision for Christ, all the love of His heart surrounds our goings, and His power is exercised on our behalf.

Escape must have seemed impossible, in face of the thorough methods adopted to prevent his leaving the city. Kept with a garrison, every gate barred and watched, sentries patrolling the walls, and apparently religious self-constituted detectives as-

sisting the authorities, to secure this dangerous fanatic. The whole place encircled by an armed force, martial law prevailing, every power set going to apprehend this servant of the Lord. But, says the Apostle, "I escaped," and yet such were the simple and successful means God used that we stand amazed and wonder. This time not an angel, in whose presence soldiers slept at their posts, at whose touch shackles fell noiselessly to the ground, and before whom doors and gates mysteriously opened; but Christian fellowship! Just that and nothing more. Those who loaned that basket and rope, and whose love risked death in affording shelter and aiding the apostle, little thought that such commonplace evidences of true fellowship would be included in the inspired record for the encouragement and example of the saints all down the ages. Here he is commenting upon his infirmities (weaknesses), spite of which God used equally weak vessels to circumvent the powerful enemy. Personally, I think this was the more likely reason of Paul's special reference to the "basket," surely, humiliation so little affected him in any way that he would scarcely deign to recall it; but, on the other hand, he never lost an opportunity to recount the love shown to him by others. May we, too, learn, in passing, that miracles of deliverance are still possible where simple loving fellowship is practised, and "baskets," "ropes," and "houses" are truly placed at His disposal.

But in the next occurrence a still greater deliverance is recorded. Gal. iii. 23. ". . . But before faith came, we were KEPT (as with a garrison) under the Law . . ."

The military analogy, again referred to, is evidently the Damascus experience of his early converted days. It seems impossible for him to forget it. He was delivered certainly, but the circumstances of impending danger and death were nevertheless terribly real, until God made the way of escape. So here, if for a moment we recall the scene and remember the apostle's apparently hopeless position, do we not realise how infinitely more we were absolutely shut up unto condemnation. Not a loophole of escape, every avenue guarded, not a ray of hope, and powerless of ourselves to get free from the clutches of the law. In fact, kept as with a garrison, as good as apprehended, proved guilty, and awaiting sentence. Could any word more clearly

express our lamentable position, or help us to a better understanding of the deliverance wrought by God when the riches of His grace were revealed in a God-given faith to lay hold of. Well might we sing, "Oh happy day that fixed my choice," when through that faith we, like the chief of sinners, were delivered from so great a death.

In Philippians we have unfolded what should characterise a "heavenly" man in an earthly scene; and in concluding this epistle Paul gives expression to some of the grandest truths for the uplifting and encouragement of believers. As a freeborn citizen of the great Roman Empire he had often seen, and no doubt personally enjoyed, the far-reaching protection of its vast military power, and this doubtless enabled him more fully to enter into the greater and more important fact of his, and our, heavenly citizenship. There was a limit to the sphere of the former, but no bounds could be placed on the latter. Not a spot in the whole Universe was beyond the influence of that "seat of government," and therefore how safeguarded all the interests of the child of God, and how dignified should be the demeanour accordingly. How wonderfully this fact impressed his soul, is seen in his conclusion as he shows God's unfailing resources on behalf of His people in this scene. It is clear, the all-absorbing interest in that celestial sphere was not from a selfish standpoint of personal gain, by his exulting declaration ". . . from whence we look for the Saviour . . ." Is not this the secret of his enlarged heart? How the fulness of it all seems to burst forth like a flood long pent up, in the endearing terms used of those who were his "trophyies." The joy of the Lord's coming, the joy of being changed into His likeness, and of seeing others share with himself the unspeakable glory, all culminate in that injunction twice repeated "Rejoice, and again . . . rejoice . . ."

Then from the heights to which faith had raised him he returns again to the practical side, to the conditions preceding the thought under consideration, the possibilities of heaven below. "Be careful for nothing, prayerful about everything, and thankful for anything," and

"The peace of God . . . shall KEEP (AS WITH A GARRISON) your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus."

What a heavenly calm permeates the life thus encircled by the peace of God, Who knows the end from the beginning. Kept as with a garrison, therefore every approach of the enemy is detected by a vigilance that never fails, and defeated by a power that is ever triumphant. Not a weak spot in this defence, it is impenetrable from without, while from within all is likewise assured. The heart's affection is preserved from wandering, and the mind (will) also is kept in harmony through that blessed One, so that our love is ever maintained true, and our wills ever subject, without the shadow of a doubt or question. The life will thus be characteristic of the truth contained in the epistle—Sin not mentioned, the Flesh only once, and that to condemn it, and a walk, the keynote of which is "joy and rejoicing."

In 1 Peter i. 5, to which reference has already been made, the Apostle introduces the same word, "KEPT (AS WITH A GARRISON)," and the same note of happiness, as he draws attention to the eternal verities connected with the certainty of their entering upon the inheritance, towards which they were journeying. As "strangers scattered," knowing something of the difficulties and dangers by which the roads of that period were beset, they too would the more readily appreciate the allusion to being kept as with a garrison by the power of God. Again, as Paul in the epistle to the Philippians, he takes the same line to encourage those to whom he is writing; their heavenly inheritance, their safety by the way, the appearing Lord, all of which truths cause them, in spite of their many trials, to greatly rejoice, consequently, in the same manner they are brought to see how, as a heavenly people, their interests too are being safeguarded while travelling thither through an earthly scene.

Perhaps, in closing, a word of warning is needed, and we do well to take heed to the list of experiences through which Paul passed. A brief consideration of the earlier verses of 2 Cor. xi. will correct any wrong impression that being "Kept" means freedom from loss, suffering or sorrow. Being kept does not necessarily imply that we shall be kept *out* of that from which we naturally shrink, but this we do know, that we shall be kept *in* any and every experience into which the Lord may be pleased to lead us, and further,

KEPT AS WITH A GARRISON.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 4.

APRIL, 1918

Price 1d

Professor David Smith and Prophecy.

There is just now, as many of our readers will be aware, an increased public interest in the truth of the Coming of Christ. In November last appeared a manifesto calling attention to the present crisis as pointing towards the close of the Times of the Gentiles, and bearing the signature of well known names. It asserted that the Revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment, and that the completed Church will be translated to be for ever with Him. It also referred to the restoration of Israel and to the reign of Christ.

This declaration has called forth a very strong protest from other religious leaders, which has been published in the public press. Prof. David Smith, D.D., has also sided with the opposition, and given expression to his thoughts on what he terms "prophecy-mongering" in the columns of *The British Weekly*. Taken together they constitute a distinct challenge to all who hold the views set forth in the foregoing manifesto. Such views are declared to be positively dangerous, and to be deprecated and discouraged in every way, and more particularly at the present time. If this is so, then all that we have been saying in these columns for months past is, to say the least of it, not only fanciful, and contrary to sound scholarship, but positively baneful.

We accept the challenge. And we propose to bring Prof. David Smith's remarks to the test of Scripture. Someone is writing to him on the measurements of the Great Pyramid, and how they coincide with the prophetic Scriptures in fixing the present days as the end of this dispensation. With this particular aspect of the subject we do not concern ourselves, but when Dr Smith, quoting the words, "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," makes this to mean that "our Lord declared that the course of history was hidden from Him in the days of His flesh," we altogether dissent. *The course of history* hidden from Him! Has

Prof. Smith altogether forgotten Matt. xxiv. ? where in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" our Lord gives a most graphic sketch of future history. Consider some of the statements contained in the answer. "Many *shall come* in My Name;" "Nation shall rise against nation;" "Deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you." "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then shall the end come.*" He refers to the "abomination of desolation," to "the great tribulation," and to His own coming, with its attendant circumstances, and speaks of the state of the world when He appears. Is not all this the course of history? Moreover, our Lord uses these words, "*Behold, I have told you before*" (v. 25). If the course of history was hidden from Him, how could He tell beforehand what would happen? much less give an outline of particular events down to the close of history! Clearly, Dr Smith forgot all this, or he would never have written what he did.

Take one more example. Was Jerusalem compassed with armies, when our Lord spoke, as recorded in Luke xxi. ? When He also declared "there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people," was that a present fact or future history? And how about the contents of v. 24? "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Here is a prediction which condenses in a few words the entire history of 2000 years. Part has already become history, and part still remains to be fulfilled.

The course of history hidden from Him! If Dr Smith can make a statement at the very outset so evidently wide of the mark, is he to be trusted on other points? He proceeds to build a great deal upon this entirely gratuitous assumption. If our Lord did not know the course of history, "it is unreasonable," he writes, "to impute a large prescience to His prophets and apostles; and this prejudices every pretence to discover a programme of futurity in their writings." But the data from which this conclusion is drawn is entirely erroneous. Our Lord did foretell history, as we have seen. Moreover, is it legitimate exegesis to select an admittedly difficult text—though capable, we think,

of explanation—and deduce from it conclusions of the most drastic and far reaching nature? From an isolated remark, he assumes that our Lord was ignorant of future events (though other statements of His prove that He was not)—therefore, His apostles must have been ignorant also!

“The prophets,” we are informed, “were preachers to their own generation, calling men to duty and faith in face of actual or imminent crises. They never predict far remote events.” What is the actual fact?

Let us begin with Moses. Has Prof. Smith forgotten that both Leviticus and Deuteronomy contain predictions which are being fulfilled to-day? Let him read again Lev. xxvi. 32, 34, 44-9, and Deut. xxviii. 37, and xxix. 27. There is also the prophecy of Balaam, referring to remote events “in the latter days”—see Num. xxiv. 14-24.

Moreover, let us ask Dr Smith a very simple question. Do not “shall” and “will” speak of futurity? As far back as Gen. xii., we find God saying to Abraham, “I *will* make of thee a great nation.” And again, “And in thee *shall* all the families of the earth be blessed.” And let him note how many times “shall” occurs in Matt. xxiv., a passage to which reference has already been made.

Let us come to Isaiah. Here we could multiply passages which describe the future blessing of Israel. It is impossible to suppose that the condition of things depicted has ever been realised yet. These predictions must, therefore, refer to the future. In other words, Isaiah did “predict far remote events.” If these predictions are never to be realised, if they are merely so much rhetoric, then the Bible has no claim to be the Word of God, and we unhesitatingly affirm that of all books that were ever penned it is the most cruel and disappointing. We have only space to give chapter and verse of some of the passages where a future condition of things is clearly foretold. (Ch. ii. 1-5; ix. 7; xi. 1-13; xxv. 6-8; xl. 1-5; liii. 1-12; lx.; lxi. 1-2; lxii.)

Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant to be made with Israel and Judah. That had no application at the moment of writing. The remnant of the nation were about to be carried away captive, and when brought back they were still under the old covenant. No such covenant as is described has ever been realised by the

nation of Israel. Yet it has been on record as part of the divine plan for this very people for over two thousand years! Yet Dr Smith says the prophets “*never* predict far remote events.”

But although he uses the word “*never*,” he has to admit, further on, that two events have been predicted. “One is the Advent of the Messiah . . . and the other is the Christian hope of the Second Advent.” In admitting so much it seems to us Prof. Smith gives away his case. For not only was the coming of the Messiah predicted, but His very birthplace was predicted (Micah v. 2). His sufferings were predicted (Isa. liii.); His entry into Jerusalem (Zech. ix. 9); His rejection, yea His very cry on the cross (Ps. xxii.); and His future glory are predicted. If all these details are foretold, what does Dr Smith mean by saying the prophets “*never* predict far remote events?”? Are not these *events* which we have just mentioned? Were they not remote? And we would ask this question: If minute details—such as the riding into Jerusalem on an ass’s colt—could be predicted hundreds of years before, why should it be considered impossible to predict details as to Christ’s Second Coming? Is it any more difficult to give details of the Second Advent than of the First Advent? Surely it is a matter of mere common sense, as well as faith, that if we find certain predictions have been fulfilled—and no one can dispute it—we may expect other predictions made by the very same writer will equally be fulfilled. That is to say, if I believe Micah v. 2, why should I not believe Micah iv. 1-4; which foretells the future glory of Israel, the blessing of all nations, the end of war, and declares “*the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it?*”

“Beyond this,” says Dr Smith, i.e., beyond the bare fact of Christ’s first and second advents—“every attempt to read the future is both impious and mischievous.” But what are Micah iv. 1-4, along with Isaiah ii. 1-5, xi. 1-9, xxv. 6-8, and also Matt. xxiv., and Luke xxi., as well as a multitude of other passages, but the unveiling of the future? Micah iv. 1-4, actually speaks of “the last days,” and still remains to be fulfilled though predicted more than 2000 years ago.

Dr Smith then proceeds to add a very solemn warning. “The truth is,” he declares, “that prophecy-mongering is morally and intellectually ruinous. It issues in madness; and anyone who is

disposed to question this should read that tragical biography, Mrs Oliphant's Life of Edward Irving." Prophecy-mongering remember, is believing that the prophets did predict far remote events. So according to this, the prophets themselves were verging on madness, and were morally and intellectually ruined. For surely it is as bad to predict events as to believe they have been predicted. That there have been those who have gone beyond Scripture, and drawn upon their own fancy as to dates, etc., no one will deny, but it is unreasonable to make everybody who believes in prophecy and in the Millennium answerable for the vagaries of such people.

Dr Smith asserts that "they (the prophets) never predict far remote events." We hold him to this. If we believe the opposite to be true he calls it "prophecy-mongering," and declares it to be "morally and intellectually ruinous." And that "it issues in madness." Such words from the pen of one who is regarded by some as a leader and teacher in the Church would be bad enough at any time, but to be uttered just now when God is calling the attention of His people to the importance of the Prophetic Word, deserves the most emphatic denial.

They are absolutely untrue, from every point of view. The prophets were men of God, holy men, men who received and recorded communications from the mouth of the Lord, and they prophesied of "far remote events." No less an authority than an apostle exhorts us to *take heed* to "the sure word of prophecy" (or, "the word of prophecy made more sure"), because it is as a light that shineth in a dark place,* and because the prophecy came not by the will of man, "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And it is a fact, though Dr Smith may be ignorant of it, that some of the most eminent men in the Church during the past hundred years—eminent alike for their learning and spirituality, as well as soberness—have been students of prophecy, and held firmly, and to much profit, the views he so strongly denounces.

"At a time like this," he says, "every lover of his fellows and his nation will resolutely refrain from speculation, and leave the future to God in faith and love." From *speculation* we hope

*But in what real sense could prophecy be a light to us if it dealt only with the age in which the prophet lived?

indeed everybody will refrain. And if Dr Smith's animadversions had been merely against this, whatever form it may take, we should have said nothing. But when he affirms that our Lord declared that the course of history was hidden from Him in the days of His flesh, and that being so, His Apostles and Prophets could not have foretold history, and asserts that the O.T. Prophets never predict "far remote events," he himself is indulging in speculation, and denying the revealed truth of God. If Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi. are not a forecast of history, then we do not know what could be. And the same may be said of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (chapter ii. of his prophecy), and of the seventy weeks of chapter ix.

Here we should be content to leave the matter had not the same writer in a subsequent article deemed it expedient to attack the Apostle Paul's teaching on the Second Advent. He pictures all sorts of evils as arising out of such teaching, and then adds, "The true remedy lay in retracting the affirmation of an immediate return, *but this error was rooted in his mind*, and so he introduced an idea of Jewish theology, etc., etc. Thus the Second Advent was imminent, but not immediate. It was a *desperate theory*, betraying the apostle's *bewilderment*, and it is significant that he soon abandoned it; and never mentioned it again. Indeed he says very little in his later epistles about the Second Advent, and *we should follow his example.*" (Italics ours.)

Prof. D. Smith is a lecturer at the Presbyterian Theological College, Londonderry, but we think even this position scarcely qualifies him, or entitles him, to refer to the great Apostle of the Gentiles as he does—one who was a "chosen vessel" of Christ, to whom it was given to "complete the Word of God," and whose inspired writings occupy a foremost place in, and fill a considerable part of, the New Testament. To speak of such an one as being "embarrassed," to suggest that he should have *retracted*, that he had an "error rooted in his mind," and to describe his subsequent pronouncements as "a *desperate theory*," betraying "*bewilderment*," is not only to insult one of the most distinguished servants of God that ever walked the earth, but seriously detracts from the authority of the New Testament. Let us not forget that the Apostle had been converted some twenty years, and during the greater part of that time had been serving Christ,

before ever he reached Thessalonica, and if he was capable of making such a glaring mistake in regard to a doctrine like the Second Advent, there is no reason why mistakes should not have been made about other doctrines.

In answer to Prof. Smith's strictures let it be said, first, that if there is any force or truth in his charges they would equally lie against our Lord Himself. He spoke to those who heard Him, as if His coming might take place in their lifetime, and they were to expect His return. The Second Advent was to have its bearing upon their practical conduct and outlook. They were to be "like unto men that wait for their Lord."

Secondly, the Apostle Paul never went beyond this, and we believe Prof Smith has misconceived his teaching. Christ did not say that He would *certainly come* during the lifetime of the existing generation,* nor did His servant. The words in which the Apostle deliberately formulated his doctrine are these: "And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." He never went beyond this. He never ventured to predict any day or year, or even to affirm that our Lord would certainly come in his lifetime or theirs. In a further unfolding of the doctrine in 1 Thess. iv., he speaks of those who would be alive when the Lord returned, and being alive himself, he appropriately classes himself amongst the living.

But he did not go so far as to assert he would be alive. In spite of Dr Weymouth's footnote to this passage, the words "we" and "you" do not imply that our Lord *would* come, but only that He *might* come in the lifetime of those he addressed. The apostle had, therefore, nothing to retract. He had no "error" deeply rooted in his mind, there was no "desperate theory," and he was not in the least "bewildered." And, moreover, in 1 Thess. iv., he is speaking of Christ coming for His own. In 2 Thess. ii., it is to the world.

Thirdly, the simple truth is that the Lord's return was always to be a *present* expectation. The apostle never made it more than that. And our Lord solemnly tells us it is the evil servant who postpones the thought of His return, and says, "My Lord *delayeth* His coming."

*We use the word "generation" here in its limited sense.

We would ask this question : If the Lord's coming again was not to be the expectation of *every* generation of Christians from earliest days, at what precise moment was it to be so? That it was to be expected and waited for by some is evident, from our Lord's oft repeated statements, and those of His apostles. To what generation do the exhortations " Take heed to yourselves ;" " Watch ye, therefore, and pray always ;" " Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord "—apply? Is there any direction in the Bible as to a given date far on in the history of the Church, when believers were to begin to have anticipations of the return of their Master, and begin to take heed to such warnings? Not a word. Our Lord was addressing His own generation, and every succeeding generation has been under an equal obligation to give heed to His exhortation.

What authority has Prof. David Smith for saying " the apostle soon abandoned it." He never held or taught what the Professor seems to suppose he did. And what he did hold and teach remained with him until the end. And in almost the last, if not the last, words he ever wrote, he twice refers to the subject : 2 Tim. iv. 1 and 8. The same truth is also very distinctly referred to in his epistle to Titus. So the suggestion that it almost dropped out of the apostle's teaching is equally misleading. He did not need to be continually enlarging upon it, but in Colossians, in addition to the foregoing passages, it is referred to, and these are amongst his latest writings.

We would earnestly ask Dr Smith to review his position. We cannot believe that he would willingly mislead those committed to his care, or prejudice their minds upon such important matters as prophecy and the Second Advent. As it is, his remarks misrepresent both Scripture and the Apostle Paul, and he makes the Word of God of none effect by his tradition.

" The doctrine of election shuts nobody out, though it shuts a great many in."

" It is a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinions, that in the language of the New Testament, the same officer is called indifferently bishop, or elder, or presbyter."

Notes: Biblical and General.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.—There seems much difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of this parable, and as to whom it applies. The other day, in a public address, a Church of England dignitary drew a distinction between the wise and foolish virgins, but only to the extent of bringing in the foolish a little later than the others. Both, according to his account, were alike amongst the saved. The foolish might be left behind at first, and have to go through the *tribulation*, but would ultimately find their place in heaven as part of the Church along with the rest. He grounded this assumption mainly upon the fact that *all* are said to be *virgins*. To build so important a doctrine upon so precarious a basis as a term of this kind seems to us extremely dangerous. He might as reasonably argue that wherever the term *servant* is used in the New Testament, it necessarily means that the man himself is saved. Some indeed do reason thus. If so, then Judas was a saved soul. Scripture does not attach any such view either to “virgin” or “servant.”

There is one fact in the narrative which seems to us to exclude all thought of the foolish virgins being saved. They return to find the door shut. How significant are the words at the end of v. 10, “*And the door was shut.*” Does the Lord shut the door upon any of His own, however ignorant or feeble they may be? But there is more than this. In answer to their cry, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” there came the solemn reply, “*Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.*” Again, we ask, Would the Lord ever speak thus to any of His own sheep, or any true member of His body? It is inconceivable. And, indeed, He expressly states the contrary. “I know My sheep,” He says, and again, “He calleth His own sheep by name.” How could He ever say to such, “I know you not?”

There are some who think that the passage warrants the belief that when our Lord comes only a special selection from the elect will go to be with Him at first. They are the *watching* ones. How can such a doctrine as this be supposed to find any support from the parable we are considering? And yet some very earnest men do seek to extract such teaching from it. Surely they

cannot have looked very closely into the details of the parable. Where are the *watching* ones? As far as this parable is concerned, there are none. While the Bridegroom tarried they *all* slumbered and slept. There was no difference in this respect. Again, when the midnight cry was raised they all awoke. "Then *all* those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." So that all the virgins are *alike* in these two particulars: they all slept while the Bridegroom tarried; they all arose when His coming was announced. Clearly, then, if it depends upon watching, or even waking, none are prepared to go in. On this ground, either *all* must go in or none. Either all must be shut out or none. As far as this parable goes, not one is watching, unless all are.

But as a matter of fact some do go in and some do not. What is it then constitutes the difference? An inward work of grace. The difference is not one outwardly, but inwardly. Outwardly they were all virgins, and all had lamps. That which distinguished the two was this—"They that were foolish took their lamps, and *took no oil with them*; but the wise *took oil* in their vessels with their lamps." Whether the translation of verse 8 be "*gone* out," or "*going* out," it makes little difference to the lesson of the parable. That lesson is focussed upon the oil. The one class had something which the others lacked, and the distinction was internal and vital, and not outward and circumstantial. There was a work of God's Holy Spirit in the one class which did not exist in the other.

What then is the real meaning of the parable? It would doubtless be a mistake to limit its application. That the very scene has been, and is still being, enacted in Christendom, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Our Lord had been speaking just previously, in view of His coming, of a household, and of a faithful and wise servant made ruler over it; and also of an evil servant. Here, again, is a distinction. The one would be rewarded, the other cut off. He then proceeds to speak of the *household*. For though the term is not mentioned, the household is certainly covered by the ten virgins. And this is what would come to pass—there would be the spurious amongst the real; the mere professor alongside the possessor; those who only gave a lip acknowledgment of the Lord, and those who really gave their hearts to Him. These two classes are in the professing

Church to-day, and have been from very early times. There are those, alas!—and how large a proportion they are!—who are Christians outwardly and in name only. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power. So difficult is it sometimes to tell the difference that it has been put on record, “The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. ii. 19). Those the Lord knows as His constitute the “wise,” the rest are the “foolish” virgins. They are often closely identified now, living in the same house, sitting side by side in the same Church or Chapel, even engaged in similar church work, but here the resemblance ceases, and the eternal separation of the two will ere long take place.

The parable may also have a further application. A similar process may go on amongst God’s earthly people after the translation of the Church. But in either case, the separation of the “wise” from the “foolish” is radical and final.

The British Army in France.—We think our readers will like us to pass on to them certain particulars which have lately been given concerning the work of the Gospel amongst the soldiers in France, and the moral and spiritual condition of the men generally. It was recently our privilege to listen to an authentic statement regarding these matters from one who had only a day or two before returned from that sphere of operations, after a three weeks’ visit to various centres. For a long time two opposite points of view have claimed attention. Some have declared that a positive revival had been, or is now, taking place, while others spoke mainly of the abounding and increasing wickedness. This matter was dealt with by the speaker, who declared that he had never seen any spiritual revival, nor had he ever met anyone who had seen it (and he has twice made extended tours both in the rear and at the front). The only revival, he declared, is a revival of wickedness, and he had seen sights which had made him blush for shame. Drunkenness and vice are appalling, and are made easy, and he spoke solemnly of the hundreds of young men who, after the war, would return to this country with the loosest of morals, and in fact practically de-Christianised. The army behind the lines is thirteen times greater than that occupying the front trenches, and the temptations at the various centres where the men congregate is proving the moral destruction of thousands.

What strikes every man on first landing is the number of different nationalities engaged in the work of transport. Almost every conceivable colour is represented, and so many different tongues are spoken, that the Bible Society has issued the New Testament, or portions of it, in seventy-two different languages for northern France alone.

The speaker dealt with the religious outlook of the men as a whole. Official religion was to a large extent held in contempt, and exercised no real influence over the men. Parade services had to be attended, but they were a mere formality. In response to invitations from chaplains and others, some of the men partook of the communion, but it really meant nothing to them. The majority of them were not the least interested in the externals of religion, or the various rites of the Church, and dealing with the question as to what will happen when the men return, and will the Church be ready to receive them, the speaker declared that the great bulk of the men have no more idea of having any relations with the Church when they come home than they had before the war. *Official* Christianity, so-called, has positively no more interest for them now than then. "But" the speaker added, "I have yet to meet the soldier who has not given a respectful hearing when I have spoken simply of Christ."

He then bore testimony to the great work being done by the Soldiers Christian Association, and although no one could truthfully speak of a revival, yet individuals were being awakened and brought to Christ. There were other associations which catered largely for the *amusement* of the men, and while fully recognising the need of suitable recreation, the speaker gave it as his opinion that there were many of them as tired of amusement as they were of the war.

He was able to give particulars of some very definite cases of conversion. One, of an ex-London policeman who was in the great Cambrai engagement, and was the only one of his company left to come out of it alive. His wife had been a Christian for many years, and had often besought him to turn to the Lord, but he had neglected to do so. When, however, he was spared to come back to the rear after the above battle he resolved that if salvation was to be had he would not rest until it was his. He was present in one of the huts during an address on Faith. The

speaker, to make it simple, explained what faith is in the form of an acrostic:—**F**orsaking **A**ll **I** Take **H**im : and called for a response from the men present as to who would take Christ. Several did so, and as the speaker was leaving he found the ex-policeman waiting for him at the door to tell him that he, too, had decided. “And,” said the preacher, “he gave my hand such a grasp that I am only just getting back the use of it.”

Another, and still more remarkable, case was that of a prize-fighter, one of the ex-champions of the world. “Not a mile from where I am now standing,” said the speaker, “just before the war he won £4000 in a few minutes.” The engagement was for 20 rounds, and he knocked his opponent out in two. His name is known in sporting circles throughout the world. When this man first entered the hut, he was unknown to those in charge, but they recognised that he must be a celebrity, for the other men were soon crowding round him. A complete transformation has taken place in him, and he is now witnessing for Christ, and everybody knows about the change. But so ignorant was he of the gospel that he knew nothing of the Cross, had never heard the parable of the Prodigal Son, and could not mention the name of a single book of the Bible in either the Old or New Testament. Yet, after he received blessing, he came three times a day for Bible instruction, and his New Testament was soon marked in a way different from any the speaker had ever seen before.

The speaker closed by declaring that what was most of all needed to-day was that we should be utterly unashamed of the gospel, and that the greatest field for the gospel to-day is the British Army.

We are asked to publish the following appeal:—

Opportunities for sending out the Word of God in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and English to the soldiers and prisoners, to the Chinese in the Labour Battalion in France, Salonica, etc., are now more pressing than ever.

A great door is NOW open, and we are eager to enter with the Gospel. Our distributors are earnestly asking for parcels of Bible Booklets. We are in need of funds. Will you co-operate with us in this worthy object?

Yours in His Service,

H. MUSGRAVE READE.

Isaiah.

Chapter VII (continued).

Before leaving this part of the prophecy, there are two points that tend strongly to confirm the interpretation that verses 14 and 15 refer alone to Immanuel ; and then the reference in verse 16 is to some other child who is also, it would appear, yet to be born at the time the prophecy was uttered.

First, the address, in the earlier verses is not to Ahaz personally ; but rather to him only as a representative of the " House of David." Thus the mystic promise of the Virgin's Son is to " you," not to " thee ;" and will be fulfilled, not to Ahaz, but to the " House of David " at some indefinite time in the future.

But verse 16 recurs unequivocally to Ahaz personally ; " the land will be desolate, whose two kings *thou* abhorrest " (R.V.), and must be intended for him and no one else. It follows that the " child " of that verse must be some other than the Immanuel of the previous ones.

Next, a word is used for " child " in verse 16 that is never, as far as I am aware, applied to Immanuel. It seems to lack the dignity of " son," and is variously rendered in our Authorised Version " boy," " lad," " young man," " servant." It is the word too that we next meet in chapter viii. 4. where the reference is clearly to the son of the prophet, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, not to Immanuel. I take it that it refers equally to that same child of the prophet here.

After verse 16 the voice of comfort is heard no more ; threat follows and altogether displaces it.

Let us stand for a moment with Ahaz, and remember that his secret heart-confidence is in the help of the Assyrian king : he heard, with complacency, that his enemies' lands are to be laid waste, and he says in his heart that he knows how that devastation shall come about ; then suddenly, the tone changes ; and he is listening to a threat against his own country of such extreme distress that it has no precedent. Do you not hear the unspoken question in the king's heart ? Who shall be the agent of *that* distress ? Like a thunderclap from a clear sky comes the answer in the very last words : *Melek Asshur*, " the king of Assyria," the very man Ahaz was, at that very minute, hiring for his help ! Then the prophet continues :

Jehovah shall hiss for the fly that is swarming
 At the end of the Nile-arms of Egypt's low vales :
 For the bee in the hills of Assyria hiving
 Till they settle on Judah's desolate dales.
 The rock-cleft, the thorn-hedge, the beautiful tree
 All shall resound with the hum of the bee.

Yes, Jehovah has but to hiss toward Egypt, and the flies that swarm in her lowlands by the Nile-arms—expressions as these flies (the accompaniment of filth), are of that internal "*corruption*" of which Egypt speaks—would respond. Then, turning eastward, He gives the same signal ; and the bees, those persistent pursuers that ever " compass about " the object of their animosity (Ps. cxviii. 12), expressions of that *cruelty* and *violence* for which Assyria stands—these shall come and cover the land of Judah.

Verse 20: *Naked* shall Judah be in that day, for, as Ahaz is hiring the king of Assyria, Adonai shall hire him too ; for he lies at the Euphrates, only waiting to be hired and shall use him as a razor to shave away everything that speaks of dignity or self-respect, from head to foot, even including the beard, till Judah is as naked and exposed as Samson after Delilah had done her work. *Poor* indeed shall Judah be in that day, for the sum-total of a man's wealth shall consist in a calf and two sheep (or goats), yet so abundant shall be the pasture afforded by the uncultivated lands, that even these three creatures shall give him all the food he needs, or indeed can get.

Wretched shall Judah be in that day, for in the place of the vineyards having a thousand vines worth a " silverling " (or about twenty-five cents) each, nature, unchecked, covers all with the tokens of the curse ; briers and thorns taking the place of grapes. These briers and thorns afford a jungle for the wild beast, so that none dare enter them unarmed ; and the hills, once so smiling with crops, rejoicing on every side," became only " fertile in its own disgrace," and are clothed with brier and thorns—cattle may tramp through them, but no plough no spade shall cultivate them ; the jungle of briers and thorns defeats the husbandman.

Thus again, like the toll of a funeral-bell, or the refrain of a dirge, sounds out the repeated " in that day," and the prophecy concludes with a three-fold reminder of the primal curse

in the words " thorns and briars." How closely it corresponds in its nakedness, its poverty, its misery, its wretchedness with the church in Laodicea, or of *to-day*.*

I cannot refrain from noting the correspondence between the physical and moral spheres; simply leave the soil alone—give it up to itself; nothing more is necessary; it will quickly witness to the curse resting still upon it. So let parents simply leave their children alone—let them refrain from bringing them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord—it is all that is necessary—a wilderness of moral " thorns and briars " will all too quickly bear their witness to the " fall " of our first parents; so let God simply leave men alone—give them up, as He did the Gentiles (Rom. i. 24-32), and we see the correspondence to the thorns and briars in the abomination that covered them, and alas covers the vast professing body of Christendom to-day (2 Tim. iii. 1-5). May we each learn our absolute dependence on Him for true fruit, and cry, " Leave, oh, leave me not alone," for that were the worst of fates.

*"The description is tautological and pleonastic, heavy and slow in movement to produce the impression of a waste heath, or tedious monotony." (Delitsch.) This shows how much is conveyed to the ear of the Hebrews for whom it was primarily intended, by the very construction of the sentences—which, in itself, pictures the meaning.

(To be continued.)

Mary.

Within the dreary shadow of the tomb,
 The woman stands and weeps. The dews of night
 Are heavy round her feet; the tender light
 Of dawn has waked the garden's faint perfume.
 Unwitting she of earth's or heaven's delight.
 Her soul has stooped to drink of Marah's wave,
 Her heart is breaking o'er an empty grave,
 Her wounded spirit swoons in desolate gloom.

Oh, lonely Watcher, stoop, and look again
 Into that dread abode where angels sit,
 And with their heavenly glory lighten it.
 Look where thy Lord has lain for thee, and then
 Turn,—and the music of His lips shall bless
 To gracious sweetness all thy bitterness.

E. STACY WATSON.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 5.

MAY, 1918.

Price 1d

Two Questions often asked Regarding the Church.

1.—Will the Church pass through the Tribulation?

2.—Is the Church the Bride of Christ?

1. The answer to the first question, Will the Church pass through the Tribulation? depends somewhat upon what is meant by the Church. There are those who do not discriminate, and include in the Church all believers from the beginning of the world. This is a view which receives no support from Scripture. Before the Flood, for instance, there was neither Israel nor the Church existent. From the call of Abraham, God was dealing with an elect *nation*—Israel. From Pentecost He has been building His Church, which will be completed at the coming of the Lord.

Then, again, it may be perfectly true that there will be a false Church pass through the Tribulation. It is quite possible that a *spurious* Church, one Christ has utterly rejected—spued out of His mouth—composed merely of professors, may be in existence when the Great Tribulation takes place. But the *true* Church—that which Christ builds (Matt. xvi.)—that which is “builted together for a habitation of God by the Spirit,” and “groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord,”—that which is the real Body of Christ and composed only of true believers—this Church will NOT pass through the Tribulation, but will be in glory with her Lord when that takes place.

For what is the Great Tribulation? The Great Tribulation is the time of Jacob's trouble. It has nothing to do with the Church, as such, at all. It is referred to in the O.T. where the Church is not in view.

Moreover, when does it take place? After the rapture, not before. It occurs during the period between the rapture and the appearing, when the first and second beasts of Rev. xiii. are on

the scene, and the Jews are back in their own land, and when God is once more dealing with them, and not with His Church.

This is clear from our Lord's reference to it in Matt. xxiv., "For *then* shall be the great tribulation," He declares. "Then"—When? He has just referred to the abomination of desolation—an idol set up in the holy place—the restored temple—spoken of by Daniel the prophet. What has all this to do with the Church? This is at Jerusalem. "Then let those which be in Judea flee into the mountains." "For THEN shall be the great tribulation." All this is circumstantial enough, connecting this unexampled period of suffering with the land of Palestine (though it may not be limited to this), and with Jewish restoration and worship. Correct thoughts as to the Church would remove any difficulty as to the matter.

2. May we think of the Church as the Bride of Christ? There are some who refuse the thought. They declare that Israel is the Bride, and the Church is the Body of Christ. Their difficulty is that Jehovah declares, respecting Israel, "Thy Maker is thy husband," and He speaks of rejoicing over His earthly people as the bridegroom over the bride, and they conclude at once there cannot be two brides.

But such reasoning is altogether beside the mark. Look where it will land us if we follow it out logically! God speaks of Israel as His son. We might with equal reason ask, How can God's son be His Bride? The reason given, therefore, why the Church cannot be the Bride would equally make it impossible for Israel to be the Bride. Son and Bride are quite as incongruous as the thought of two Brides seems to be.

What we have to remember is that all these terms represent some spiritual truth or relationship. And we need to look beyond the *figure* to the spiritual *fact* that is behind it. And we also need to remember that an earthly figure is never an exact counterpart or reflection of the heavenly. Human relationships, like the figures of the Tabernacle, are shadows and not the very image of the things. It is quite irrelevant to apply earthly standards to heavenly things or attempt to make a spiritual truth adapt itself to human conditions. For example, in one verse in Isa. lxii., we are told respecting Zion, "so shall thy *sons* marry

thee," and then in the next breath, "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Here, then, Zion is represented as holding practically the same relationship to different persons. The difficulty disappears when we remember that these are only figures of speech (though representing great and most blessed facts), and that the point for us is to grasp what is behind and beneath the figure.

The same remark applies to the Church. The Church is, in different passages, presented under various figures—house, body, temple, city, and bride. No one figure could convey the whole truth. What we need to grasp is, what is the particular truth each symbol is intended to convey.

We would commend the following considerations to any who have hitherto had difficulties respecting the matter.

1. Statements occur in the New Testament with reference to the Church just as strong as any with reference to Israel in the Old. Paul writing to the Corinthian Church declares, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." If "husband" implies the marriage relationship in the Old Testament, why not in the New?

2. There are statements respecting the Church's relationship to Christ, and His to her, which can only be fully appreciated in the light of the marriage relationship. We have already quoted one. Eph. v. contains others. There we read, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church.*" Now, if Christ has not loved the Church as His Bride, how can His love be an example to husbands? It is quite true, the same passage does state, "So ought men to love their wives *as their own bodies.*" But this is not the highest kind of love. No man would think of saying, "the love I have for my body is the highest love of which we can have any conception." We all know that in human affairs the marriage relationship represents the supreme love. And it is not a little remarkable, as if the apostle had this very reflection in his mind at the time, that he immediately employs the negative, and adds, "no man ever yet *hated* his own flesh." We do not hate our flesh, we care for it, but this never could represent the highest form of love, it needs the relationship of Bride and Bridegroom to convey that, and as a matter of fact it never says anywhere in Scripture Christ loved His Body, the

Church; but in verse 25 of Eph. v., it does say, "Christ loved the Church," and in direct connection with the marriage relationship. And Christ's love becomes a pattern to husbands. How could it be so unless He were all that the idea husband conveys? In the passage we are considering it should be carefully noted; when it is *headship*, we have the body referred to (v. 23), when it is a question of the husbands *care* for his wife it is the body, but when it is a question of *love*, it is the marriage relationship (v. 25).

3. There are not wanting direct statements which apply the term Bride to the Church. "I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband." This cannot be the earthly Jerusalem for that has a temple, this has no temple. And "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it," which is never said of the former. But a more direct testimony still, if possible, is furnished by Rev. xxii. 16-17. In v. 16, Christ presents Himself to the Churches. Who is it responds in v. 17? Can it be any other than those composing these same Churches? And they are spoken of as the Bride. When Jesus presents Himself, it is "the Spirit and the Bride who say, Come." There are three reasons for considering this to be the correct interpretation.

(a) Christ's testimony through John was to the Churches, and it would be an altogether gratuitous and unnecessary violation of every canon of interpretation to suppose that it is Israel, or some other company, that responds. No reason is given for thinking that it is one company in v. 16, and an altogether different company in v. 17.

(b) Christ presents Himself in v. 16 as the Bright, the Morning Star. To whom does He present Himself in this way? To Israel? Never. They will know Him as the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv.). The Morning Star belongs to the present Church period. It is surely then the Church that responds to such a presentation.

(c) But, lastly, it is "the *Spirit* and the Bride say, Come." The Spirit is thus looked at as on earth, and in the closest possible relationship with the Bride. Such a condition of things appertains only to this dispensation. The Spirit is in the Church as He will never be in Israel or any other company. From these

three reasons we conclude then the bride, of v. 17, can only be the Church.

We think it is clear from what has been stated that as far as Scripture teaching is concerned the idea of the Church being the Bride presents no difficulty. If there are difficulties they are only what we ourselves import.

GOD.

By WALTER SCOTT.

The Bible opens with a magnificent declaration of Divine Power. "In the beginning *God* created the heaven and the earth." Omnipotence, supremacy, infinitude, and eternity of being are necessarily involved in such a grand statement. The central, controlling, and distinguishing glory of the universe is God. He is the alone source of all life, of all light, of all purity, and of all blessedness. The highest spiritual attainment is delight *in* God (Rom. v. 11). The most profound Christian blessing consists in being brought *to* God (1 Peter iii. 18). The sum of all knowledge is in God Himself. He is the centre of the universe. Outside of Him, and apart from Him, progress is impossible. His glory and power are the never tiring story of creation (Ps. xix. 1-6; Rom. i. 19-20); while the imperishable Holy Scriptures fully reveal Him in His character, attributes, and being. God in His very being is inscrutable. He dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. vi. 16). The perfections of God are numerous and diversified. A close and reverent study of these would surely lead us out of our littleness, and set us down in the Divine presence great in *His* greatness, and with a character formed after God.

God is a SPIRIT (John iv. 24); THE ONLY GOD (Isa. xlv. 21, 22); SELF-EXISTING (Isa. xliii. 10); INVISIBLE (Col. i. 15); OMNIPOTENT (Jer. xxvii. 4-5); OMNISCIENT (Ps. cxxxix. 1-16); ETERNAL (Gen. xxi. 33); INFINITE (1 Kings viii. 27); IMMORTAL (1 Tim. vi. 16); HOLY (Exod. xv. 11); INCORRUPTIBLE (Rom. i. 23); MERCIFUL (Ps. ciii. 8); RIGHTEOUS (Ps. xi. 7); SOVEREIGN (Rom. ix. 15); GREAT (Jer. xxxii. 18); FAITHFUL (Deut. vii. 9);

GOOD (Mark x. 18); COMPASSIONATE (Lam. iii. 22). For His MAJESTY see Psalm xxix. His GLORY (1 Chron. xvi. 24-29). His POWER (Ps. lxii. 11). His LOVE (1 John iv. 8). His GRACE (1 Peter v. 10). His WISDOM (Rom. xi. 33). His TENDERNESS (James v. 11). His PATIENCE (Rom. xv. 5). His IMMUTABILITY (James i. 17). His TRUTH (Ps. xxxi. 5). His WORD (1 Peter i. 23).

When the subjection of the rebellious part of the universe to Christ, the Son of Man, is an accomplished fact, with the destruction of death, the last enemy, fully assured, then the kingdom in its widest extent will be laid down before God, from whom it was received. The glory of God will then shine forth as it never shone before. No earth born cloud will obscure it. The Son Himself as man will be in eternal subjection to God. As the Eternal Word He ever was, is, and ever will be One in power, glory, and existence with the Father, but as *Man* on earth, as also in eternity, He voluntarily occupies the place of subjection. His humanity will never be laid down—thank God! God then will be all and in all. Eternal glory! Eternal peace! Eternal rest! Eternal happiness! Genesis ii. reflects the shadow—only a shadow however—of Rev. xxi. 3, of that moment of supreme bliss when God shall dwell with men on earth—no thick darkness (1 Kings viii. 12), and curtained enclosure (Exod. xxv. 8) to hide God from men as of old, but the eternal state reveals the grandest picture conceivable—God and man in one dwelling—face to face. “He will dwell with” men, not with Israel as in days past and gone, but with *men*. Hallelujah: It is the triumph of our God, and that wondrous scene knows no setting sun!

God, the Name of the Supreme Being, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, is represented by three terms in the Hebrew: *El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim*. These names in their primary signification mean *power*, *might*, *strength*. The first ten words in the Bible contain a magnificent utterance and witness of Divine Power. *Eloah* (singular) is used about 60 times, and ever in contrast to the “gods many and lords many” of the heathen. It first occurs in Deut. xxxii., “forsook God” (*Eloah*). *Elohim* (plural) occurs about 2700 times. It contains within it the suggestion of the Trinity: see Gen. i. 26. In Genesis i., we have the God-head (*Elohim*) in Creation, Power, and Counsel.

Martha and Mary of Bethany.

Luke x.

By HERBERT R. FRANCIS.

What is the deep meaning and application of the words addressed to Martha—"One thing is needful?" Doubtless, they throw light upon the whole of our Lord's words to them both. David expressed what was the object of his life when he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, *that* will I seek after." It was high-water mark with him spiritually, his longing desire was to live *always* in the presence of the Lord (Psalm xxvii.). Paul's joy in Christ Jesus amidst the toils and dangers of his life is summed up in the same words: "One thing *I do*" (Phil. iii.). It was not salvation that he spoke of, it was not assurance, it was not the hope of the coming of his Lord even. The words sum up his whole soul's desire. Christ was before the eye of his heart, not sometimes, but always—in prison, in dangers of shipwreck, before hard and relentless enemies, learned or ignorant.

Now, was not this "one thing" in the mind of our Lord when He spoke to Martha? Perhaps we might put it thus: Mary was right in being at His feet, and Martha was right in her desire to give the glorious guest the very best. He could not reprove Mary for her place of discipleship, but the being "cumbered" about the provision of the supper troubled His heart of love. Martha needed to know more of the rest of sitting at His feet. We cannot serve Christ until we know how He has served us. His ministry to us is the "one thing needful." And until this is known we are cumbered. It is quite right to serve, going at His command to witness on every opportunity, but it must not be in the "restless will" that is always striving to do some great thing, but because He has first ministered to us. Time must be taken to be still, in order to hear His voice. And we must not be troubled if the testimony for Him seems to be unheeded; "Who can tell what shall prosper, this or that." We must mind we are not troubled about the "much serving;" in fact, when the despairing or anxious mood comes, then would be the time to be like Mary and sit at His feet, and instead of using our own words learn of Him. This will be a cure for a troubled heart. How

beautifully was this exemplified in the character of our Lord. He rested when others would have fainted. With Him, truly, "one thing" was "needful," the glory of His Father, so that in every act of life He could say, "I do always those things that please Him." But my reader may say, "Oh, but how can you set such a standard before a weak believer?" But we may make it our "aim," as Paul says. Did you ever read Ecclesiastes iii.? Mark what Solomon says, "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh." A one-sided Christian, or one who lays great stress on one truth sometimes puts other truths out of proportion. To be always laughing would be very much out of place for a Christian, just as much out of place would it be that a Christian should never smile. There is thus a time for everything. "*One thing is needful.*" All belongs to Christ, and all things are ours in Him. We have one little life and we have to spend it in glorifying Him. That which does not directly, or indirectly, do this will doubtless bring reproof in the day of account. Whether we eat or drink let us do all to the glory of God, using each talent which He has given us. "One thing is needful" sums up our Christian life. "One thing," says David; "One thing," says Paul; "One thing," says the Lord and Master of All. Service is secondary to true communion, indeed that flower which our Lord loves to see springs from the root of fellowship. How easy it is to obey when we are in fellowship. He may send us over mountains, or vales, or through the dark, or perhaps He may tell us not to "go" at all, but to sit still and wait; then it is part of the "*one thing.*" Our union with Christ is all of grace, our response to that grace should be whole-hearted service. We are soldiers, to obey; servants, to work and witness; sons and daughters in His family, seeking to please Him who has called us.

In prayer we may always pray to occupy both places—sitting at His feet and serving.

"Lower, ever lower
 Keep me at Thy feet,
 Poor and helpless only,
 In Thyself complete.
 Still Thy blood my title,
 And Thy grace my plea,
 Even in the glory
 Hiding, Lord, in Thee.

Nearer by the darkness,
Nearer in the light,
Pressing ever closer
In the thicker fight.
Never, never heeding,
If Thy face I see,
Whether cloud or sunshine
Brings me nearer Thee."

"Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. If a member of Christ's body went from Ephesus to Corinth, he would have been equally and necessarily also member of Christ's body in this latter assembly. Christians are not members of a church, but of Christ. The eye, the ear, the foot, or any other member which was at Corinth was equally such at Ephesus. In the Word we do not find the idea of members of a church, but of Christ . . . At the beginning it was clearly manifested, and in every city this unity was evident to all the world. All Christians walked everywhere as one church. He who was a member of Christ in one locality was so also in another, and he who had a letter of recommendation was received everywhere, because there existed but one society."

"The Lord's prayer, given at the request of the disciples . . . was evidently not intended to be used as an exact, and far less as an exclusive, form. It is not given in the same words by any two of the evangelists. As it was given before the New Testament Church was set up, so it is strictly adapted to the old rather than to the new economy. It contains no clause asking for blessing in the name of Christ, which the Saviour afterwards solemnly enjoined as indispensable. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, when the New Testament Church was set up, we read nothing more in the inspired history of this form. And it was not till several centuries after the apostolic age that we find this prayer statedly introduced into public worship. Accordingly it is remarkable, that Augustine in the 4th century expresses the decisive opinion that Christ intended this prayer as a model rather than a form; that He did not mean to teach His disciples what words they should use in prayer, but what things they should pray for."

Isaiah.

Chapter VIII.

The opening words, "Moreover the Lord said," mark a new subsection of the prophecy, which we may say began with the child Shear-Jashub in chap. vii., ascends to Immanuel; descends again to Maher-shalal, and finally ends and rests with the Child "Wonderful" in chapter ix. 7.

And now, Ahaz is no longer seen—Isaiah is addressed directly. He is to take a large tablet, such as can be hung up prominently for all to see; and he is to write upon it with a man's "pen"*: that is, in such plain letters that the most humble of mankind may be able to see and read it, one strange compound word, surely never before seen "Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

Then, by divine direction, he selects two witnesses—the necessary number for a competent testimony—whose names are given us, and therefore we may be quite sure are significant: *Uriah* meaning "Jehovah is my light," and *Zechariah* "Jehovah remembers," son of *Jeberichiah*, meaning "Jehovah will bless." Thus the one witness says by his name: "Jehovah is my *light*," and the other Jehovah's purpose is to *bless*, and the "offspring" of that purpose is that he will *never forget* His people. Both Light and Love may thus be said to witness to the genuineness of the writing as to Maher-shalal, as indeed they do to *all* He writes. Are not our Scriptures similarly confirmed?

Thus when the Assyrian armies are devastating Syria and Ephraim, the two witnesses shall testify that the prophet's tablet, which has been exposed for about twenty months, bearing that one strange enigmatical word, has meant: first, that a son should be born to him, who should bear this name that none would think of giving to any child; secondly, *that* name foretells what they see taking place before their eyes; and thirdly, all this should occur while the child was still an infant, unable to speak the simplest words: "Abbi" or "Immi;" thus it is not the military prowess or statesmanship of Ahaz that has brought this devastation on their enemies, but the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of Jehovah.

*Literally—the style of a frail mortal man; **Enosh**.

All is enigmatical and parabolic; and whilst Maher-shalal can by no means be absolutely equivalent to Immanuel, yet one can discern a link between them. Immanuel is "*God with us*;" Maher-shalal-hash-baz is "Hasten booty, speed prey;" that is, "*God against those against us*;" for God evidences Himself for Israel by the destruction of their enemies, as in chap. lxiii. 4, "the day of vengeance corresponds in its threatening with Maher-shalal; while "the year of my redeemed" as surely corresponds with Immanuel.

Verses 5 to 8 form another step in the progress of this wonderful prophecy. It is a continuation of Jehovah's word to the prophet :

Forasmuch as this people refuseth Shiloah,
Whose waters go rippling so softly along;*
Jehovah brings on them the flood of the river,
Its torrent of waters many and strong;
(Even Assyria, its king, and its glory)
O'errising its channels—o'erflooding its banks,
Till passing through Judah, it is still overflowing,
Till a man be submerged even up to his neck.
As a bird on its wings, so shall he hover,
Filling the breadth of Thy land [even Thine].

IMMANUEL.

Here the waters of Shiloah (meaning "sent") are clearly in antithesis to the flood of the river (which can be none other than the Euphrates); the one so gentle, and thus so sweetly picturing *grace*; the other so threatening, so clearly picturing *judgment*; and since this latter is interpreted for us as representing the power that comes from the river—the Assyrian, with all his military pomp and power—the other must, in some way, be identified with the House of David.

For marvellous is the very topography of that "pleasant land;" its rivers, its brooks, its springs, its mountains, its vales all silently, but eloquently preach eternal verities. Here there are indeed

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

*The word carries with it the idea of a gentle sound, murmuring as waters, or sighing as winds. Compare "Flow gently, sweet Afton."

Listen to Shiloah softly flowing between Mounts Zion and Moriah; if you are listening with the *inward* ear, you will hear a voice sweeter than its own rippling music; for Zion, ever tells of grace as in contrast with Sinai which we all know stands for *law* (Heb. xii. 18 and 22). Moriah tells the same sweet story, for it was here that the sword of judgment was stayed in David's day (2 Sam. xxiv.); it was here that God provided Himself a Lamb (Gen. xxii.); and it was on Moriah that the temple was built, where those sacrifices, so ineffective in themselves, still pointed forward to that same Lamb of God. Now *Shiloah flows at the base of both these mountains*. Could anything speak more clearly of Christ—the *Sent One* of the Father; and so "Shiloah"—being *at the base* of all God's goodness, grace, and mercy? Oh, most surely He is.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

Eureka!

"Revival means a fresh discovery of Christ."

—See "Revival" by C. Cyril B. Bardsley, M.A.

It was not that His people knew Him not—
No! to their faith long since He was revealed:

 But strange forgetfulness of Him
 Had drawn the veil

Between the glory of His face and them,
 Since they forgot

Their privilege, He had Himself concealed.

 The joys grow dim:

 Then world and sin prevail:

Witness no more the tide of ill can stem.

But, in His pity, He perceives her plight

 And to His Church returns:

 She rediscovers Christ;

Again the Lord and loving soul keep tryst!

 The blight

Of His long absence gone, once more she burns

 With rapturous love,

 Akin to theirs above:

Revival breathes within the soul and life;

While witness with God's saving grace is rife.

WILLIAM OLNEY.

Prayer.

“Its Meaning, Power, and Reality; Its Value to the Individual, the Church and State.”

Prayer is the connecting link between the soul and God. It implies a heartfelt want, a yearning for help, a longing for sympathy. It engenders confidence, it signifies dependence on the unseen One. It brings the power of God from heaven to earth. By it we obtain help.

When our prayers are according to God's will they are answered. “He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he shall see His face with joy” (Job. xxxiii. 26). *True prayer* brings gladness to the heart, and gives to faith a vision of God. Prayer is supplication, not giving God information, but a real expression of our wants. It should be accompanied with thanksgiving for past mercies.

Our prayers must be in the Spirit, and with the understanding—a real transaction—and very definite also.

We must be careful “to *seek* first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” If we do this, we are assured that “all things shall be added unto us.”

Prayer includes confession—confession of sin, failure and shortcoming, “of omission, as well as commission,” should be mentioned. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Prayer should also include adoration. Let us express our deep sense of God's infinite power, wisdom, goodness, perfection and love, also let us own our constant dependence upon Him, by whom the worlds were created and maintained, and from Whom we receive all the necessities of life. For He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

After becoming God's children, it is our blessed privilege to intercede for others; for we are made kings and priests to our God. We can offer effectual prayers for friends, enemies, and for all men, including governors and kings.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

The effect of a constant habit of prayer is that the heart and mind are garrisoned against all influences of sin and Satan. Nothing can move us, not even tribulation, persecution, famine, or distress of any kind, for God gives us His own peace and can make us "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37). Thus fortified we can face anything in life or death. Prayer to be effective must be coupled with a real living faith, and then it will accomplish wonders. (See Heb. xi.) We have a foundation to work on, the exceeding great and precious promises, which are always, "Yea and amen in Christ Jesus," and this gives us holy confidence to draw near unto the throne of Grace, that we might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. If our prayers are in the Spirit, and we ask according to His will, we shall surely obtain our requests in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus the power of prayer will be demonstrated.

THE REALITY OF PRAYER.

The effect of prayer is realised when we obtain the desired petitions. Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves, and He prayed for rain to be withheld and given. His supplications were answered. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." *Real prayers* are connected with reality in heart and life. God loves reality, and hates hypocrisy. The unreal prayer of a hypocrite becomes sin (Psalm cix. 7; Matt. vi. 5). Instances of the reality of prayer are seen in Abraham, the patriarchs, and the prophets, and nearer our own times, in Whitefield, Fletcher, the Wesleys, and hosts of others. The reality of prayer is denoted by its importunity.

Imitate the widow in the gospel, who would not be refused. Imitate Moses. When God was about to cut off Israel, he pleaded his oath and his promise, again and again, even after God said, Let me alone. If you wish your prayers to be real and effective, *plead* the mercy and love of God. *Plead* the yea and amen promises of God. *Plead* the death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ.

Enter your closet and bewail the sins of the nation before the Lord. Link yourself with them, and make them your cause.

Follow the example of Daniel and others. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Oh! for a faith to unlock this door, to seek aright, to knock aright.

The value of Prayer to the individual is seen in its glorious results. It says in effect, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Much benefit accrues to us through individual wrestling with God. Take Jacob for instance. He got the blessing of close contact with God. Through the prayer of faith God is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all "we ask or think." Many revivals of religion are to be traced to this kind of prayer. We often get more value than we bargained for. Pray always, without ceasing. David prayed seven times a day (Ps. cxix. 164). The blessed Saviour was a man of prayer. He often retired alone to pray in secret. What an example! "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet." *The man of prayer is a man of power*, as evidenced in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Prayer brings us "into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son" (1 John i. 3). Prayer and the work of God go together. God is working while you are praying. What a privilege to be a co-worker with God, to be a real priest of God. This is the honour that every Christian can claim :

"I want to learn the value of one soul,
One soul that's saved, one soul for ever lost,
By pondering well its everlasting goal,
And more than all, what Thee its ransom cost."

The value of the corporate prayers of the Church has often been manifested to the world, from the earliest period to the present day. Take Pentecost, for instance (Acts i. 17; ii. 1-4). Great outpourings of blessing have resulted in answer to the united prayers of the Church. To get the blessing—continuing, persevering, and believing, prayers must be offered at the Throne of Grace, with one accord. The neglect of this bounden duty has resulted in bringing the Christian Church into disrepute. We ought to pray as a response to the definite call of God to repent of our many serious sins as a Church and nation, and *because* it will give us a true spirit and the true temper wherewith to meet the various social, political, industrial, and religious problems of the day. We ought to use the present time in preparing our-

selves by prayer and serious thought for the coming of our Lord, and all the great changes that may intervene before that takes place.

PRAYERS IN RELATION TO STATES.

We get a great many instances in the Holy Scriptures where states or kingdoms have really benefited through the united prayers of God's people. Also we see how they have suffered, when this much needed devotional exercise has been neglected. Take the Jewish nation, for instance. There never was such a time of blessing, as that which occurred in Solomon's days, when the Sovereign and priests and people, bowed before the Almighty in true prayer (2 Chron. vi. 12). Solomon asked for wisdom to guide the affairs of state (2 Chron. x. 11), and received a distinct blessing. The Lord heard and answered his petitions (2 Chron. vii. 12). Our own native land has been richly blessed in bygone days through adhering to the Bible, and to the teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Alas! as a nation we have greatly degenerated. There never was a time in our history, when we needed so much to be thoroughly humbled before God in prayer. God is punishing the nations of Europe for their departure from His Word; whole empires being involved in the greatest and most terrible war the world has ever seen.

God is not mocked, whatsoever we sow, that we shall reap. The Lord's Day has been desecrated. The Bible has been neglected. There has been an excessive love of pleasure, and a selfish extravagance. We are losing our Protestant character by worldliness and tampering with the Church of Rome. Truly we are warned by history that *national sins* are visited by *national judgments*. We ought to humble ourselves before God. "If my people . . . shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, *then* will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. vii. 14). If we don't do this, *how* can we expect to be delivered? Hear what God says:—"I will go and return unto my place TILL they *acknowledge* their offence and seek my face" (Hosea v. 15). "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Pro. xiv. 34).

J. G.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 6.

JUNE, 1918.

Price 1d

The Call of the Hour.

By the EDITOR.

(Written, April 15-17, 1918.)

No one, surely, who is of age to appreciate the situation, will ever forget Saturday, April 13. The German advance, and still further threatened advance beyond Armentieres, along with Sir Douglas Haig's address to his troops telling them to hold every position to the last man, that they were fighting with their backs against the wall, showed that a tremendous crisis had been reached. An evening paper had for its chief headline, "The gravest hour of the war," and summed up the situation in the words, "It is, in short, the critical hour."

At such an hour—the like of which has hardly been in the world's history—it is surely a time to look beneath the surface and ask ourselves some plain and pointed questions. If ever any hour brought men face to face with realities, this one has. Let us, with the veneer stripped off, and all make-believe and deception gone, ask, What does it all mean? For surely this war, so widespread, so terrible in its course, and fearful in its consequences, has a message for all men.

As one reads the account of the awful fighting, continued day and night—men so wearied as almost to be fighting in their sleep—as one contemplates the sacrifice of life and thinks of the maimed and wounded, and tries to imagine the blood-red fields of France and Flanders, with the blazing homesteads and houses, and the German hordes seeking, at no matter what cost to themselves, to break down all resistance, demolish the British armies, and reach the coast—surely it will occur to everyone who attempts this that the most sane thing to do—indeed the only thing—is to seek some adequate explanation of it all.

To say that Germany was bent on war; that she had made her preparations for the conquest of Europe; and to attribute

everything to her inordinate ambition, and lust for power, is, after all, to penetrate only a very little beneath the surface. It is like a man with violent fever raging within him, attributing his ill-health to the spots on his face. The real reason of the war is not some malady peculiar to Germany, but is one common alike to all mankind. One thing alone can account for the war, for one thing alone has produced it—all is summed up in the one word—*sin*. And this not one man's sin, but every man's.

This stupendous hour is a call to humanity to face the fact of sin. Surely we must feel of what little use it is to hide the real evil from our eyes; and if only the war brings us to see facts as they really are, even this calamity, colossal as it is, will, after all, prove a blessing in disguise. Do we not already perceive how morally worthless was our boasted civilisation, and how ineffectual our legislation and Acts of Parliament? These have proved only the thinnest of veneer. Underneath, all was rotten and all was wrong. But we must go deeper, if we are to touch the very root of the matter, however painful may be the process, and each man must come to see his own sin and confess it. Let every man face this fact to-day, and the war will soon be over, and it will not have been in vain.

Nor is it only each man's sin that accounts for the war, but also neglect of the Divine provision made for sin. This, after all, is the real factor. Nominally, Christ is acknowledged to be the Saviour of the world by all the combatants, but practically He is ruled out of His own house. The Son of God was manifested, we are told, *to take away our sins; and to destroy the works of the Devil*. Why, then, is the Devil so rampant in Christendom to-day? and why are the fairest fields of France scarred by sin? Because the message of the gospel is unheeded, and the salvation Christ offers is neglected. The light of the gospel has in bygone times shone brightest in Germany and France; in Italy and England. But gospel truth has for many a day been at a discount. And it is because God's gospel has been despised that the world is at war. The nations which are now fighting would have been at peace had they cherished the gospel of peace.

God is, as it were, giving the world a last opportunity—an opportunity to learn the danger and dreadfulness of sin; and to escape the wrath from heaven which ere long is to be mani-

fested against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The only way of escape is by the road of repentance and faith. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

These, then, are the fundamental questions which the war has raised—and the consideration of every other question is, for the moment, but a frivolous waste of time—How does every man stand with regard to his own sin? and what is his attitude towards God's offer of salvation from it? If sin can produce such results as are to be seen from the war, then they furnish only one more proof that *sin* and *salvation* are the two outstanding questions of the moral universe. Has not the war been permitted, in order to force these questions once more upon our attention?

"I am Kept."—*Extracts from Diary and Letters of a Young Soldier of Christ in Bank, Billet and Battlefield.*

This book is a brief record of C. H. Mawson (only son of J. T. Mawson, Editor of *Scripture Truth*), who was killed at Poelcappelle, October 12th, 1917. It tells of what Christ can be to one who seeks Him, and what a young man can be for Christ even in the army, when the heart is fully surrendered. It is a delightful record. Published by The Northern Counties Bible and Tract Depot, 63a Blakett Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Price: 7d net.

"The apostasy has entered in principal, and Christendom will go from bad to worse, until God judges it. I feel continually more and more the necessity of insisting upon this, in order to awaken the conscience of Christians on this point. If I could cry with a voice which should resound through all the world, and make itself heard by all Christians, I would warn them of this solemn truth; as I have warned them in my weakness in the sphere in which God has placed me . . . I hope God will give me grace to lay it even more strongly on the consciences of the children of God."—*Extract.*

“He led them Forth by the Right Way.”*Psalm cvii. 7.*

I remember setting out on a recent occasion to visit a friend's house at some distance from my home, the locality of which was perfectly new and strange to me. I had been told that the road was somewhat difficult to discover, and, naturally, I felt rather anxious and worried lest I should go the wrong way, or never reach my destination at all, especially in these days of intensely dark streets, and bewilderingly dim lights. As I was peering about in some perturbation, I heard my name spoken, and I looked round to find my friend at my side. All my fear and anxiety were gone. We walked along together quite happily, chatting of our mutual interests, without thinking of the way at all; and soon we arrived at her home. What had created the change? Had the road suddenly become less dark, the way less new and strange? No. The difference lay in the fact that by my side walked one who knew every step of the way, and so one rested content and happy.

And should it not be so with those who know and love the Lord Jesus? Have we not experienced times when we have forgotten that mighty Friend at our side, and so have groped on in darkness of spirit and anxiety of soul, fearing lest we may be making untold mistakes, and filled with many perplexities? Then, it may be, just in the blackness and darkness we have heard the voice of our Beloved speaking our name, and the light has suddenly broken in upon our soul as we realised that He was by our side.

So much, too, depends upon the guide, does it not? Suppose, on my journey I had enquired my way of a stranger, and he had undertaken to show me the way. Should I have felt so contented and happy in the company of one with whom I was not acquainted? No. Rather should I have felt more anxious lest he should not be leading me in the right direction, or taking me into places where hidden dangers might await me.

My rest of heart came surely from the fact that I knew and absolutely trusted my friend.

“He led them forth by the right way.” Who? Our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that Name mean to us? To some, it may be, it is just the name of One who lived on this earth centuries ago, and nothing more.

To others, this name is that of their dearest and closest Friend. “Nearer is He than breathing, closer than hands or feet.” Yes, it is true He lived centuries ago, and that He died, but, thank God, it is also gloriously true that He rose again, and that He lives for evermore at God’s right hand, and in the hearts and lives of those who love Him.

What rest of heart comes from having the Lord Jesus as the sharer of every detail of our lives! Surely then can we sing:—

“No, never alone,
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.”

There, too, in every perplexity or sorrow which comes into the daily life. Yes, and in the joys which come also! It is gloriously sweet to turn to that Friend at our side and tell Him all. “Strength and calm for every crisis, come in telling Jesus all.”

“He led them forth by the right way.” Wondrous indeed if our Divine Leader had merely instructed us as to the road we should take, or caused the directions to be written down for our instruction. How infinitely gracious of our glorious Lord to promise to be Himself the One Who should personally conduct us in life’s pilgrimage. And how comforting is the thought of being led. If He is leading, then surely the thought implies that He is standing between us and any and every danger and enemy which may beset our pathway, and that nothing can harm us because He is our never-failing perfect shield. Does not the thought of all He endured on our account in Gethsemane and on Calvary help us to understand how He will be our Protector now? It can never be wholly fathomed, but that bitter cry coming from those Divine lips is perhaps some little measure of all that He suffered:—

“It went up from the Holiest’s lips
Amid His lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use
Those words of desolation.”

“ He led them forth by the *right way*.” Many in these days of stress and strain, into whose lives the war has brought desolation and many perplexing, anxious thoughts, are sadly asking— Can this indeed be the *right way*? Can He truly be leading me into such difficult places? It may be that one, inexpressibly dear, has been suddenly called away from the home, and, later, has laid down his life, such a bright useful one, and it seems just to have been thrown away, and the one who is left has to take up the broken threads alone, and “ Trembling lips are asking sadly ‘ Why this mystery of Pain?’ ”

Yet, in all these things, “ He led them forth by the *right way*.” Pain and sorrow and suffering will ever be somewhat of a mystery, yet surely if we realise that God is love, how could He endure that His children should have to undergo anything of this nature were it not in order, that, as the great Physician, He may prevent much greater and worse suffering? How often, too, sorrow has been the means of leading souls nearer to the Lord Jesus. Have we not noticed how a little child will perhaps be content to be some distance away from his guardian in the sunny hours of noontime, but as the darkness deepens how he draws near, and holds tightly to the hand which closes so protectingly over his tiny one?

“ I do not try to see my way,
 Before, behind, or left or right,
 I cannot tell what dangers gray,
 Do haunt my steps, nor at what height,
 Above the sea my path doth wind,
 For I am blind!
 But not without a Guide I wend
 My unseen way by day, by night,
 Close by my side there walks a Friend
 Strong, tender, true, I trust His sight,
 He sees my way, before, behind,
 Though I am blind.”

M. H.

Neither Scripture nor science answers the question: *What is life?* When science attempts to solve the enigma, she speaks of the properties of life, but that begs the question: What is life? is the unanswered question of nigh 6000 years. *God alone knows what it is.*

The Gospel in the Book of Ruth.

By R. E.

This book recounts the history of a Moabitish damsel returning with her mother-in-law from Moab to Bethlehem, and tells how, from being a gleaner, she becomes the wife of the owner of the field, a mighty man of wealth, and through union with him enters the royal line of Israel and becomes the ancestress of King David. But beneath the story, and shining through the story, is the richest unfolding of the gospel; and every turn in the narrative, and every incident recorded, reveal the fact that grace in the salvation and blessing of a sinner is exemplified and intended to be enforced.

Does not the opening remind us of the fall, or of the parable of the Prodigal Son? The scene is laid outside the promised place of blessing. God has been left; the far country has been entered. Moab is but a picture of the world, and represents the place of distance. There is no blessing and no satisfaction until there is a return; and before that takes place there is only a sinking deeper and deeper into worldly ways and associations, and disaster follows disaster. It is the old familiar story of failure and sin, with all their baleful train of consequences, until the eye and the heart are directed once more to that which has been lost, and the cry in the far country is heard, "I perish with hunger," "I will arise and go." And just as through man's sin, and because of it, there has been the outshining of Divine grace, until grace has much more abounded, so in this story the very shame and fall of Elimelech and his family make way for one of the brightest and richest displays of grace, the history of human sin and failure has ever witnessed.

The opening verses reveal the fact that it is a time of famine in the land of Israel, and a certain man, with his wife and two sons, goes to dwell in Moab. God always tests His people. There are times when we seem left, and the true state of our heart is revealed. A famine is an experience in which we need more than ever to depend upon God, and await His deliverance. We are apt to take things into our own hands, devise schemes which seem calculated to meet the present difficulties, and walk by sight and sense instead of by faith.

Elimelech means "my God is King," while Naomi means "pleasant." They belonged to Beth-lehem-judah. The first part of this name means, "the house of bread." "Judah" means praise. We see, therefore, what a glorious heritage was theirs, yet they turned their backs upon it all because of the famine. And what was the consequence? Elimelech dies. When we deny God, He denies us. This does not mean that a child of God can be lost eternally, but it does mean that he may make shipwreck of his faith, and find that away from God, and without the light of His countenance, all goes wrong (v. 20). After ten years, the two sons die also. All had tried to settle down and enjoy life—the two sons marry—but it ends bitterly. Naomi is at last left alone.

Possibly the false step in leaving Canaan had had a detrimental effect upon the sons. At all events, it was altogether contrary to God's law for them to marry Moabitish women. They were evidently prepared to settle down in Moab, but God will not permit it. How much sorrow would God's people be saved did they obey Him, and walk in His ways. But what a mercy that God does not leave His children to themselves. When the two sons are taken the last link is broken, and it is then that Naomi arose to return. There must be a return if ever there is to be a recovery of blessing. And it is God's prerogative to show mercy. How brightly this truth shines in every line of the story before us! The end was life, instead of death; gain, instead of loss. Mahlon and Chilion die in Moab, but Ruth is united to Boaz, and the name of the dead is raised up upon his inheritance (chap. iv. 10). So with us. By nature we are dead—dead in trespasses and sins—but by grace we are quickened together with Christ. We have life now in connection with Him instead of with ourselves—a life in all the favour and love of God instead of under His judgment. So when everything is lost as regards Naomi—her husband and her two sons dead—then God begins to work, and brings in new hope and blessing.

Naomi had heard in the country of Moab how that God had visited His people in giving them bread. This is like the gospel coming to a sinner in the far country. What good news it was to Naomi. She had learned the folly of that false step. There was nothing in Moab for a child of God. She was in the midst

of a people whose tastes and desires were incompatible with her own, while they knew nothing of her worship and faith and expectations. How unhappy she must have been. The news of the blessing that was being given to Israel seemed like an invitation to return, and she does not delay. Judgment was upon her and hers in Moab, everything she valued had been taken from her—and she will stay no longer, “*Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on their way to return unto the land of Judah.*”

(*To be continued.*)

Notes : Biblical and General.

The Great German Offensive—At the time of writing (April) it seems the darkest hour of the war, and a special article as to this—“The Call of the Hour”—appears in the present issue. But we wish here to pass on to our readers two messages that have brought light and comfort amidst the darkness. The first, is found in Ezra ix. 13, “AND HAST GIVEN US SUCH DELIVERANCE AS THIS.” While in prayer that God would be pleased to check the great advance of the enemy that was taking place, we seemed specially directed to these words. A few days later, while meditating upon the further progress made (and as we write the whole situation appears most critical, this morning’s news telling of several important points having fallen into his hands), another passage of precisely the same import came under notice—the passage containing the words of Elisha to King Joash when he tells him to take bow and arrows and to shoot from the open window. And as he shot the prophet exclaims, “The arrow of the Lord’s *deliverance*, and the arrow of *deliverance* from Syria.” The extent of that deliverance, as we see afterwards, depended somewhat upon the King himself. When told to smite with the arrows on the ground, we read, “he smote thrice and stayed.” “Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times,” said the prophet. “Now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.” God’s purpose and our efforts must co-operate.

In both the above passages the thought of *deliverance* occurs. And we cannot doubt that this will ultimately be given,

though it may be after a measure of suffering and even defeat. With God (as in all such matters), it is not merely a question of who shall win, but of the end He has in view in having permitted the occurrence. Britain, as well as Germany, needs to be humbled, and has many a lesson to learn, and God can accomplish this with regard to both.

Individual waiting upon God is, at the present crisis, the imperative duty of all Christians, *and that continually*. It should be the employment of every spare moment. It was not enough that Moses on the hill prayed *once* when the conflict with Amalek was going on below. He had to continue in prayer. When his hands were heavy and hung down Amalek prevailed, in spite of the fact of his previous intercession. So the word to us is "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

* * * *

Some Striking Contrasts.—In Luke ix., we have the record of our Lord's Transfiguration. There was the change in His personal appearance, the glory that surrounded Him, the attendance of Moses and Elias, and the Father's voice declaring His delight in Him. Yet the Object of that delight is, in the same chapter, refused entertainment in a Samaritan village! And He who had been greeted on the Mount as God's beloved Son will neither claim nor enforce His right to hospitality. He acknowledges that on earth He is but an outcast. "*The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.*" Yet He is Lord of all, and He can exercise His Lordship at the proper time, and in a suited way. The same chapter closes with His commands to one and another; and the next opens with His title as Lord owned, and the power and rights of it exercised in the sending out of the seventy. While further on, this same One who had confessed He had not where to lay His head, is heard declaring "All things are delivered to Me of My Father." And the seventy return with joy saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through Thy Name." R. E.

—♦—

In Psalm xxii., we have Christ the Victim for sinners. In Psalm xxiii., it is Christ the Shepherd of the Sheep. In Psalm xxiv., it is Christ the King of Glory. A beautiful trilogy surely. W. S.

The Book of Psalms.

By WALTER SCOTT.

PSALM 18.—The historical setting of this Psalm is in David's triumph over all his enemies, and celebration of deliverance from the hand of Saul. Second Samuel xxii., of 51 verses, is substantially the same as Psalm xviii., of 50 verses. *David* in sorrow, in confidence in Jehovah, and in ultimate triumph is the burden of the history. *Christ*, in the sorrows of death, and then in deliverance, and exulting confidence in Jehovah, and finally exalted as the Universal head of the nations, is, in the main, the story of the Psalm.

In our Psalm Christ associates Himself with Israel. The Messiah's identification with His beloved ancient people in their afflictions, not in their sins, is important in the interpretation of the Psalms. A verse, or part of a verse, may be strictly Messianic, while the next sentence may be Israelitish. The fortunes of Israel are bound up with those of Christ (Isa. lxiii. 9). The triumph of Israel is assured at the end, but only in connection with Christ. His triumph is their triumph. It is Christ who, as seen in the early part of the Psalm as delivered, becomes the Deliverer of His people. Thus the Deliverer and the Delivered are identified—form One Company; for the principle see Hebrew ii. 11.

It is a beautiful Psalm. *Grace* delivers us from our sins. *Righteousness* will deliver Israel from her enemies. The atonement is the ground of both (Ps. xxii.).

The end of the Psalm (verses 43-45, 47, 48) is distinctly millennial in character. It looks onward to the establishment of the kingdom consequent on the complete overthrow of the enemies of Israel and of Christ. Israel will then be exalted to the Headship of the nations, but all under the authority and supreme administration of David's Son and Lord.

On the whole the Psalm is one of song; there is so much deliverance in it. Jehovah is everything to the soul. He is personally known and personally loved. There is intense individuality in the Psalm. Jehovah *my* strength, *my* rock, *my* fortress,

my deliverer, *my* God, *my* buckler, horn of *my* salvation, *my* high tower (verses 1, 2). All this, and more, Jehovah was to David. Do we know God in this experimental and practical manner? God known and loved through, and in the midst of, life's sorrows and varied trials, is one great feature of this precious Psalm.

DIVISIONS.

1. Jehovah the Confidence and Strength of the Soul, verses 1-3.
2. Sorrows and Deliverances, verses 4-35.
3. Enemies Overthrown, the Kingdom Established, Praise, verses 36-50.

A HELPFUL AND IMPORTANT NOTE.

“ In verse 43 there are particulars to be noted. Three classes of persons are here introduced : the people—He is delivered from their strivings ; the heathen—He is made their head ; then a people, not before known with which He had not been in relation as in Israel, shall serve Him. That is, Messiah is delivered from the strivings and revoltings of ungodly Jews ; made the head of the heathen ; and then a people hitherto strangers should serve Him—become now a people to Him. Submission will be immediate, so evident will be His glory and power then. And even where there is no sincerity, or, at least, no proof of it, they will at once serve, bowing down to Him. This is millennial.”

J. N. D.



“ What is meant by asking the Father in Christ's name? Can it be merely saying “ in His name ” at the end of a prayer? When Christ died and rose again, He gave the believer His own standing before God ; and then to ask the Father in the name of Christ, is to ask in the consciousness that my Father loves me as He loves Christ ; that my Father has given me the acceptance of Christ Himself before Him, having completely blotted out all my evil, so as to be made the righteousness of God in Christ. To pray in the value of this is asking in His name (Comp : John xvi.). When the soul draws near, consciously brought nigh to God, it may be said to ask in His name.

The Believer's Weapons.

By E. ADAMS.

These are in vivid contrast to the weapons wielded by the world. The foremost is FAITH. The world believes in its "strong right arm" and in the might of man. The believer lays hold of the arm of God. Faith is the attitude of soul that pleases God. By faith we confess our weakness and God's omnipotence; we abase man and exalt the Lord, Whose purpose is that no flesh should glory in His presence.

The believer in the midst of the world is like a sheep among wolves. If he refuses to use the world's weapons he will be worsted in the battle of life, unless God comes to His aid in times of difficulty and danger. His refusal to fight the world in the world's way renders him liable to go under unless the God of gracious providences succours him.

God is deeply interested in all the circumstances that touch the lives of His people, for, in the first place, they are His children; and, in the second place, these circumstances have a vital bearing upon our spiritual experience. These providences are under our Father's absolute control, and He causes them to work together for our ultimate good. He holds all the "strings" in His hand; He moves all the "scenes." Not a single thing can touch us without His knowledge and permission, and the things that do touch us are designed to be either food or medicine. They are all His servants—and ours; yes, even death itself. (See 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.) "The Lord performeth all things for me." And as we commit ourselves to Him in faith He works deliverances on our behalf. These are generally through what appears to be the ordinary course of events, but the blessed fact remains that the Lord has changed things for our good. We do not mean to say that God *always* delivers where there is faith. Some of the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11 did not receive deliverance. But as faith honours God, He delights to deliver—sometimes in ways the most unexpected, for, as we have seen, He has thousands of servants at His disposal—those who look to Him. If we *pray*, and *believe*, and *obey*, God will *provide*.

A child of God, himself a great sufferer, wrote the following inspiring sentence to a fellow-believer—"When your battles are

hottest, *pray*, and *just wait and see* your foe crushed at your gate, for the Lord is on His way with victory while you pray." O for grace to trust our God more fully! By trusting the Lord we make His victory our own.

The godless world glories in independence of its Maker. It loves to command, not to ask. But PRAYER is a mighty weapon in the hands of a spiritually minded believer. True prayer is a work; and more than that, it is a weapon that does unflinching execution in the ranks of the enemy. Our prayers are often too limp. They are too seldom projected by strong desire and vigorous faith. The poor world derides prayer except for the reflex action it has upon the one who prays, but the Spirit-taught believer knows that the weapon of "all-prayer" effects changes and works deliverances of inestimable value. Prayer changes things by bringing God into them.

Millions of petitions have risen from God's Church in regard to the war, some of them from well-nigh breaking hearts. Are they all in vain? The thought is folly. We can in this life have but a faint estimate of the way in which the ceaseless cries of God's children have opposed and overcome the spiritual forces that are at their deadly work behind the great European tragedy. The poor world little dreams of the immense services which the Church of God is rendering humanity in these times. Let us not, then, be weary in this "well-doing," for in due season we shall reap the fruit of our prayer warfare.

In contrast to the lies with which the world wages its warfare, the believer wields the sword of the TRUTH of God. (How many lies have been told during this present war by rulers who keep back unwelcome facts from their peoples, who have all become willing dupes and have identified themselves with their leaders and their policies of force and fraud. How easy it will shortly be for the nations of Europe to swallow "The lie" of Antichrist!)

"He that will lie for the 'good of the cause' will lie as to the cause being good for which he lies." God will never set His seal of approval upon any untruth, even though spoken by His children and in the interests of the gospel. But all truth comes from the Eternal and Almighty One, and has Omnipotence at the back of it. Men entrench themselves behind some darling

lie which they dream is for their profit, but which is really working their ruin. It is the business of the servant of Christ to pour in the truth which drives the dupes of Satan from their cover and forces them to surrender to the Lord.

In what numberless instances has the naked word of God slain the sinner's unbelief. A Christian worker quoted several passages of Scripture to an infidel. The unbeliever replied, "What is the good of giving me those texts; I don't believe the Bible." But the other went on giving the man text after text, in spite of repeated objection, "I don't believe that book." In a few minutes the infidel surrendered to the truth of God and was converted! The promulgation of the truth of God has consequences that are more far reaching than we generally imagine. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," and as we go on obeying the injunction, "Preach the Word," the Spirit of truth will make it good in the hearts and consciences of those whom it reaches, unbelief will be routed, and the soul won for the Captain of our salvation.

We need to speak the truth in love. "LOVE never faileth," and has been described as the greatest thing in the world. When all other weapons have failed, love has often won the day. A man filled with hate against a servant of the Lord has sometimes been converted on the spot by the shock of the other's love against his hate.

The Holy Ghost says through the apostle, "*Arm yourselves with the same mind*"—the mind that was in Christ—the mind to suffer in the flesh. By renouncing the carnal weapon we do suffer, but wielding the weapons of faith, prayer, truth, and love, we win spiritual victories that angels may well be constrained to admire.

Acts iii. 21, speaks of the restitution of "all *things*," not of all persons. To apply this passage to the devil, his angels, and the lost in hell is a monstrous perversion of Scripture. The doom of all such is permanently fixed, irrevocable. The prophets of old referred to in the text, wrote and spoke only of things on earth.

Wandering Thoughts at the Lord's Table.

Heart and Conscience Speak.

Heart—

Oh, my Lord, my mind will wander;
Though I fain would think of Thee—
Vagrant mem'ries must grow fonder
When called back to Calvary.

Yet the grief that thoughts should wander
From a scene so filled with bliss:
Precious moments lightly squander—
Jesus Saviour, save from this.

Conscience—

Thou heavy heart, thou carnal mind,
Where can ye other beauty see?
Or where a worthy rival find
To Bethlehem or Calvary?

Heart—

But He knew my mind would wander,
Therefore bid me with Him sup,
And His dying love to ponder
'Neath the signs of loaf and cup.

Conscience—

Then pause thou restless heart, and think
Of that pure life once lived for thee,
And all the steps of love that link
Bethlehem to Calvary.

Heart—

Ah, but still my thoughts do wander—
Marring fellowship divine—
Tearing signs from Christ asunder—
Till I'm left with—bread and wine!

Conscience—

Then hearken, oh thou slow of heart,
A cry comes from Gethsemane—
What caused those tears? Ah, that thy part—
Thy guilty part—in Calvary.

Thine the sin that filled the cup,
That bitter cup of agony:
His the love that drank it up—
Hast thou no praise for Calvary?

Heart, musing—

"Mine the sin that filled the cup!"
Mine that caused His agony!
"His the love that drank it up!"
Love that led to Calvary.

Oh, no more my thoughts shall wander—
Jesus Lord, I worship Thee,
While with happy tears I ponder
My guilt—Thy love—and—Calvary!

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 7.

JULY, 1918.

Price 1d

Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry.

By Dr A. T. SCHOFIELD.

[From Spring of A.D. 28 to Spring of A.D. 29: including Nine Journeys—520 Miles in all.]

ARTICLE I.

From Capernaum to Decapolis and Magdala: from Magdala to Caesarea Philippi, and back to Capernaum: from Capernaum to Jerusalem by Jericho—about 315 miles in all.

FROM SPRING TO AUTUMN A.D. 28.

Scriptures—Matt. xv. 21; xviii. 35. Mark vii. 31; ix. 50. Luke ix. 18—x. 42. John vii. 10-13.

We now enter on the closing year of our Lord's short public life, and we find ourselves in an entirely fresh set of circumstances. Hitherto Capernaum has been the centre, and Galilee the circumference of our Lord's labours; but now, He is finally rejected, and the doom of the Lake cities solemnly pronounced, and our Lord's ministry in Galilee is practically concluded. Let us, however, observe here that though the cities are judged there is the most gracious welcome in the Bible to all the weary and heavy laden (Matt. xi.).

Christ's face is now steadfastly set towards Jerusalem, but as there is still a year before His death on Calvary, the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, finds a new sphere of work, and this, as we shall see, is again found on the borders of the Holy Land, and in a Bethany on the other side of Jordan.

From this point Galilee drops out of the Bible. Hitherto it has been absolutely predominant in the Gospel record, but it now becomes of entirely secondary importance; and what is here worthy of close attention is the fact that when our Lord on the Mount of Olives gives His final commission, He says the gospel is to be preached "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria—and unto the uttermost parts of the earth," Galilee being entirely and most markedly omitted. It had been, indeed, evangelised by Christ Himself, as Judea and Samaria never had.

We, therefore, find in the Acts of the Apostles no mention of Galilee; Capernaum being not even named, though the centre of Christ's labours in the gospels. All this is of deep significance to us in England to-day.

Our Lord's first journey, after the terrible utterances of S. Matthew xi., was practically of a Gentile nature, although not actually outside the borders of the Holy Land, as some have thought. From Capernaum, Christ first travelled along the borders of Tyre and Sidon, no longer on a public ministry to Galilee, for He would have no one know it; but "He could not be hid." Need ever discovers Him, although self-righteousness may ignore Him. There is a triumphant note in the Evangelist's words here, which has an echo in our hearts as we read them: "He could not be hid" (as we know to-day) because of the unconscious dignity of His high lineage, and the warmth of the love and grace that ever flowed from Him. Thus the radiance of the mountain top was seen in the deep valley of human need (as with Moses), for our Master shines in all spheres.

In this beautiful idyll, the Syro-Phoenician woman takes the place of an unclean beast in Peter's sheet, but the keys of the kingdom are still in Christ's hand, and He unlocks the door to her. The word here should be "little dogs" (domestic pets) for they only eat crumbs, and not the unclean pariah dog of the street. Taking her place as a little dog, not asking for anything but the droppings from the servants' table (lit), and lifting her faithful eyes to Christ, she at once became a child of Abraham, and is given a seat with his children at the table. It is thus that great faith (S. Matt. xv. 28) trusts Christ and gets its reward, while little faith (S. Matt. xvi. 8) mistrusts Him and is rebuked. Still, as of old, outcast sinners are daily illustrating the first, and many true believers, alas! the latter. In the gospels only a Gentile woman and a Roman centurion rejoice Christ with their "great faith;" while four times . . . the disciples grieve Him by their "little faith."

Returning by Decapolis, our Lord heals a deaf man, and as He healed him He sighed. What pathos is here! It was the man's own sigh that was echoed by the heart of Christ. The power of the sigh, and the sympathy of the sigh, are here combined; Christ sorrowed with, and not merely for, man. How we need that Ephthatha to-day to open our ears to hear as the

learner (Isa. 1. 4), and to loose our tongues to speak a word in season to him who is weary.

Avoiding all the well-known, but now doomed cities, Christ reached the Greek region of Decapolis on the further side of the lake. Here He fed the four thousand, meeting as before the unbelief of His disciples. On the face of it, this unbelief seems almost incredible so soon after the miracle of the five thousand had demonstrated His miraculous power; but alas! our own experience reveals how quickly God's mercies are forgotten, and how persistent and steadfast is our unbelief in His love and power. It is interesting to notice that the baskets of fragments taken up here, were each large enough to contain a man, and in one such Paul escaped from Damascus. There is great significance in the principles connected with these two miracles, on which we cannot fully enter here. We may however remark on the Jewish character of the feasting of the five thousand; the five loaves feeding them materially as did the five books of Moses spiritually, the food reaching them through the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and the fragments gathered into twelve baskets, under the power of the Messiah; this undoubtedly represents blessing in the Jewish dispensation. In the feasting of the four thousand Gentiles among the Greek cities, we find the two sevens of the loaves and the baskets, significant of Divine perfection, and nothing that is Jewish is seen, the miracle representing Christ's sovereign goodness to the world.

Our Lord and His disciples now return across the lake, but we read of no storm, for all the storms are over for disciples who (represented by Peter) have learned to walk on the water.

The next journey is to Caesarea Philippi, involving another short but calm voyage. At this time S. Luke commits himself to an apparent contradiction. He tells us (chap. ix 18) that as Christ was "praying alone, His disciples were with Him." On the face of it this seems impossible for if one be alone there is none other there. There is, of course, here no contradiction but a deep truth, for the fact is, and it would be well if we knew it better, that no one can pray to God excepting when he is alone in spirit. The fact that one can be entirely alone in the midst of a crowd was never felt by any as it was felt by the Lord.

At this time a blind man was healed at Bethsaida Julias: he was, however, first of all led outside the doomed town, and

commanded not to make the miracle known, for the day of grace, as we have seen, was over; there were to be no more signs or testimonies to that generation. Even with regard to Christ's Person, as we see (S. Mark viii. 30), "He straitly charged His disciples that they should tell no man who He was;" and from this time He began to speak of His complete rejection and approaching sacrifice.

When Caesarea was reached, Christ had arrived at the extreme northern boundary of the land of Israel, for Caesarea was the ancient Dan, and it was here on a mountain (a spur of Anti-Lebanon), on the confines of the Holy Land that Christ was transfigured. S. Luke incidentally reveals another secret concerning prayer; our Lord, He says (chap. ix. 28), went up into this mountain to pray, "and as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered." It is only as we pray that this takes place in us; for it is in this we are brought face to face with the Lord; and it is here we are changed into the same image (2 Cor. iii. 18). Those who are much given to prayer, bear the stamp of Divine communion in their faces. We read in Acts vi. 15, that Stephen, one who ever continued steadfastly in prayer (Acts vi. 4) had a face "as it had been the face of an angel." We are indeed absolutely told to be transfigured or transformed in Romans xii. 2, which is the same word as that in S. Matthew, and in 2 Cor. iii. 18; so that it is quite evident that neither our inner minds nor our outward appearance should be the same after we have thus known Christ, as they were before.

The description of the change of our Lord's garments into white light which clothed Him in dazzling radiance, according to Psalm civ. 2, may also find a resemblance in the luminous and radiant character of our glorified bodies in the resurrection. "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Habakkuk iii. 4; see also Daniel xii. 3; S. Matthew xiii. 43, etc.). A very ancient tradition tells us that such were the garments of Adam before the Fall, and that it was only when the radiance disappeared that Adam discovered that he was naked.

Moses and Elias appear on the Mount, as the priest and the prophet in the presence of the King; Moses the Former, Elijah the Reformer, in the presence of Jesus the Transformer of Israel. We cannot doubt that when Moses prayed (Deut. iii. 25) to see that goodly mountain even (Sept.) the Anti-Lebanon, that he

looked forward to this bright moment when he stood with the Christ whose reproach he had borne in Egypt. All this is a wonderful sight for our souls. The Lord full of grace, at the moment of His deepest humiliation and rejection, crowned with glory and honour, the central Figure, the Object, too, of the supreme delight of heaven, which here found its expression from the lips of His Father.

We note the sleep which overcame the disciples on this wondrous occasion (which was probably at night), was the same in the Garden of Gethsemane and no doubt elsewhere. It would, I think, be a great mistake to regard this condition as showing indifference, or as referring merely to natural sleep; it is rather the stupor which overcomes those who are suddenly introduced into scenes that surpass their understanding, whether these be occasions of transcendent glory or of infinite anguish, the effect in both is to paralyse the human faculties with a mental torpor. We delight to think that when we "know even as we are known," we shall be vouchsafed faculties and powers to intelligently grasp the glories by which we are surrounded, and able to enjoy to the full that which passes all human understanding.

We may regard the Mount of Transfiguration as the climax of the life of Christ. The proclamation of the kingdom had now been practically rejected by all the great cities around Him, and this mission being ended, there remained for the Lord nothing but rejection and an ever deeper descent into the valley of humiliation, until all was consummated on the Cross.

Instead of the three tabernacles which S. Peter in his stupor babbled about (it being at this time the Feast of Tabernacles), we have the one bright cloud where the Shechinah dwelt, and under the fringe of which the three favoured disciples were brought, Moses and Elias having vanished, and Christ now being left alone with His own. There can be no doubt that a sort of halo of the transfiguration glory was the occasion of S. Mark ix. 15, when the people were amazed at His appearance. It is delightful to remember that after we have enjoyed spiritual visions of Christ (on the Mount) in prayer and have to descend into the valley of human distress and need, we have Christ as really with us as on the Mount!

Returning privately to Capernaum, our Lord pays the tribute money from the fish's mouth, a miracle upon which perhaps

more ridicule has been expended than upon any other. We may just note in passing, that in spite of this, this lake together with a small one in East Africa (presumably once connected with it) are the only two where fish are found that habitually carry their young in their mouths, or any bright object they may seize; the fish is called "Chromus Simonus," and I saw it at Tiberias carrying a young fish in its mouth.

At this time, His own family, still uneasy doubtless about His mental condition (Mark iii. 21), besought Jesus to leave them and return to Judea, not merely to keep the Feast, but to show His powers to the authorities there, feeling sure, doubtless, that they would be able to come to a right judgment as to their value and Christ's own condition. They wanted indeed, to get rid of Him, and our only relief in considering their action is to remember that, at any rate, on this occasion their mother is not associated with them. Jesus then, rejected, accounted mad, and possessed with devils and a "winebibber" in Galilee, leaves it, an outcast on earth, to be judicially murdered by His own people in Judea. There was no rest for Him this side of the new tomb. Our Evangelist (S. John vii. 1) fully recognising this, no longer calls the Feast of Tabernacles a Feast of the Lord, but a Feast of the Jews.

Our Lord, going up secretly by Jericho as far as Bethany, discourses to an enquiring lawyer about the Good Samaritan and the wounded traveller in an immortal parable that has been the solace and the hope of every wounded traveller since.

Mark the various steps in the precipitous descending path of the Son of God. From the eternal throne to the manger at Bethlehem to become Messiah and the Son of David; then lower still from the Son of David to the Good Samaritan; further down to the despised condition of being accounted mad, possessed and gluttonous; then lower still to be condemned to a robber's death upon the Cross of shame; and last and lowest of all, to be forsaken of God. Was there ever such a path? Was there ever such a sacrifice? Was there ever such love poured out unto death as this? Never! Well may our souls in humble adoration, bow down before the eternal throne and sing to Him that loveth us: "Worthy is the Lamb."

The only real home provided for Christ on earth that is recorded in the Gospels, was in the house of Mary and Martha

at Bethany. Their privilege thus was absolutely unique, and we may be sure was greatly valued by the sisters. Martha's elaborate meals, with many dishes, speak of her as a perfect hostess that could not do enough for her honoured guest; but while she prepared the material food in such profusion, our Lord points out that but one (dish) is really essential, and that consists of the spiritual food (the good part) which Mary was then receiving, in listening to the words of our Lord, even as He had said to the Tempter: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (S. Matt. iv. 4).

He Sitteth on the Throne.

Rev. i. 18; Rev. iii. 21; Rev. xxii. 3.

Nevermore the Cross and nevermore Alone—
 Man's Blackest Crime is done—his direst seed is sown.
 But He Who bore the Cross and Shame—
Sitteth on the Throne.

Nevermore the Cross and nevermore the Shame—
 Though all the Sin of Man is flung upon His Name,
 And all the Hate of Man is poured upon His Frame;
 Yet He Whose Love Hate could not quench—
Sitteth on the Throne.

Nevermore the Cross and nevermore the Scorn—
 Though on His Holy Head they wreathed the mocking
 Thorn,
 And from His Suffering Heart they drew Love's saddest
 groan;
 Yet He Whose Sorrow none could share—
Sitteth on the Throne.

Nevermore the Cross and nevermore the Gloom—
 Though wrath Divine has crushed His soul to Blackest
 Doom,
 And earthly wrath has cried, "Away with Him! no
 Room!"
 Yet He on Whom Dark Judgment fell—
Sitteth on the Throne.

Nevermore the Cross and nevermore Alone—
 The Corn of Wheat has died, the Christ has found His
 Own;
 And He Who bore the Cross and Shame—
SITTETH ON THE THRONE.

H. B.

Copies can be obtained of HUNTER BEATTIE, 25 Monteith
 Row, Glasgow.

Isaiah.

Chapter VIII. (*continued.*)

These names, Rezin and Remaliah's Son, again have striking and surely divinely given significance, nor can I pass them without notice. *Remaliah* is clearly a compound word, made up of *Rem*, from a root meaning "lofty" or "lifted up;" the preposition "l" or "to;" and the easily recognised "*Jah*" or *Jehovah*—the whole reading "*Lifted up to Jehovah.*"

Does not the Scripture tell us of one who must answer to that name; for whom, being a creature, it was the worst of robberies to make himself "equal with God," yet did that very thing? Indeed does not this same prophet Isaiah, in chapter xiv, tell us of him? "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. . . for thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . I will be like the Most High.*" But that is precisely "*Remaliah,*" or "lifted up to *Jehovah.*" Surely this is quite simple and unstrained. *Remaliah* then is a name that applies to Lucifer or Satan.

But, further, we are not dealing here with *Remaliah* himself, but with his *son*—it is the son of *Remaliah* who is one of the confidences of the apostates. Has then the true *Remaliah*, or Lucifer, or Satan, or the devil, a "son," whom he leads in the same path of awful assumption of being like the Most High, and who thus evidences his sonship? Indeed he has in that "*son of perdition who exalteth himself above all that is called God!*" (2 Thess. ii. 4) There is the true *son* of *Remaliah* of the future, acting exactly as his father—walking in the same path. He is to be also found under such names as "*False prophet,*" "*Beast from the land,*" "*Anti-christ,*" and many another of dreadful import that he bears in the Scriptures, as heading up the corrupt or religious form of evil, when all evil, in both its forms, comes to its head; and, as of old, he was found at the head of apostate Israel, so shall his anti-type, in the future, be a Jew.

His ally is *Rezin*, king of Syria. Now we have the very word, *Rezin*, in Gen. xlix. 6, where it is rendered "*selfwill.*" Nor can there be any misunderstanding the name of his kingdom, when we leave the Hebrew *Aram* unchanged into the Greek, "*Syria;*" for *Aram* is from precisely the same root as the first

syllable of *Remaliah*, and means again "lifted up." It was, of course, thus applied to the highlands of Syria as expressive of their topography; but what weighty significance it has as expressive of the moral characteristics of the sphere of the rule of this king. He, the self-willed one, is the king of *Aram*, those "lifted up"—the children of pride.

Is not, then, *Rezin, King of Aram*, an excellent prototype of that "prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 27), the Gentile head of the revived Roman Empire in its utter apostasy, and ever to the end the ally of the Jewish *Ben-Remaliah*, the false prophet? for pride governs both, and in *pride* is the bond of relationship between all the discordant elements of evil.

We must inquire who is meant by "this people" who refuse the gentle waters of Shiloah, put their boastful confidence in *Rezin and Remaliah's Son*, and consequently are overwhelmed by the torrent of the Euphrates? Surely it cannot be Judah, for Judah was trembling with fear, *because* of *Rezin and Remaliah's Son*; and now, as in the worst of times, clave to the House of David. Its prime application then, it would appear clear, must be to the *ten* tribes, under the lead of Ephraim. For the refusal must have been *before* this time, since the Assyrian invasion is now the threatened penalty *for* that refusal. Are we not then driven to that first rebellion against the House of David—the first refusal of the "sure mercies" ever linked with that House—in Rehoboam's day? The Spirit of God always takes note of the *first* lapse from what has been divinely set up, quite irrespective, as here, of the unworthy character of the human representative of that institution. All that is now seen is that the revolt under Jeroboam was the forsaking of all the divinely appointed channels of the goodness of Jehovah—the "waters of Shiloah"—in those days. These the ten tribes valued not; these they relinquished with Esau-like profanity, to secure some present advantage. Let not my readers fail to turn to 2 Chron. xiii. 4-12, and they will hear a son of David convicting Ephraim of refusing the waters of Shiloah by treading under foot the divinely appointed priesthood, by counting the blood of the divinely appointed sacrifices an unholy thing, by doing despite to the Spirit of God, even by fighting against the one king *anointed* by the Lord God of their fathers. Many years have rolled their course since then, another king, another set of people are on the scene;

but it has never been forgotten, and now after so long a time, it is on *this* account, combined with a course consistent with that beginning, that the Assyrian is coming to take away their place and nation.

Now herein lies a very important principle. "Was it not rather hard," an objector might say, "to make those who lived many years later bear the penalty of the deeds of their remote ancestors? What had *they* to do with Jeroboam? Why should *they* be laid waste by Assyria because their fathers had revolted against the House of David?"

One might parallel this objection by, Was it not equally hard on those Scribes and Pharisees, whom the blessed Lord called "Hypocrites," to make *them* responsible even for what Cain did (Matt. xxiii. 35)? What had they to do with the "blood of Abel?" Did they not indeed piously disavow the deeds of their fathers in slaying the prophets, by building sepulchres in honour of those prophets?

Indeed it is very easy and exceedingly comforting to self-complacency, to disavow the wickedness of someone else; but when it is of one's own father, something more is needed than simple disavowal, for one may evidence that the nature one has received of that father is quite ready to repeat his conduct—it is exactly the same nature, and, by it, there is a moral identity that may make two generations, or any number of generations, *one and the same generation*. Indeed the very disavowal involves the same proud nature, opposing all the humbling truths of the Cross. Not disavowal at all, but confession, repentance, and self-judgment are then alone in order.

So a long line of murderers of prophets was but one "generation," and then come these religious Scribes and Pharisees, with their self-complacent denial of the deeds of their fathers, and who yet were just about to imbrue their hands in the Blood of God's dear Son, while their children who would succeed them would revile, and persecute, and imprison, and rack, and torture, and burn His servants down to the end, and all under the most religious guise, till in that concrete expression of the religion of the earth, "Babylon, the Great," should be found "the blood of *all* that were slain upon the earth." There are always two generations and only two, and both are living to-day.

“The Heart Knoweth his own Bitterness.”

Prov. xiv. 10.

By R. E.

“When everyone shall know his *own* sore and his *own* grief.”
Solomon’s Prayer—II. Chron. vi. 29.

Someone has said, “When we cease to bleed, we cease to bless.” To this might truthfully be added, that bleeding is by a two-fold process. There is the arduous and constant toil, until every faculty is strained to the utmost, and the very life is being laid out in the service of others; and there is that which is the result of endurance, rather than prolonged effort, when the heart has to bear some heavy burden of bereavement or disappointment or responsibility, and bleeds in silence and alone. And is not the blessing also of a double character? The blessing that comes from what we *do*, and that which comes through what we *endure*. He who labours, to the extent of bleeding, for the benefit of others, whether it is for their temporal or eternal welfare, confers a blessing. But no less does the one who suffers, though no eye but God’s sees his agony. May it not be said that the Saviour of the world brought more blessing to mankind by what He suffered for them, than even by what He did? Though commonly, and often rightly, we speak of one as if it were the other. Still, if we distinguish, it would hardly be wrong to say that His sufferings were the greater both in kind and result. And perhaps when the whole account is made up, and all is seen in its true perspective and bearing, and in the light of accomplished result, with regard to every one of God’s children the balance will be on the same side; and it may be that which received the most recognition on earth, because it was more before the public eye, will not be found to be more fruitful, or more valuable, than that which claimed less attention.

But however that may be, the aphorism we have quoted contains an elemental principle of all life, and the bleeding and the blessing are correlated. It is surely good to remember that

out of the pains, and struggles, the tears and agonies of men and women of faith, a blessing flows, first of all, to themselves, and, next, to others. The furnace does yield the golden ore, purified, and ready to enrich all who receive it. Or in other words, the rod which strikes the rock does bring forth the living water to renew and satisfy the thirsty ones around. These words uttered by our Saviour in the Garden, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," were the prelude to a story of a love and an achievement that has saved and gladdened countless multitudes since. Our salvation and joy would never have had birth apart from His anguish. And only because He was exceeding sorrowful can we "with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Let us remember, then, that "when we cease to bleed we cease to bless," and that everyone who has, to any extent, been able to impart spiritual help to his fellows, has had to know something of this process; and in silence, it may be in darkness, certainly, in wrestling, and with strong crying and tears, he has been disciplined and prepared. Elijah had two experiences of this kind ere he appeared on Mount Carmel before all Israel. He knew the solitude of Cherith, and the trial of his faith as he sat beside the diminishing waters of the brook; for that water failed like every other, and for the same reason, even though he was a prophet of the Lord; and he knew another trial, in the house of the widow, when he had to cry out, "O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" But the experience he had of God on these occasions prepared him to face the stupendous crisis of Carmel, and to overcome. He had to bleed in order that he might bless.

But there are many called to suffer who may not be able to discern at the moment any blessing that is to accrue from it, either to themselves or others. They only know that they are bleeding. And perhaps one of the hardest parts of it is that the cause remains unknown to others, or, if known, no one else can measure the extent of the wound. So true is it, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." Yes, the *bitterness!* Others know the sorrow perhaps—the occasion or circumstances—but they do not know anything of the *bitterness*. Sometimes there are cir-

cumstances or occurrences which in themselves are trifling, but coming just *as* they do, and *when* they do, and from the quarter they do, add immeasurable poignancy to the grief. And the wise king was surely never wiser than when in his prayer at the dedication of the temple he includes one petition, which, while being indefinite, is yet the most definite of all : “ *When everyone shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear Thou.*” Many things are mentioned for prayer ; things that everybody could know about and was more or less interested in—war, famine, drought, pestilence—but at last he comes right home to every man’s own bosom, and mentions “ *his own sore and his own grief.*”

And does not our experience tend to confirm Solomon’s wisdom, and to remind us of a higher wisdom and tenderness still that guided him? After all, the world and society are made up of ones, and each individual, in one sense, stands alone, and his life is complete in itself. One glory of the Bible surely is that it is the book of the individual soul. It has something to say to *me*—something to offer *me*. I do not have to lose myself in the mass in order to hear its voice. It has a direct message for each one who is willing to listen. I can hear it for myself, quite apart from anyone else.

And has not each of us “ *his own sore and his own grief?* ” Others may have the same in kind, but this does not make ours less our own. Nor is it a question merely of degree. A child’s sorrow, though it may be only over a broken penny toy, or a smashed doll, is just as much its own, as is the heavier sorrow of a grown man or woman to him or her. No, it is our *own* sore and *our* grief ; *that* is the point. It is *I* who suffer it ; *I* who smart under it ; *I* who wish it had never happened.

Both these experiences as to the heart knowing his own bitterness, and everyone knowing his own sore and grief come to us from the same source. No other than King Solomon is their author, and it is not impossible that he knew their meaning, and that when he uttered these words he was conscious how true they were in his own experience. Yes, in spite of his rank, and privileges, and wisdom, and riches, his heart may have known his own bitterness, and he may have been conscious of his *own* sore and *own* grief. It may be, indeed, that there is a bitterness

peculiar to high station and overflowing possessions. At all events, they did not screen him from what was the common lot of all his subjects. Does not that oft repeated exclamation, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," tell us so?"

There is the *sore* as well as the *grief*. There is that which irritates, frets, wounds—in addition to the other sorrows and bereavements of life. Perhaps that which makes us *sore* is not always so palpable to others, as that which makes us *sad*. But it may be for that reason even more hard to bear. We may be thankful that Solomon included both. Does it not suggest that when anyone does know his own sore and his own grief he can carry it straight to God? This Temple, which with all its magnificence and greatness was for Jehovah's praise and dwelling place, was also for His people's prayers, and within those hallowed walls how many could tell his own sore and his own grief with no ear but God's to listen. What pitiful tales those walls were invited to hear! The Temple was dedicated, amongst other things, to this purpose, and Solomon asked God to hear from heaven His "*dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest (for Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men).*" For God cannot sympathise with evil, though he can with those who desire to be free from it. And although this Temple no longer exists, the provision made for faith to-day is even more ample. We are invited to come with boldness to the very Throne of Grace that we may obtain *mercy* and find *grace* to help in time of need. (Heb. iv.) To that Throne of Grace we can bring every complaint.

Illustrations.

Jacob knew, probably, as well as anyone ever did, his own bitterness. His early sin, his long service in Laban's employ, the troubles in connection with his family, the death of Rachel, and last, but by no means least, the supposed death of Joseph, and his separation from him for twenty years—made his own sore and his own grief very real to him. What a tragic moment when his son's coat was brought to him, "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned over his son many days . . . he refused to be comforted; and he said,

‘For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.’ Thus his father wept for him.” How often his heart bled. Yet he knew also what it was to bless. And it is this act of faith that is recorded of him in Hebrews xi., “*By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.*” He could forget his own sorrow and the past bitterness, as he spoke of the Angel which had redeemed him from all evil.

Hannah’s case was totally different from that of Jacob, yet her sore and her grief were just as real. We read, “She was in bitterness of soul.” Yes, she had her *own* sore and her *own* grief, exactly as someone reading these lines has his or her’s. “Out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken,” she declares, when Eli remonstrates with her. And the cause of it was, that “her adversary provoked her sore, for to make her fret . . . so she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.” And this went on year after year without remedy. But at length relief came; and it came through prayer. “In bitterness of soul” she “prayed unto the Lord.” But what a change prayer wrought! Even before the answer was actually given she realised the benefit of making her requests known unto God. For we are told, “*the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.*”

Hannah’s heart bled, but the result was blessing. Samuel the Prophet of the Lord was the offspring of her travail and faith, and all Israel eventually rejoiced in his light. True as it is, “the heart knoweth his own bitterness,” the remaining part of the verse is not less true, “and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” Hannah’s prayer, which is left on record for our great enjoyment, and not less for our edification, tells us this. It opens in this triumphant strain, “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; *because I rejoice in Thy salvation.*” Here is the secret of being able to endure the sore and the grief—God’s salvation becomes known. Our trials, our griefs—the anguish of spirit which some of God’s people are made to feel—are not beyond His touch. “*The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*” He does not do the former without the latter.

David.

Perhaps there are few more touching or bitter lamentations on record than that uttered by David at the death of Absalom. Truly it was his *own* sore and his *own* grief, for circumstances made it impossible for others even to share the grief, much less to feel as David felt. Many, perhaps, could hardly resist a secret satisfaction that the conspirator was dead. But with David the father's love overmastered every other consideration. "And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept: and as he went, thus he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The thought of that son, so dear to him, of his conduct, and of his tragic and untimely end, only added poignancy to his grief. Yet the King acted wisely in listening to the advice of Joab. "And the King arose and sat in the gate." Unrestrained grief is useless. It is harmful to others, as well as to ourselves. It serves no good end. There is a temptation at times to muse over our *own* sore and our *own* grief in a selfish way, forgetting that others have their trials which are special and peculiar to themselves, and losing sight of God and duty, and the claims of those around us. David was never more kingly and never more wise, than when he refused to gratify personal feelings, and responded to the call of his people.

But we must close. There are thousands to-day who have their own sore and their own grief, in whose case, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness." It may be a consolation to them to be reminded how such were specially remembered before God in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. And although the Temple has vanished, yet the God, whose dwelling-place it was, remains, the same God, with the same concern about the sorrowing. Carry all your sorrow to Him. If there is sin along with it, there is provision also for that. A way is open for all to the very heart of God, through the death of His Son. He who came from God's heart leads us back there by way of the Cross. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," is the message. And if the heart knows bitterness it may know also the sweetness of a love that has spared nothing, but suffered all. That which is your *own* sore and your *own* grief may become His; while His joy and peace may become yours.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 7.

AUGUST, 1918.

Price 1d

Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry.

By Dr A. T. SCHOFIELD.

ARTICLE II.

From Capernaum to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Bethany beyond Jordan, from Bethany beyond Jordan (Perea) to Jerusalem.—174 miles.

[*From Early Autumn A.D. 28 to January A.D. 29.*]

Scriptures—St Matthew xix. 1-15. Mark x. 1-16. Luke ix. 51—xviii. 17. John vii. 10—x. 40.

Our Lord, as we know, had refused to attend the Feast of Tabernacles publicly, on the ground that His "time was not yet." Truly such was the case, inasmuch as the spiritual harvest was not yet gathered; and as a matter of fact the only Feast of the Lord that Jesus attended at Jerusalem was, after all, the Passover. Pentecost and Tabernacles in their fulfilment were still in the near and distant futures, but He Himself was the fulfilment of the only feast He attended. He went up therefore privately after the caravan had started, and we find that on this occasion the Samaritans refused to allow Him to pass, as was customary, through their country. This may have been because in His growing popularity, and with the record of so many wonderful works culminating in the recent attempt in Galilee to make Him king, the Samaritans resented His face being stedfastly set towards Jerusalem, as "the place where men ought to worship," instead of to Gerizim. They resented Christ as the King of the Jews; but gladly received Him as the Good Samaritan at Sychar.

It is very remarkable, and worthy of our notice, that although the zeal of His Father's house might eat Him up, and any wrongs done there must be swept away, His own wrongs at the hands of the Samaritans were meekly passed by, and no judgment from heaven was called down upon their act, though it was not left entirely unnoticed.

We may note here that the Synoptics do not speak of any journey to Jerusalem until Christ goes there as king (on Palm Sunday), their distinct subject being the message of the kingdom; it is practically only from St John that we learn about the other visits. The omission of the visits to Jerusalem by the Synoptics, and the fact that it formed no part of the evangelistic labours of our Lord, as did the great cities of Galilee, may possibly be connected with the word of Isaiah i. 27, so well known to our Lord, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment;" it was not therefore a question of the offer of grace, as it was to the outcasts where Christ laboured. We cannot, however, thus fully solve the mystery of the limited sphere of our Lord's labours and their concentration in Galilee, for we seem here to touch some of the deeper counsels of God that are not yet revealed to us.

Christ then now leaves the ignorant, but, on the whole, friendly peasants of Galilee for the cultured hostile critics in Judea! It would appear that it was on this journey that the seventy messengers were sent before His face, as He made the detour to Jerusalem by the Jordan valley and Jericho, which was brought about by the behaviour of the Samaritans; and this led curiously enough to the parable of the Good Samaritan, which was probably spoken on the journey up to Bethany while passing over the very road on which the scene is laid. It is remarkable that our Lord represents Himself here under the guise of one of those Samaritans by whom He had only just been repulsed.

The road where the wounded traveller met his misfortune remains pretty much the same to-day, and the successor of the inn where he was entertained for two days as the Samaritan's guest stands now on the same spot (as shown by remains of Roman pavement), on the left of the road, while on the right the little village of Abu-Dis, which has furnished throughout all time the robbers of Jericho travellers, still crowns the crest of a hill.

One does not stay to consider the parable in detail, its beauties have so often been pointed out; but it is a blessed thought for a wounded sinner to know, whether he be regarded as a traveller on the Jericho road or as a sheep that is lost, that Christ's eyes, His heart, His feet, His hands, His power, His skill, His riches, His thoughts, and His very life, are all devoted to the sinner's rescue, recovery, and redemption. And what a rescue this was! "A certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was." This

is the very place where Christ found the woman of Samaria, and where He finds us with our backs to God, our faces to destruction, as we travel along the broad road; and there, robbed of our strength and sorely wounded by our sins, we come to ourselves, and recognise the true inwardness of our pitiable and helpless state. But if "where he was," describes our position, "where He dwelt" describes that to which we are translated by the love of the Good Samaritan; for this love, proved to our hearts in His atoning death, takes the lost sinner in his helpless misery up from the side of the Jericho road, and places him in the bosom of the Father (John i. 18). The contrast between the two "where he was" and "where He dwelt" measures the triumph and glory of redeeming grace.

We may perhaps wonder how far those who heard the divine music of this parable were able to enter into its harmonies and symphonies at the time, not least of which is perhaps the concept to which we have already alluded, of our Lord Himself as the Good Samaritan, whose discharge in its divine perfection of a neighbour's duties, forms an admirable contrast to the failure of those bad Samaritans, who refused Him right of way, to discharge theirs.

And now we come to the idyll of Bethany (briefly touched on in the first paper), the only house on earth, so far as we know, of which Christ was unmistakably the Lord and Centre. The Feast of Tabernacles was proceeding at the very moment that our Lord turned into the garden of the little house at Bethany, and there in accordance with the divine command, would doubtless be found the booth in which our Lord and Mary (and also Martha, and probably Lazarus when they could spare the time) would often sit. What strikes us about Bethany is that Christ was absolutely at home there; He was not so much a guest as an essential member of the household that completed the family; the natural way in which Martha makes Him the confidant of her small troubles is a sure proof of this. We lose no time if we ponder here awhile, but we lose much if we hurry on, for here surely in these meditations on our Divine Lord's pathway on earth, we may perceive as in a glass, the privileges which may be ours even now in entertaining the same Lord as our honoured guest.

Christ had come a long way, and as He sat thus in the garden booth, the two sisters were affected according to their several characters. Martha who served, saw the weariness of Jesus, and has-

tened to minister to it. Mary discerned the fulness behind the weariness, and drew from it. To our Lord this was no expression of selfishness but gave Him the deepest joy ; for He came not only to give His life a ransom for others, but also to minister, and in doing so He had meat to eat that Martha knew not of ; for her dishes were surpassed by the same food that satisfied Him at Sychar and at Nain, when in the one case the woman of Samaria, and in the other the woman who was a sinner, fed His soul with heavenly food, while they themselves never thirsted nor hungered again. Such is our Lord amongst us now in the inexhaustible riches of His love.

Mary we know was always misunderstood. If she did not serve, she was wrong ; if she did not rise to meet Christ at the grave, she was wrong ; if she anointed Him for His burial with the precious ointment, she was also condemned ; and yet as we shall see later on, it was in these very acts that she became immortal ; for wherever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world, this that Mary did was to be “ spoken of for a memorial of her.”

It will be observed that our Lord's presence absolutely makes no alteration in the manners and customs of the house ; He does not interfere with the respective spheres of the sisters, and it is only when appealed to by Martha that He makes any comment.

May we not see in the trio at Bethany, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the three forms of human life and character—to be, to do, and to suffer—the intransitive, the active, and the passive varieties of existence? The first is Mary, her characteristic was her state ; the next Martha (for curiously enough though the house was hers, she is always placed second by Christian instinct) is characterised by her service and activities ; while Lazarus is the one who suffered the pains of death and is inseparably connected with them. With great reverence may we further venture to suggest, that in these three forms of human life, we see some faint reflection of the characteristics of the Trinity. The “ I am ” exemplifies state or being, that of the Father ; the agent, the energiser and the quickener of all spiritual life, is the Holy Ghost ; whereas *the One who suffered is the One whose steps we now trace with reverence to Calvary.*

(Article II. to be concluded in our next.)

The Book of Psalms.

By WALTER SCOTT.

Psalm 19.—This Psalm naturally divides into three parts. (1) The testimony of creation—especially the heavens—to the glory of God. (2) The written law of Jehovah, and its witness to His gracious character and attributes. The first witness is to the heathen world (Rom. i. 20). The second testimony is to Israel, to whom were committed the living oracles of God, His law and ordinances. (3) The spiritual effects of the law upon those who bow to its Divine Authority. In brief, the object of the Psalm is to make God known to the heathen and to Israel.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” The heavens are the work of God’s fingers (Ps. viii. 3). The firmament or expanse the work of His hand (xix. 1). Our globe is not alluded to in the Psalm. The solar system is more than a hundred million times greater than our earth. The millions of suns, of stars, of worlds undefiled by the presence of man—heavens of indescribable beauty are the celestial witnesses to the glory of God; that is to the Majesty of Omnipotence, to infinite wisdom, to eternal existence, and to the surpassing goodness of the Creator. The Solar system is a never failing preacher and teacher (verse 2). Day and night the heavens speak to man, wherever found. The sun by day pours out its wealth of testimony to the glory of God; while moon and stars by night take up the story. The Gospel in its universality is founded on this very model (Rom. x. 18). We may add that the glory of God is set above the highest heavens (Ps. viii. 1). God’s glory is the reflection of what He is.

The second witness of God is the law. The law of Jehovah addresses itself to a people in covenant relation with God, hence the frequency—seven times—of the term **Lord** or Jehovah. This beautiful and significant title applies to the redeemed part of creation. These are the two books given to us by God. (1) The Book of **Nature**, which testifies of God the Creator. (2) The Book of **Revelation**, here termed the law of Jehovah. In this latter the moral excellencies of God are made known, as love, pity, grace, tenderness, compassion, mercy, etc. The law of Jehovah operates in the moral and spiritual world. What this law is, and what it effects, is the burden of verses 7-11. Each clause, each

word contained in those five verses should form a subject of prayerful and careful study.

“ Presumptuous sins ” (verse 13) were, under the law, distinguished from sins of ignorance (Num. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xvii. 12, 13). Unsparing judgment was meted out to presumptuous sinners. Sins of ignorance were met by sacrifice and consequent forgiveness. The sin of apostacy, for which there is no remedy, seems to answer to the presumptuous sinner under the law (Heb. vi. 4-6; x. 26-29). There is neither sacrifice nor forgiveness for high handed sin or the “ great transgression ” under the law, nor for apostacy under the gospel. We would add, apostacy **from it** is impossible for one truly born of God.

Divisions.

- 1.—The heavens declare God’s glory, verses 1-6.
- 2.—The law unfolds Jehovah in saving and blessing, verses 7-11.
- 3.—Sins and an appeal to Jehovah, verses 12-14.

Notes : Biblical and General.

The Effort to Dethrone Christ and Set Aside Christianity.—

The other day we were standing opposite a large and well appointed shop in Regent Street—one of the most important thoroughfares in the west-end of London. At first we did not take in the situation. There were books of various kinds in the window, and a figure of Christ in the background, and we were not sure what kind of a depot it could be, until our eye rested upon the words, “ The Star of the East.” Then we knew where we were. In the window, displayed in a prominent position, was the announcement that a great teacher was expected shortly to appear; that many were looking for him; and that it behoved all by regulating their lives and doing what good they could to be prepared for his arrival. This declaration, of course, had no reference to the coming of our Lord. There was a figure of Him, as we have said, in the window, but in the background, as though to be supplanted by this other “ coming one.” And this was in the centre, so to speak, of the world’s Christianity!

We were reminded that after all, the whole situation may be summed up in this way, that, the world is awaiting the arrival of two men—the Christ and Antichrist. This is how it is put in 2 Thess. ii. Three times over we read such words as these: “ And

that man of sin be revealed ;” “ That he might be revealed in his time ;” “ And then shall that Wicked be revealed.” While the chapter also speaks of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. For which are we waiting? And whose coming are we helping on?

* * * *

We have also had a book sent to us called **The Theocracy of Jesus**: “ a paper read before the ‘ Brotherhood ’ affiliated with Bank Street Chapel of —— ;” and in its printed form addressed “ To all sincere and earnest Ministers of Religion.” How such a paper, which is a flat repudiation of everything **distinctively** Christian, could be allowed to be read in connection with any “ chapel,” or how any audience that had any respect for its own intelligence could listen to the end to such a production, it is difficult to understand. We can only say that if anyone attempted to lecture on English history or literature or some scientific topic, and displayed as much ignorance of his subject as the author of this pamphlet does of Christianity, he would surely have found empty benches in front of him before he had finished. But it seems as if anything were good enough as an attack upon Christianity, and especially upon the teaching of the Apostle Paul; and as if anyone, however limited his own personal experience and knowledge, was considered capable of presenting his fellow beings with a brand new religion infinitely preferable to that taught by Christ and His apostles, endorsed though it be with the lives of saints and the blood of martyrs throughout all the centuries since.

In a preface written by a friend and admirer we are told that “ a new vista is opened by this *unassuming* address.” The italics are ours. Of its unassuming character let the reader judge, for in the previous paragraph we are informed that the author dismisses “ summarily the Christology of Paul.” And as if this were not enough on the part of the writer himself, his friend announces that in the face of such a pronouncement as we have before us, “ Ministers of religion, in particular, will have to revise not only their creeds and tenets, but their whole outlook on life.” Such a declaration (so calculated to take away our breath!) might be expected to be followed up with some show of reason and force of appeal. Our readers must draw their own conclusions from what follows.

We are told that Christianity is “ impaled and now stands self-condemned (?) by its utter helplessness in the midst of dis-

ness, to prevent which is not only one of its self-imposed tasks, but the *raison d'être* of its existence." This is not the fault of Christianity as received from God, but the want of it. Christianity cannot work unless men adopt it. Of Christ we read, "He could there do no mighty work because of their **unbelief**." It is not Christianity but unbelief that stands impaled and self-condemned.

Then we come across the startling statement (and this really forms the main thesis of the book), "Many of these doctrines—some of them basic principles of the Christian faith—had not been thought of until years after His (Christ's) death. Among these is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." What are we to say of such a statement as this in the face of Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; ix. 9-10, 31; x. 32-4?

Again, it is asserted "that Jesus neither claimed Messiahship for Himself, nor did anybody else claim it for Him during His lifetime." Matthew xvi. 15-18; John i. 49; iv. 25-26, contain the plainest affirmation of His Messiahship, in the form of confessions by others, and accepted, without any reservation whatever, by Christ. And in the last case we have a distinct declaration on His own part. Further, we are challenged "to find a single Christian doctrine or dogma based on the teachings of Jesus." What did the audience think, we wonder, of such a challenge as this!! The truth simply is that almost every doctrine developed in the epistles is either expressed or implied in the teachings of Christ. We have already mentioned two; the Resurrection, which is the very key-stone of the arch of Christianity (see also John xi. 23-26); and the Messiahship. New birth is taught in John iii. Salvation by grace through faith, in Luke vii., x., and xv.; John v. 24, etc., etc. The gift of the Holy Spirit, John i. 33; iv. 14; vii. 38-39; xiv. 6, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, etc. Christ the life of His people, John vi. 35, 57; xiv. 6 and 19, etc. The love of God to the world and of the Father to those who believe, John iii. 16; xvii. 23 and 26. Sonship (so largely developed in Paul's epistles) is found in Luke xv.; John viii. 31-36; xx. 17. But enough. This "iconoclast" before he attempts his hand upon Christianity, should at least acquaint himself with what he proposes to break up. As a matter of fact, he is profoundly ignorant of what Christ and Paul really teach. They are in perfect accord, properly understood, and due allowance being made for difference of dispensation. Christ spoke of a spiritual kingdom, so does Paul. The

former speaks of a kingdom on earth in manifest power, and displacing all other kingdoms, and so does the latter, and the one is quite as ethical as the other. The author, whose book we have in review, makes everything of the so-called "golden rule," and he believes that the emancipation of mankind from all the ills to which flesh is heir, is to spring out of the acceptance of it. But he seems altogether to overlook the fact that the great apostle of the Gentiles gives as much prominence to this "golden rule" as Christ Himself. (Read Romans xiii. and Gal. v. 22-26; Eph. iv. 31-32; v. 1-2, and 25.) If, however, he thinks that unregenerate sinners and those who reject the Christ of God are going to carry out the golden rule he is very much mistaken.

What is Going to Happen?

A Bird's-Eye View of Truth relating to the Second Coming of the Lord.

We are all interested in what is going to happen in the future, and if it is something which affects us personally, we are all the more interested in it.

Now, whatever we may think of the Bible, it is a book of true prophecies—that is, of reliable information for people about events which were ahead of them when it was written. All the prophecies it contains have either been fulfilled or are capable of being fulfilled in the future. You cannot pick out a single prophecy and say, "This has never come to pass, and it is impossible for it to come true hereafter."

I want to speak for a moment about two sets of prophecies in the Bible.

The first set is contained in the first part of the Bible, called the Old Testament, and relates to the coming of Christ into the world, more than nineteen hundred years ago.

People differ a great deal about the time when the books of the Old Testament were written, but they all agree that even the latest of them was written long before Christ was born.

We find it said in the Old Testament:—

1.—That a Saviour or Deliverer of the people should come (Gen. xlix. 10; Numb. xxiv 17; Deut. xviii. 15; Isa. ix. 6-7, Iv. 4-5).

2.—That he should be a descendant of King David (2 Sam. vii. 12-13; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. xi. 1, 10; Jer. xxiii. 5).

3.—That he should be born in Bethlehem (Micah v. 2).

4.—He should suffer (Gen. xxii. 8; see John i. 29; Isa. liii.; Ps. xxii.; Dan. ix. 26; see 1 Pet. i. 11).

5.—He should reign (Ps. ii. 6-8; xlv. 3-7; Isa. ix. 6; Dan. ii. 44, vii. 13-14; Micah iv. 7; Zech. xiv. 9).

These prophecies, it will be observed, are of a very definite character—quite unlike the vague predictions of sham prophets—and they have been fulfilled, or will be (for some prophecies were only partially fulfilled), to the letter. We have, therefore, every reason to expect that if part have been fulfilled, the remainder will all come to pass in due time.

The following are some of the Old Testament prophecies which have already been fulfilled:—Gen. xiv. 13-14, see Exodus I. xv.; Deut. xviii. 15, see Acts iii. 22-26; Psalm ii. 1-3, see Acts iv. 25-28; Psalm xxii. 1, see Matt. xxvii. 46; Psalm xxii. 8, see Matt. xxvii. 43; Psalm xxii. 18, see John xix. 24; Psalm xxii. 22, see John xvii. 26, xx. 17; Isa. vii. 14, see Matt. i. 23; Mic. v. 2, see Matt. ii. 1; Isa. lxi. 1-2, see Luke iv. 17-19; Zech. ix. 9, see Luke xix. 38; Zech. xi. 12-13, see Matt. xxvii. 1-10; Isa. liii., see Matt. viii. 17; Matt. xxvii.; 1 Peter ii. 24, etc. There are others equally definite which yet remain to be fulfilled.

And this is why it is necessary for Christ to come a second time, but not until certain other things have happened, which the Scriptures also foretell.

The most precise and definite of these things are the following:—

1.—The Gospel must be preached to all the peoples of the world (Mark xiii. 10).

2.—The Jews must return to their own land (Isa. xiv. 1-2, lx. to lxii.; Amos ix. 9-15; Micah iv. 1-7, vii. 19-20).

3.—The Man of Sin—the Antichrist is to be revealed (2 Thess. ii. 3-10).

But we also have to remember that our Lord's second coming is in two parts. He comes first for His own. And this may happen at any moment without any intervening event. Then He comes with His own to judge the nations and take His kingdom. (See 1 Thess. iv. 13-17; Rev. xix.)

As the Bible has been so absolutely truthful about these things and about the first coming of the Lord, may we not look with com-

plete confidence for a fulfilment of the remaining prophecies, those about our Lord's second coming?

1.—That He will first come in the air and receive to Himself the true believers who are alive and remain (as well as all dead saints), (1 Thess. iv. 15-17; John xiv. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 20-23).

2.—That then there will be a period of great tribulation, to last probably forty and two months. True believers being the salt of the earth (Matt. v. 13), and being removed it would seem natural that great corruption and misery should follow (see Matt. xxiv. 21-22; Luke xvii. 26-37; 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5, 13; iv. 3-4)

3.—That the Holy Land will be the scene of warfare and bloodshed, the bulk of the Jews being still unwilling to recognise Jesus as the Messiah (Zech. xii. 2-3, 8-9; xiv. 1-4, 7). Conversion of unbelievers does not seem to be excluded during this time, but their trials will be very great and they will have a special reward (Rev. vii. 13-17, xiv. 6-13, xv. 2-4, xx. 4).

4.—The Lord Jesus will come in person to Jerusalem as King, will defeat the powers arrayed against Him and His kingdom, and will reign in Jerusalem (Zech. vi. 12-13, xiv. 4-9; Rev. xix. 11-21; Psalm ii. 6).

5.—The Millenium will follow. Christ will reign 1000 years, and there will be unexampled peace and prosperity in the world (Rev. xx. 4-6; Isa. ii. 2-4, xi. 1-9; Isa. xxv. 6-8, lx.)

6.—Last of all will come the judgment of the great White Throne (Rev. xx.), for which all the dead will be raised with their bodies (the living having been judged previously—Matt. xxv. 31-40), and give an account of their works and be judged accordingly.

Our Lord has repeatedly warned us in the Gospel to be on the watch for these happenings (Matt. xxiv. 42, xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 32-33; Luke xxi. 34-36). He has expressly told us that they will come suddenly and unexpectedly, and that no one will know the day or the hour. And the Scriptures everywhere indicate the unreadiness of the world. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn," we are told. And again, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." The important point for us is—Are we ready for Christ's return? Meet the Lord we must some day, either at His coming or the Judgment Day. Shall we be among those who will rejoice at His appearing, or tremble? (Matt. xxv. 10-12; Luke xxi. 26-28; Luke xix. 11-27; 1 Thess. v. 1-10; 2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

The Gospel in the Book of Ruth.

By R. E.

The Return to Bethlehem.

The two daughters-in-law start to return with their mother-in-law to the land of Judah, but Naomi wishes them to remain in their own country. Possibly she felt ashamed of all that had happened during the past ten years. To have taken the women back with her would have been a public witness to her wrong course in allowing her sons to ally themselves with the daughters of Moab. This would have been a sad reproach to Naomi. Evidently she would have preferred to return to Bethlehem alone. It is not always easy to get rid of the consequences of wrong doing. These two widows that accompanied Naomi from the land of Moab were a witness to her wrong course, and all her pious phrases can scarcely conceal her sense of it. She has to confess, "It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me" (verse 13). What a confession to be compelled to make! Does it not tell us that we can never help others while we ourselves are away from God? How sad to have to send these two women back into their heathen darkness! "Behold, thy sister-in-law is-gone back unto her people and **unto her gods,**" are the words which fall from Naomi's lips as she tries to persuade Ruth to do likewise.

But Ruth is of a different mind. No persuasion on the part of her mother-in-law can induce her to separate from her. Of Orpah we read, she "kissed her mother-in-law" and went back, but "Ruth clave unto her." The two women take different roads, and, as far as we know, never meet again. To what different ends the two roads led! Do we not see this constantly happening? Two people who may have walked together and grown up together, and even lived together—people who have had the same training and the same surroundings and held the same views—who have inhabited the same district and perhaps the same street—take an opposite course and are separated for ever. How can we explain it? In one sense we cannot, we only know that it happens. We know that brothers and sisters—children of the same parents—growing up side by side, become at length separated, even as Orpah and Ruth were, the one choosing the world and the other Christ. Orpah, means a skull, Ruth, means friendship. Is there not some-

thing significant in these names? Orpah chose the world with its pursuits and its religion—and it is only a skull—for “the world passeth away and the lust thereof.” Ruth clave to Naomi, and her friendship for one of God’s children brought her into blessing and rest.

Yet, up to a certain point, how much Ruth and Orpah had in common. They belonged to the same country, they had married two brothers, they were both daughters-in-law to Naomi, they both accompanied her at the commencement of the journey, they both wept when she spoke of separation. But here the resemblance ends. Have we not a somewhat similar picture in the ten virgins of Matt. xxv.? Between the “wise” and “foolish” there were many points of resemblance. All have one description—virgins, all took lamps, all went forth to meet the bridegroom, all slept, and all awoke at the cry, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh.” And yet what a gulf separated them when that moment arrived. From this point they had nothing in common, and their road lay in opposite directions. So it was with Ruth and Orpah. Ruth was determined to go on, whereas Orpah decides to go back. And it is just here the mystery of man’s responsibility and God’s sovereignty comes in. Both hath to be allowed for. Orpah had precisely the same opportunity as Ruth, and it was open to her to make the same choice. We can only say that those who choose aright have God to thank, and those who choose wrongly have only themselves to blame. It is well for us to feel all the weight of this solemn fact, that there is a right choice and a wrong one, and that men and women are constantly making either the one or the other.

It is well, too, to note Ruth’s earnestness and determination. She is in every way an **elect** soul. A fact which appears again and again as the narrative proceeds. What can be more beautiful than her avowal, “**Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried, the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.**” It may be, that in their former intercourse Ruth had caught some vision of the faith that was in Naomi, though it lay buried under much worldliness. In the household of her husband some glimpses of Israel’s greatness, and connection with the true God, may have been given to her, and she had re-

sponded. A need had been awakened which she felt only Israel's God could satisfy, and she was following Naomi not merely for her sake, but because of the light which was her's.

Supreme moments come in all our lives, and so much depends upon the use we have made of previous opportunities. Outwardly, perhaps, these two women were very much alike, but there the resemblance ended. During the past ten years one had been yielding to influences that had had little or no effect upon the other. Nor did the cleavage appear all at once. For a time they seemed to be of one mind. "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people," was the language of both. But as the pressure became greater the point of separation was reached, and Orpah went "back unto her people and unto her gods."

Alas! for the position Naomi occupies in this scene. A child of God, an heir of the promises, one who had her part and portion in the promised land, yet feeling the necessity, because of her own unfaithfulness, of urging those naturally dear to her to return to idolatry and the world. What an unenviable position is that of the backslider! To what straits and shifts and pitiable expedients is such an one not reduced? Yet better to return alone and disgraced than not at all.

In the midst of such a dark and degrading picture, the conduct of Ruth, comes as a welcome relief, "Ruth clave unto her." And although the utmost pressure is brought to bear, nothing can move her from the fixed resolve to which she had come. "**Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.**" These were strong inducements. The two women were no doubt attached to each other. Had they not been the wives of two brothers? They were both widows, and this would create a natural sympathy. They were of the same nationality and country, and had been of the same religion. Such links appeal in the strongest possible way to the natural mind. Yet Ruth is immovable.

There is perhaps no more splendid resolve, nor one couched in finer terms, on record, than that contained in verses 16-17 of our chapter. Ruth's break with her old life is complete, and her committal absolute and irrevocable. It is well when in every life there comes some high resolve of this kind. It gives strength and tone to all that follows. Such light is never lost. Can we look back to some moment when we arrived at a great decision, when boldly and

unflinchingly we took a step that was to affect all our after life? There ought to be this in every career. Such there was in Ruth's.

Someone has said :—

“‘If you wish to be good, the easiest, indeed the only way, is to be heroically so.’ That is profoundly true. We are not going to be commonly good until we are uncommonly devoted to goodness. That is to say, the easiest way to do God's will on the ordinary road is to bring to each task and duty a life of uttermost consecration. It is only the really full life that will make little things live. If there is to be the heroic flavour in our ordinary fellowships it must be born out of a supremely surrendered life to the fellowship of God in Christ our Lord. We are too prone to try to be good on a perilously low pressure, and we cannot get along. There is no strength in our goodness. We are not impressive. It makes no mark. It cannot burn a trail! There is not heat enough. If we had more heat, if we had more of the Holy Ghost, the ordinary things of the ordinary day would pulse with the power of holy consecration.”

All this is pre-eminently exemplified in the career of Ruth. Her after history is all a reflection of this one transcendent moment. All she accomplished subsequently flowed from this initial act. It was so tremendous that it lent its force to all that followed. She was “heroically good” to start with, and therefore we need not wonder at the climax of her history.

Naomi saw that “she was stedfastly minded,” and left speaking to her. These words disclose Ruth's character at the outset. She was “stedfastly minded” at the beginning, and she was “stedfastly minded” unto the end. Nothing, or very little indeed, is accomplished without it. This is true in every department of life, but more particularly so in the spiritual realm. Spiritual things demand it, and are worthy of it. Is not Christ worthy of as much devotion and attachment as was displayed by Ruth towards her mother-in-law? Let us resolve that we will make everything of Him, and that His company and the attraction of His Person shall be more than all beside.

“So they **two** went until they came to Bethlehem.” Here is a further lesson. We need the company of a fellow Christian, and he or she must be one whose face is in the right direction. Ten years before, the face of Naomi had been toward Maob. It had proved a land of desolation. Now it is towards Bethlehem, “the house of bread.” Let us see to it that we are in the place where God feeds His people, and that we remain there and never leave it.

Naomi is back at last! And the exclamation from all is, “Is

this Naomi?" What a sad confession she is compelled to make. But it was honest, and it shows she had repented. She hides nothing; and this is much to her credit. There is no effort to cover up her failure and sin! We do not think her complaint is so much against God as herself. **Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me.**" Here was the end of ten wasted years—bitterness and emptiness. Let us ponder the lesson, beloved fellow Christian. There can be no happiness and no prosperity if we go our own way. That is the way of death, and God has to testify against us. What a bitter experience had this child of God! So bitter that surely no one can wish to share it, or willingly run any risk in that direction.

Yet, thank God, there is another side. The wandering saint returns—the backslider is restored; and when that takes place God can bless. "The minding of the flesh, is death; but the minding of the Spirit is life and peace." So Naomi found it. Pleasure and prosperity were in store for her of which she had never dreamed. And in the end she is able to lay the child of Ruth and Boaz in her bosom, and the women say, "There is a son born to Naomi." "Thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, **which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.**"

And in the presence of all this grace it becomes us to bow in self judgment and lowly adoration. God can, and does, turn our very failures and mistakes into blessing. But far be the thought that this is to make us regard them lightly, or run into them carelessly. Rather, it should lead us to hate and refuse more than ever the flesh that can sin against so much goodness, and leave us only with adoring thoughts of a God Who, in spite of our misdemeanours, is yet able and willing to bring good out of evil.

(To be continued.)

One can pay "tithe of all manner of herbs," and at the same time "pass over judgment and the love of God," but one whose heart is filled with the love and judgment of God will not neglect the tithe, for he will consider it a privilege rather than duty. (Luke xi. 42).

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 9.

SEPTEMBER, 1918.

Price 1d

“The Lord of Peace Himself give you Peace.” (*II. Thess. iii. 16.*)

By R. E.

“Let not your heart be troubled.” “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”—*John xiv. 1 and 27.*

We hear a great deal to-day about War Lords. They occupy a foremost place for the moment, and they are filling the world with distress and anguish. Have we ever thought that there is a Peace Lord?—“**Now the Lord of Peace Himself.**”

Throughout the chapter from which these words are taken, the apostle has been referring again and again to the Lordship of Christ. About nine times we have the title Lord mentioned, until, in verse 16, he speaks of Him as the Lord of Peace. Surely this is one of the sweetest and most suggestive titles that even our Lord and Saviour bears. In the Old Testament He is spoken of as the Prince of Peace. In the New, as the **Lord** of Peace.

To the Thessalonians, who received the epistle, these words must have come as a most refreshing revelation. Certain words used indicate that they were experiencing anything but an easy time. “Your patience and faith,” says the apostle, “in all your **persecutions** and **tribulations** that ye endure.” And again, “And to you who are **troubled** rest with us.” “That ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also **suffer.**” To these tired and harassed disciples, not long converted, how much such words would mean: “**Now the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always by all means.**”

Let us consider, first, that Christ Himself possesses peace. He is never cast down, never troubled, never perplexed. Peace was always His. When from eternity He looked forward to His earthly mission, with all that it meant of suffering and humiliation, He had peace. And when it came, and brought with it an experience such as no human soul had ever known, His peace remained undisturbed. And still it is His through all the changes this sad earth witnesses. Yes, He is the **Lord** of peace. How blessed, infinitely blessed, Christ is in the possession of such a property. With ourselves, naturally, if we ever know peace, it

comes as a very brief phase of our experience. It is fitful and fleeting. It is never the same as His, unless it comes from Him. How many people there are who seem to possess most things except this one essential thing. The world does not know peace (except of a false kind) and it cannot give it.

II. Peace is not only possessed by Christ, but He gives it. "Now the Lord of Peace Himself **give you peace.**" And this peace will be ours the more stedfastly we fix our gaze upon the Possessor of it. Here is not only one who counsels us to have peace; a friend may do that while not himself enjoying the peace he would impart. We have to do here with the Lord of Peace Himself. And that very fact imparts peace. In a crisis, or moment of danger, what gives peace like being in the presence of one who is calm and undisturbed? That is precisely what we have here—not only peace, but the Lord of Peace Himself. What an advantage, and what satisfaction, in such a turbulent scene as the one we live in, to know One Whose title is "The Lord of Peace."

Nor can we forget that peace is just what He gave to His troubled disciples ere He left them. That dark betrayal night with all it portended did not disturb the Lord of Peace, but it greatly disturbed His disciples. The shadow of His departure hung over them. The disappointment of all they hoped for chilled them; and so the Lord commenced that wonderful discourse of His which opens in John xiv., with these peace-giving words: "**Let not your heart be troubled.**" And He spoke those words as no one else could speak them. We may try to comfort the bereaved, or the sorrowing, or the anxious, and we do it with faltering accents often, and we feel all the time how powerless we are to impart what we speak about. But Christ can say, "Let not your heart be troubled," as a command as well as a consolation. The very fact that the Lord of Peace Himself says this, should dismiss from us all corroding care.

And further on He adds some other words: "**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" Our Lord dwells upon some of the greatest truths in the Bible in this discourse; and what a revelation of His character it affords that He thinks first of all of the distress of His downcast disciples and was not above ministering comfort to them.

What did the Lord mean by "Peace I leave with you?"

Did it not mean that there was nothing either between themselves and God, or themselves and Him, to cause one moment's disquiet? Every question would be settled by what He was about to do for them. He assures them it is all peace **Godward**. But He adds to this: "My peace I give unto you," that it might be all peace **manward** also. In the world they would have tribulation; men would be against them; circumstances might sometimes be hard; but so it had been with Him and yet His peace always remained. He gives that peace to them. **My** peace I give unto you. How can He impart His own peace? Just because He is the Lord of Peace; and because He is **in** us, and we are **in** Him. As He said later, "That in **Me** ye might have peace." He is just a haven of peace, and in every storm and stress we hide in Him.

III. PEACE ALWAYS.

How full is the declaration contained in this verse in Thessalonians, "The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace **always** by **all** means." Always peace, this is the promise. Perhaps if one thing disturbs our peace more than another it is that disappointments and disasters happen which we cannot account for, or see any reason why they should have been allowed. Let us wait, and believe that all has happened for the best. If we knew all we should probably be praising God for that for which we are now ready to chide Him.

The late Reader Harris, K.C., in his book, "How I became an Agnostic, and how God saved me," relates the following incident which occurred before he was saved. He had been several years in Bolivia as the government engineer, but hearing that his mother was ill in England he was very anxious to catch the first steamer home having obtained six months leave of absence. "Being the Government engineer," he says, "everything possible was done to expedite my journey. I rode 400 miles on mules, and then went for 300 miles by train travelling day and night to the coast. When I reached Mollendo, a miserable hole reeking with yellow fever, I learned to my intense disgust that I had missed the steamer by six hours! I paced up and down, and I cursed God. There was not another steamer for a fortnight. Why was it, I asked, that I was hindered in this innocent and laudable purpose of hastening home to comfort my mother in her illness? Every day as I awoke to find myself in that fever stricken hole I cursed God afresh.

“ At last the next steamer was due. It was late. Two days passed. If only the other steamer had been half as late, I should have caught it. When it did come I hurried on board.

“ To my surprise the passengers seemed strangely silent. It was like a city of the dead. I asked what had happened. ‘ Haven’t you heard? ’ they said. ‘ No! Heard what? ’ ‘ The steamer preceding us up the coast—the finest on the line—went down in the night and all hands were lost.’ ‘ The s.s. ——? ’ I asked aghast. ‘ Yes.’ ‘ What about the passengers? ’ ‘ They were fortunately very few, but they were all drowned in their bunks.’

“ ‘ And that was the steamer I had missed,’ Reader Harris adds, ‘ and cursed God for missing.’ ”

In the above case the individual was allowed to see the reason of his disappointment, and why, at the first, events were allowed to transpire which thwarted his plans. It was all mercy. At other times, the explanation is postponed for months or years; possibly will never be made known until the light of eternity makes all plain. But there is the Lord of Peace Himself to turn to. He knows why all was allowed. And He gives “ peace **always.**”

The other day, a missionary away out on the borders of China had arranged to return home on furlough. His wife was in Scotland awaiting his return. Just prior to the date of starting he was struck by lightning and killed. On the face of it, there seems nothing to explain why such a calamity was permitted. He had been blessed to thousands; husband and wife were anticipating the joy of reunion after long separation; yet the lightning was allowed to do its work. Not long before this tragic occurrence, he had penned the following lines to his wife :—

“ Let not your heart be troubled, child beloved;
Cast all your care on Him
Whose love for thee so often hast thou proved,
E’en when thy faith was dim.

“ One word of His good promise has not failed thee—
In all the by-gone years:
And looking back across life’s chequered pathway,
What love and grace appears.

“ Commit thy way unto the Lord, He knoweth
The sorrows of the way:
And to the one who walks with Him, He showeth
The path of endless day.

“’Tis but a little while, He’ll come in glory,
 Then we shall fully see,
The meaning of this life’s perfected story,
 And praise eternally.”

Yes, in the light of eternity many things will become clear which are now dark and mysterious. In the meantime, may all that is tangled and perplexing and disappointing in our life drive us nearer to the Lord of Peace.

(To be concluded.)

God’s Blue Sky.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Is anything more beautiful to view,
 Than God’s clear blue?
 To see it o’er the ocean’s wide expanse,
 At one broad glance:
 A canopy of azure, love’s great tent,
 Above us bent.
 A triumph arch of faithfulness and love,
 Rising above.
 The robe of God—the robe Christ laid aside
 When once He died.

Is anything more beautiful to view,
 Than God’s clear blue?
 The cloudless, peaceful heaven of pardoning grace,
 God’s smiling face?
 The sunlit sky of faithfulness and love,
 Like wings above?
 The upward glance, when nothing is between,
 To mar the scene?
 These are as fair and fairer to my eye,
 Than God’s blue sky.

Is anything more beautiful to view,
 Than God’s clear blue?
 The cloudless sky of hope, in which outshine
 The beams divine:
 The golden city, than the sun more bright,
 In sinless light;
 The prospect of a future, where no sin
 Can enter in?
 This is as fair and fairer to my eye,
 Than God’s blue sky.

Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry.

By Dr A. T. SCHOFIELD.

ARTICLE II.—*Conclusion.*

From this quiet home our Lord at length proceeds, probably about the middle of the feast, to enter Jerusalem; and immediately the attention of the careless crowds is arrested by the extraordinary character of His teaching. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" And when officers were sent to take Him and returned without Him, for they could not touch Him, they witnessed: "Never man so spake." It is possible that some remains of the transfiguration glory may yet have lingered around the "beloved Son," at any rate His high lineage, displayed shortly before on the mountain top could not be hidden, although in His deep humility it was shrouded with a thicker veil than that which was upon the face of Moses, still

"Beneath the veil of His flesh divine,
Gleamed forth the light that were else too bright,
For the feebleness of a sinner's sight."

We notice here the dignity of the personality of our Lord; there was no apology for His words however scathing; no searchings of heart in Christ as in John the Baptist; He does not teach as having learned the things of God, but as knowing them; He speaks also not as approaching the truth from the outside but as knowing the heart of God from within; though selfless in one way, there was tremendous self-assertion ("I am the way") combined with a most profound humility. We find no trace of hesitation, doubt or regret; it is quietness and confidence that marked the strength of Christ as they should ours. As one has beautifully remarked, "Christ never enquires for the truth as Socrates, nor reasons about it as Plato; He knows it and proclaims it with the utmost certainty and simplicity." There is no trace of arriving at the truth, no sign of progressive revelation; and though the most humble of men His spirituality made Him at the same time infinitely remote and yet infinitely near. Absolute goodness is the character of Christ, and He is the sole standard of Christian perfection.

The common feeling of Christian scholars is that the opening of chapter viii. undoubtedly forms a part of Holy Writ, and may therefore be accepted as a genuine event in our Lord's life without further comment. The story itself is one of the most wonderful in the gospels. At the accusation, our Lord stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground; we have heard of His finger already as unstopping deaf ears, and casting out devils, but here it was used probably in obedience to Numbers v. 23, where the curses are commanded to be written, and also to be blotted out in the dust on the floor of the tabernacle with water.

Three times Jehovah wrote with His finger; in the law, on the tables of stone; in the prophets in the handwriting on the wall; and in grace, here in the dust. Each time men are weighed in the balances and are found wanting; for in this woman taken in adultery in the very act, may we not see the Jewish nation at that time, taken in adultery with the false gods of Greece and Rome, whose temples were the shame of Jerusalem and Jericho, so that at that time it was "in the very act."

The stone which the accuser without sin was to take, was a great piece of rock, which in stoning was mercifully thrown first, to destroy the life. The accusers, however, were in the presence of another judge than our Lord, mentioned here for the first time, and that is their own conscience (whether actually named here or not is indifferent): a judge so powerful that no hand was able to touch the stone of judgment. They were judged themselves, but alas! made the great mistake of leaving the One who alone could save them; and in going out one by one, they avoided the present judgment of their sin (which would have proved salvation to them), and put it off to the Great White Throne.

The woman on the contrary met her judgment there and then, and in her judge found her Saviour; who while condemning the sin, forgave the sinner. She was indeed in pretty much the case of the woman by Jacob's well; in both, the sin must be exposed before the remedy could be applied, and in the one: "I that speak unto thee am he," and in the other: "Neither do I condemn thee," poured in the oil and wine of the redeeming love of the good Samaritan.

. Passing from this scene, we return to our Lord's discourses to the Jews (chapter viii. 34), which are on the same ground as Galatians iv. Israel was now as Ishmael, and Jerusalem as Egypt and

Sodom; but the lower the state of the people the greater the glory of the Lord. It is only here that He reveals Himself as the great I AM; only here does He give utterance to those wonderful words: "I do always those things that please Him." If there were no other utterance in the Bible of our Lord Jesus but this, it would suffice to prove Him either the Son of God, or the most blind and pharisaical of His race. The infinite distance between our Lord and ourselves is revealed as in a flash by such words, if any were ever tempted to use them.

The chapter (St John viii.) closes with the pathetic note: "Thou art not yet 50 years old;" such an over-estimate of some twenty years to a man's age is not common unless there be a special reason for it. "His visage was marred more than any man, and there is no beauty that we should desire him," may point to reasons for this over-estimate. Only a few weeks before we read "the fashion of his countenance was altered," and we cannot but believe that on that supreme occasion of the transfiguration, the face itself was radiant with joy and glory. At Jerusalem, they thought that He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets, which was doubtless on account of the fashion of His face, that recalled the weeping prophet who cried: "O! that my head were water and mine eyes a fountain of tears," for "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases."

The blind man whose sight Christ then restored, is a remarkable character picture. Hard as iron before the Pharisees who would denounce his Saviour, he is as melting snow in the presence of Christ—"Lord I believe, and he worshipped him."

"The Good Shepherd" next fills our vision. It has been well noted that in the "therefore doth my Father love me," we have the only instance of a man who ever gave a motive for God's love.

Our Lord then leaves Jerusalem, and crossing the Jordan, finds a new gospel centre to take the place of that in Galilee, in His Perea ministry at Bethany beyond Jordan. Looked at broadly we may say that the Galilean ministry is most fully described in St Matthew and St Mark, that in Jerusalem by St John, while in St Luke we get what may be called the Perea ministry.

The next journey to Jerusalem was truly unique. Before however considering the feast for which our Lord journeyed there at Christmastide, we may notice the remarkable conversation on

the way. In speaking of Herod as "that fox," the Lord uses the only contemptuous expression that ever fell from His lips, as He showed that none could let or hinder His divine work.

Then St Luke gives us the words subsequently spoken by our Lord in the Temple: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not."

This completes the picture. We have first the fox after the hen, and the hen seeking to protect her brood; a touch we should have lost entirely but for the juxtaposition of the two sayings, separated as they were in actual time though united in thought.

The hen and her chickens suggest rather what has been called the motherhood rather than the fatherhood of God; one may refer to Deuteronomy xxxii. 18, for a similar conception: "Thou hast forgotten God that gave thee birth."

The feast which Christ now attended, was not a feast of the Lord at all; it was the feast of the dedication, commonly known as the feast of lights, and held on or about December 25th. It was instituted solely by Judas Maccabaeus to commemorate for eight days the dedication of a new altar of burnt offering, in place of the one profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees iv.) To keep this feast it was neither necessary nor customary to go up to Jerusalem, for each one could keep it with candles in his own home. Our Lord, therefore, goes out of his way to pay a most remarkable tribute of Divine appreciation, to the great Jewish patriot without whose devotion there would have been no country left to the Jews at all.

Three times Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is mentioned; each time at the feet of Jesus. She "sat at His feet." She wept at His feet, and she "wiped His feet with her hair after having anointed Him" (Luke x. 38; Jno. xi. 32, and xii. 3).

Books and Magazines are needed for our Soldiers and Sailors.
 Our friends must have hundreds of volumes on their shelves that would be a real help to our brave men. Many of our distributors say they cannot get enough of such books. Parcels should be sent, Carriage Paid, to Brider's Book Mission, 6 Stirling Road, Bath Road, Bristol.

Revived Interest in Prophecy, and the Key to its Interpretation.

It is a fact that cannot escape notice that the recent course of events has produced among Christians a marked revival of interest in the study of Scripture prophecy. The seriousness of what is going on is apparent, and the fact that there are many premonitory signs in what is happening is being in some measure realised. It is seen also that in the past far too little attention has been given to what Scripture teaches as to the future. The correspondence columns of a popular evangelical paper have for months past been crowded with letters on the subject. Over and over again it has been apparent that from a neglected study prophecy bids fair, for the moment at least, to become a matter that may occupy a prominent place in the minds of thoughtful Christians everywhere. But, among all the schools of thought and shades of opinion represented, there seems to be one consideration largely overlooked. Briefly put, this simply is that Scripture prophecy is a **divine** revelation, a consistent, coherent, divine scheme having definite divine purposes in view. There is too much resting on a mere piecemeal application to isolated events, an easy satisfaction that if a Scripture prediction or apocalyptic symbol finds what looks like a fulfilment in a passing event the meaning of prophecy has been secured.

It becomes us to remember what Scripture itself has told us. Speaking of prophecy, 2 Peter i. 19-21 shows that while we do well to take heed to it, finding it a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise, we ought to know this **first**, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation, for prophecy is divine in its origin—holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This, if it means anything, assures us that, since prophecy has come from God Himself, the spiritual usefulness of its study depends upon our apprehending the fact that Scripture prophecy is one whole, and its scope cannot be seized if we isolate or fail to correlate its various predictions. God has one great object before Him in the future, and that object must be kept before us if we would rightly understand and correctly place the steps by which He brings about its accomplishment. That object is the coming kingdom and glory of His

Son, and all Scripture prophecy tends and moves and points in that direction. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of its own interpretation." Let this be the criterion by which we judge the various systems of prophetic interpretation now being brought forward.

For instance, the idea of an apocalyptic symbol being fulfilled in the present scarcity of food supplies, or in the career of some present day notability, really amounts to a private interpretation. It belongs to the same class of ideas that interpreted the same things of the potato blight, and the rise of Napoleon. All such systems fail because the facts are in no true sense related to the great trend and drift of Scripture prophecy. They divorce the particular prophecy from all true or any real connection with the great theme of prophecy—the coming glory of Christ. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of its own interpretation."

It is impossible to over-rate the importance of seeing that the real object of prophetic testimony is the future manifestation of God's glory in Christ. Recognising this will make all the difference. If we view the church, or christendom, and the present age as the central object, instead of Christ and His coming glory, we will be taking a wrong centre for our system—as someone has said, we will be making a Ptolemaic theory of our own instead of the true Copernican one. In any real full sense it is of the future, of the season called "the consummation of the age" that prophecy treats. It is this same future period of crisis that provides the plane of incidence where prophetic words and visions and symbols meet and find their fulfilment in Christ, in His actions in judgment and power, and in the establishment thereby of His kingdom and glory. What else is prophecy given for but to reveal the accomplishment step by step of this great future purpose of God? It would indeed be matter for regret if this apparent revival of interest in prophetic study were to be diverted into a wrong channel, and left to expend itself on the largely unprofitable speculations and imaginations of historical interpretation. That confusion may be avoided, as well as that the true Christian hope may be maintained clear and bright, it is absolutely necessary to bear in mind that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of its own interpretation."

Isaiah.

Chapter VIII.—(Continued.)

F. C. J.

But turning back to Isaiah, the historical outlines fade, as mere history, and become prophetic of a far more serious rejection of the true "waters of Shiloah" in Immanuel Himself, the virgin's Son.

In what gentle grace the "Sent One" (Shiloah) of the Father came! How softly then flowed the stream of His goodness! Let one drink of those sweet waters and never more would that one thirst (John iv. 14). Let the blind wash therein, and straightway he "comes seeing" (John ix. 7); wherever they flowed there was life, and healing, and joy. Yet the waters were refused by "that people," and the Cross was the evidence and measure of that refusal, while the Roman was, in that day, in the place of the Assyrian, and again took away the place and nation—it remains scattered even unto this present hour.

And now to-day, as I write or you read, where are the waters of Shiloah—for we must learn what and where they are, not to refuse them? They are still "flowing softly," but it is through the Scriptures vivified by the Holy Spirit, and through those who have themselves drunk thereof (John vii. 38), by whom the "love of the truth" is still proclaimed. Alas, the story is unvaried, still these "waters of Shiloah" of the gospel of the grace of God are refused with ever-increasing repulsion, for one must **stoop** to drink them; till, consistently with the spiritual character of this dispensation, "the Assyrian" shall be found in that "strong delusion" which shall also be **sent of God**, and "they shall believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11-12); even the one great, dark lie of Anti-christ, which shall soon overshadow the whole of Christendom, and fill the dwellers therein with a misery as far more terrible than that inflicted by any earthly conqueror, as **spirit** has greater capacity for suffering than **body**.*

But again to return to our chapter. Not content with over-

*Nor is the present scourge of almost universal war in that sphere which has professed to accept Jesus as Lord and Christ, without its solemn testimony to the refusal of Shiloah, and the divine judgment on the nations in consequence.

flowing Syria and Ephraim, and thus fulfilling his mission, the Assyrian passes into Judah, still like the mighty river whence he comes, till that river becomes, in intensity, so deep as to reach even to the neck of a man; while, in extent, it covers, as a bird's wings, the whole breadth of "thy land, O Immanuel!"

Here these last words seem like a cry—an appeal on the part of the prophet himself: "An enemy's foot is on the soil that is Thine, O Immanuel—Thine, by ancient covenant, and Thou wilt yet overpay its value in Thy Blood. Wilt Thou—**canst** Thou—permit such a dishonour?"

Earnest as is this appealing cry, there appears to be no answer.

But is there not? Whence then that sudden change in the prophet's note from fear to the joyous triumphant chant that is now heard? Ah, God can answer a cry without any audible speech: in a moment He can put "gladness into the heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increase." Here then gladness finds expression in a defiant triumphant chant, thus:

Rage ye peoples, and ye shall be broken;
 Listen ye dwellers on earth afar;
 Bind ye together and ye shall be broken—
 Bind ye together and ye shall be broken—
 Consult ye in counsel, it cometh to naught:
 Utter the word, it effects nothing—

For—IMMANUEL!!

Here the same word—the Name of the promised Son is, as it were, the very answer to the appeal, and becomes Israel's loud, joyous battle-cry. Was there ever one like it? "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" was inspiring; but it challenged not all the far-off nations. Here is a feeble little remnant of a people, in the power of this Name, uttering the strongest challenge to all the mighty nations of the whole earth! "Do your worst! Make your military alliances! Form your new World-Empire!* Let the nations federated consult together! Thus perfect their plans! Then issue their orders! It will all amount to nothing; neither force nor guile can sever us from our God, for 'Immanuel'-God, the mighty God, in Jesus our Messiah, is with

*Note the intensive force of the repeated line, "Bind ye together:" this is the cry of the day: this is to bring universal and permanent peace!

us, and if God be with us, who can be against us." Oh, what strength and courage there is in such an assurance!

But now there comes a word from Jehovah to His servant Isaiah, with such power ("strength of hand") as accords with its importance:

Cry not ye "Confederacy,"
 As this people all are crying:
 Neither fear what they are fearing—
 Let not this, their dread, affright you.
 Sanctify the Lord 'Tz' baath;
 For indeed 'tis well to fear Him—
 Well before Him may ye tremble—
 So He shall become to you a
 (Refuge safe)—a Sanctuary;
 But to both of Israel's houses
 He shall be a stone of tripping—
 A rock that causes them to stumble.
 He shall be a snare and gin to
 Jerusalem: for its dwellers
 Striking foot 'gainst it shall stumble—
 Falling, shall be dashed to pieces—
 Being snared, shall so be taken.

There are one or two points that I would note from this: First we may learn the secret of courage in the midst of universal alarm. It is not in **natural** stoutness of heart; nor is it in listening to soothing words or false prophecies; but by the **introduction of a greater and countervailing fear.**

Precisely as the Lord, when sending out His messengers (Matt. x.) told them fully of the dangers, possibly death that awaited them, but strengthened them by the bitter tonic of "but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here was the greater fear to nullify the lesser.

So, again, in the fast-coming day when there shall be an image set up in the holy place of the rebuilt temple (Matt. xxiv.), what terror may well strike through all the dwellers upon earth at the edict that all who do not worship shall be killed (Rev. xiii. 15)! How does God strengthen His poor people? By sweet words of soothing comfort? By any promise of deliverance, so that they shall **not** be killed? Not at all, but by the tonic of "If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. . . . and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the pre-

sence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment riseth up for ever and ever." Thus the alternative that shall present itself to those then living will be, "If you do **not** worship—death: the first death of the body. If you **do** worship—death: the second death, the wrath of God forever and ever—now make your fateful choice: if you fear men most, and dread the separation of soul and body, then worship that "image," receive the "mark," but know that you will suffer eternally. If you fear God more, and have more dread of the second death, then refuse to worship the image, and die indeed, but it will be "in the Lord."

For now comes the sweet word of comfort—intended, not primarily for our day, although many a tombstone in our cemeteries bearing this inscription seems to deny this; but for that very time and none other: "**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth**" (Rev. xiv. 13). Ah, my dear reader, it is the wholesome fear of God that is to-day so minimised among us: the Church being thoroughly permeated with those reverence-destroying principles that govern the political sphere, all moving rapidly—as every thoughtful man will admit—from monarchy, through what may be termed conservative democracy; then through Socialism, ever getting more radical, to Anarchy, and finally to a return to a worse form of tyranny than ever, but ever to an increasing elimination of the "fear of God."

Surely we may well question, with some misgiving, what would be the result to-day of some widespread threatening terror, of which indeed the whole present condition seems to give a very startling foreshadowing, and well may we listen to the word of the Spirit through the Old Testament prophet, "Fear not their fear," taken up and repeated for our especial benefit by the same Spirit through the New Testament apostle: "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts"—set **Him** apart above all, give **Him** His rightful place in your hearts, fear only to dishonour **Him**, and then He shall be for a Sanctuary." But **who** shall be for a Sanctuary? "The same One who to unbelief is a "Stone of stumbling." "But who then is that Stone?" The Apostle Peter answers: **Jesus** (1 Peter ii. 3-8). But it is the **Lord God** we are to sanctify. Surely therefore it follows beyond all cavil that **Jesus is the Lord God**. Thus is His pure deity guarded by being placed in the very warp and woof of the Scriptures.

But next, here we have the first reference to our Lord as “**the Stone;**” but so small, and lying so low on the ground, that Israel, who expected Jehovah’s intervention in quite another way, and was looking for him high **up** among the great ones of the earth, overlooked altogether the Stone lying so low before them that they tripped over it, and **fell**; and by that fall salvation is come to us Gentiles.

For it is that very lowliness of the Lord of Glory (as He ever was) who came “not to be ministered to, but to minister (to our very feet, as it were, see John xiii.), and to give His life a ransom for many” that makes Him a very precious Stone to all whose faith sees the divine glory beneath the humiliation.

King Over the Storm.

“The Lord sitteth upon the flood”—Psalm xxix. 10.

He reigneth o’er the tempest, and His hands direct its course,
For the God of Love must triumph over hell’s most hateful force:
Though the world be plunged in conflict, still He “sitteth on the flood,”
And from out the direst evil God will bring supremest good.

For the sin of man can never thwart the Sovereignty Divine,
And, from out hate’s night, love maketh its own purposes to shine:
Joseph’s brethren meant him mischief—but he filled their sacks with corn:
Jews and Romans slew the Saviour—but the world’s release was born.

Now the hour of warfare teacheth godless culture to be vain:
But the piercéd hand is soothing heart and conscience in their pain:
Will the sickened world repent and seek elsewhere for its good?
Grace from Him, who ever “sitteth as a King upon the flood.”

WILLIAM OLNEY.

NOTICE.

We have a quantity of back numbers of this magazine to dispose of. They are offered at very cheap rates, viz. :—2s per 50, or 3s 6d per hundred, or 25s per 1000, **carriage paid**. Any of our readers who can purchase these will be rendering a double service. Their free circulation will do good, and the sum paid will help to meet the extra cost of the production of the magazine, which the war entails. Expenses are now very heavy.

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The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 10

OCTOBER, 1918.

Price 1d

“The Lord of Peace Himself give you Peace.” (*II. Thess. iii. 16.*)

By R. E.

“Let not your heart be troubled.” “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”—John xiv. 1 and 27.

ARTICLE II.

The question was asked the other day, Do our loved ones who have gone before know all that happens to those dear to them who are left behind? Because, if so, would it not disturb their happiness? And at once the answer seemed to come: “If they know anything, they know all. Their’s is a fuller knowledge than ours; and therefore they are not troubled.” Our troubles down here so often arise from a partial knowledge. We see only a little bit at a time of God’s plan and purpose; and the way it is all being worked out unrolls but slowly. Did we know more, and especially did we know all, our fears and regrets would be gone. Those early disciples were troubled because their Lord was going away. This is why He prefaced His last discourse with the words, “Let not your heart be troubled.” Yet had they known all the advantages which would accrue from His leaving them, they would have rejoiced instead of mourned.

IV. PEACE BY ALL MEANS.

And, lastly, not only does our text say, “peace always,” but, “by all means.” Whatever happens, may we have peace, seems to be the meaning here. The word translated “means” has the root idea of “to turn,” a “revolution.” So that amid all the changing scenes of life we are to have peace. Other translations give, “in every sense,” “in every way.” Thus we are to have peace in every sense of the word and under all conditions. Blessed experience! It must be so, if only the Lord of Peace Himself is with us. At every turn of the tide—whatever misfortune comes—

peace. At every turn in the road—whatever new circumstances or scenes arise—peace. And peace amidst all revolutions.

“The changes that are sure to come,
I do not fear to see.”

“It is recorded of Barnard Gilpin, a reformer who lived in the days of the Marian Martyrdoms, and was called the Apostle of the North, that he was famous for never murmuring or complaining, whatever happened to him—circumstances were always the best. Towards the close of Queen Mary’s reign, he was suddenly summoned to come up from Durham to London to be tried for heresy, and in all probability, like Ridley and Latimer, to be burned. The good man quietly obeyed the summons. On his journey his horse fell, and his leg was broken, and he was laid up at a roadside inn. His friends challenged him as to whether he could now say that all was well. But he still affirmed that all had happened for the best, and so it proved. Weeks and weeks passed away before his leg was healed, and he was able to resume his journey. But during these weeks the unhappy Queen Mary died, the persecutions were stopped, and the worthy old reformer returned to his northern home rejoicing.”

In this case we can see how an accident, painful as it was in itself, proved the means of escape from a greater calamity. But may it not often be so though we are not aware of it? Many an ill that we know of may have saved us from a greater ill of which we do not know. Our Lord said, “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” The point is, we must **believe**. Believe in God; believe in Christ, and then all must be well. In any case, this faith will bring peace.

If it is true that every individual by his very presence brings a certain atmosphere with him, how true must it be of the Lord of Peace Himself. In His presence we are in an atmosphere of peace, and in that atmosphere fear cannot dwell. It is not merely some peace-giving word, or an injunction to have peace, or even a promise of peace, which our text contains; it is peace personified—the Lord of Peace Himself. This is the glory of Christianity—that “all that it has, and all that it offers, is treasured up in a Person.”

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled,

neither let it be afraid." No one but Christ can speak such words. He places Himself in contrast with the whole world, and challenges it to give what He gives. The world can offer many things to its votaries—wealth, pleasure, fame—but peace it cannot give, for it does not possess it; and what are all these other things worth without peace? A servant of the Lord was on his way to catch a train, and he passed a blind woman at the entrance to the station. After taking his ticket he regretted that he had passed her without a word, and he went back. He commiserated her upon her loss of sight. And in reply came the answer: "There are other things to make me happy." She was a Christian. She had the Lord of Peace Himself with her.

Do you, my reader, know these "other things" that can make us happy? There is One, but only one, Who can say to us, "Let not your heart be **troubled**, neither let it be afraid."

What is it that is troubling you, or making you afraid, to-day? Is it the slowness with which your goal is being reached, and your purposes achieved? Someone has said:—

"The most searching discipline of life is never reached until things begin to be terribly slow. Slowness is one of the most exacting tests of character. We want to 'get there,' we want to reap the harvest to-day. When the snow begins to fall, and the rain comes down in a deluge, and all the roads of progress become muddy, we are apt to lose heart. When the funeral train arrives instead of the wedding chariot, when we sigh, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' then we have reached life's most exacting season.

"Can we endure slowness, which is the most burdensome part of hardness? Can we, if need be, go slow and keep on going? Can we walk and not faint?"

What is the burden you have to bear? What is it that is testing your strength of endurance? May the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always by all means. And may the gain also be yours which every grief carries within itself, when we accept it "in subjection unto the Father of Spirits and live."

"The more the cross, the better Christian!—
 God lays the touchstone to each soul;
 How many a garden must lie waste.
 Did not a tear-storm o'er it roll?
 Refining grief, a living coal,
 Upon the Christian's heart is placed.

“The more the cross, the more believing!—
 In desert lands the palm trees grow!—
 And when the grape is strongly press'd,
 Then doth its sweetness overflow;
 And strength lies hid in every woe,
 As pearls do in the salt wave rest.

“The more the cross, the more the praying!—
 The bruised plants yield sweetest balm;
 Man doth not seek to find the pole
 In quiet seas and steady calms;
 And how should we have David's psalms,
 Had he not had a troubled soul?

“O, Jesus Lord, the crucified!
 Now let the cross more welcome be,
 Nor let my soul complaining toss,
 But plant Thou such a heart in me,
 As patiently shall look to Thee
 For gain up yonder, for my loss.”

The Last Battle.

“The time for the proper exercise of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ is not yet arrived. The millennial day will see this. The battle which Abraham fought, the first recorded one in Scripture, is the type of the last battle of this age. It is the conflict which introduces the reign of peace founded on righteousness, when God will manifest Himself as the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. This is, as is well known, the special characteristic of the millennium. Heaven and earth have not been united, nor have they been in fact possessed for the blessing of man by the power of God, since sin severed between the earth and that which is above it, and the prince of the power of the air perverted all, so that what should have been, according to God's nature and counsels, the source of every blessing, became rather the point from which the guilty conscience of man cannot but look for judgment. Heaven, therefore, by man's own conviction, must be arrayed in justice against earth, because of sin.”

Article III.—“Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry”
 —is unavoidably held over until next issue.

Biblical Notes.

By WALTER SCOTT.

All Church, leads to coldness, pride, conceit. *All Gospel*, tends to looseness, no depth. Unite the two in your ministry. Paul's combined ministry was that of Gospel and Church (Col. i. 23-25).

The breadth of Christian ministry is the body of Christ (Eph. iv. 12), and the whole world (Mark xvi. 15). Anything short of this is to limit the grace and purpose of God.

Man is a tripartite being, consisting of spirit, and soul, and body. Death is the breaking up of this unity. Resurrection reunites them. When the spirit departs from the body that is death (James ii. 26) to us, but not to God, for "all live unto Him." The soul and spirit of man are distinct (Heb. iv. 12), though vitally connected, and never die. The soul is sometimes spoken of as the individual. Connect *knowledge* with the spirit, hence the mind; and *desires* with the soul, the heart is the seat of the affections.

There are eight great periods in human history—from the garden (Gen. ii.) to eternity (Rev. xxi. 5), as follows:—

1. *Innocence*, connect with Adam.
2. *Lawlessness*, connect with Cain.
3. *Government*, connect with Noah.
4. *Promise*, connect with Abram.
5. *Law*, connect with Moses.
6. *Grace*, connect with the Spirit.
7. *Glory*, connect with Christ.
8. *Rest*, connect with God.

The cultivation of holiness should be the servant's great aim, not power; this latter may exist where the former is lacking. See 1 Cor. xii. for the principle.

Unless you hold to the threefold division of the Revelation (i. 19) as containing a *past*, a *present*, and a *future*, it is impossible to understand the book. These divisions are strictly consecutive; they do not overlap.

More than a third of the Bible is occupied with this great theme, THE LORD'S COMING. The seers of old beheld it in

vision. The Bards sang of it. The prophets foretold it. The lower animal creation express themselves in the minor key waiting for deliverance. The hope of Israel, of creation, of the Church, is CHRIST.

The body of Christ does not consist of the aggregate of assemblies, but of *all* saints in this dispensation.

The "horse" symbolises *victorious power*; the "throne" *judicial and administrative authority*. The "horse" in Rev. xix.; the "throne" in Rev. xx.

We gravely question the oft-repeated assertion that the original sacred books have perished. The word of God liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter i. 23). There are mighty reasons why in certain grave occasions the originals cannot be appealed to. But to hold that they have perished is, we conceive, a grave mistake. Both the writers and the writings were inspired. The Pentateuch, written by Moses, was in existence for 750 years: compare Deut. xxxi. 24-26 with 2 Kings xxii. 8. If preserved for nearly eight centuries why not longer?

The Revelation closes with the eternal degradation of Satan, the triumph of God, and the exaltation of Christ.

The bodies of believers are raised *immortal, incorruptible, in power, in glory, and a spiritual body* (1 Cor. xv.). For the force of this latter statement see Luke xxiv. 39.

That magnificent Seventy-Second Psalm may be sectioned off thus:—

Character of the Reign—verses 1-8.

Extent and Completeness of the Reign—verses 8-11.

Tenderness and Grace of the King—verses 12-14.

The King Himself—verses 15-17.

Abundance—Great Prosperity—verse 16.

Ascription of Praise—verses 18, 19.

Prayer Ended—verse 20.



The "nails" which were hidden in the doors of the temple were fully as needful as the "gold" and "costly stones" which adorned the building. David knew this, so he took care to "prepare iron" for them as well as for the other" (1 Chron. xxii. 3 and xxix. 2.)

His Presence is Salvation.

Ps. xlii. 5-11; xliii. 5—(Margin.)

A great number of Christians under the present stress are finding themselves in the earlier experiences of Psalm 42, and unfortunately some stop there, to the detriment of their spiritual life, instead of noting the exceedingly simple way out of such a slough of despond. Tears day and night, cast down, disquieted, and such like, soon bring about a state of soul that means dissatisfaction.

The Psalmist, however, calls a halt, and challenges his soul thrice with the pertinent query, Why? Each challenge being faced with the emphatic declaration "His presence is salvation" The consciousness of His nearness is the solution of his difficulties. The circumstances outwardly may not alter, but this comforts, He is with me in it—"When thou goest . . . I will be with thee . . .") therefore it means salvation from outward foes as well as from inward fears. The Lord is at hand. This seems to be the turning-point, for soon he exclaims, "I remember Thee . . ."—he is occupied with another. Self-occupation is a poor thing at the best. The up-grade is immediately marked, for he is soon dwelling on the "loving kindness of God," not only in the daytime (i.e., when all seems bright and going well), but, he says, "in the night" (i.e., when matters seem darkest, fears are greatest, and troubles appear heaviest), "His *song* shall be with me." Only a child of God can sing under adverse conditions. When there is an appreciation of His presence, day and night, or their counterpart in temporal matters, will find the believer the same. "Thou art the God of my life," and, again, "Thou art the God of my strength." Life, of course, is the all-important essential, but he does not, as so many are content to do, remain at the foot of the Cross, blessed though the contemplation of this may be, but he makes progress, and realises the delight of proving God in the path of faith. This is advancing in knowledge. He not only knows God as the Giver of life, but also as the Sustainer, which brings rest of soul, a condition vital to the truth which follows. "Send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then . . . will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." This is the spirit of true worship. The first two thoughts

reveal what I receive from God, but in the last, as in His light and through His word, there is a higher standard set before me ; a position into which I am brought, where, because of what He is in Himself, my soul just revels in God. How easy then to say from the heart, as the Psalmist, " I will go unto the altar " to lay my gift there, an offering to the One who is not only God, but " God my exceeding joy."

We know from His own gracious promise that He will never leave, nor forsake us, but is it not true, our hearts are not always in the condition to recognise and realise His presence with us, and therefore as in another connection, we need to pray, " Open thou our eyes." He alone can do it. This is illustrated on three occasions. Gen. xxi. 19, in the case of Hagar, " the Lord opened her eyes . . ." to see God's provision in the place of death—water, which meant life ; 2 Kings vi. 17, when Elisha, to allay his servant's fears, prayed, " Lord . . . open his eyes." When this was done he, too, saw that heavenly host as their strength, and understood the secret of the Prophet's calm. Luke xxiv. 31, at Emmaus, " their eyes were opened," and they knew that the Stranger who had made their heart burn was none other than the Lord, their exceeding joy. But let us never forget, the revelation came through their making him a feast. His light and truth had led them to lay their gift upon the altar, with its subsequent reward. Thus we have another beautiful three-fold cord to draw us up from the depths (Jer. xxxviii. 13) to the heights of " Beulah," expressive of union and communion with Him, of whom we can say He is

God—my life.

God—my strength.

God—my exceeding joy.



" The firmament of Bible story blazes with answers to prayer, from the days when Elijah unlocked the heavens on to the days when the petitions in the house of John Mark unlocked the dungeon, and brought liberated Peter into their presence. The whole field of providential history is covered with answered prayers, as thickly as bright-eyed daisies cover our western prairies. Find thy happiness in pleasing God, and sooner or later He will surely grant thee the desires of thy heart."—Cuyler.

The Atonement.

An Enquiry as to its Nature, and the Teaching of Scripture: With an examination of a recent volume on the subject.

By R. E.

A book has recently been published entitled, **The Atonement in the Light of History and the Modern Spirit**; and the author is a well-known Professor of Divinity. Certain statements in the preface to this work reveal the present theological trend, and the condition of mind of many of the exponents of Christianity, regarding one of its cardinal doctrines. "Ministers have told me," the author asserts, "that they would fain preach it, but it is a puzzle to them. It is felt that the doctrines hitherto received are no longer possible . . . **The consequence is that the atonement is never preached**" (emphasis ours). Then follow some opinions expressed by the head of a well-known public school:—

"The Church had lost its hold because it had no message as years ago, when its message was that all are sinners, and Christ had died for sinners. And yet he could not accept that message himself (though he feels the need of a Saviour) because he holds it is unjust for the sinless to be punished, or make satisfaction, or die instead of the sinful."

And a preacher writes:—

"In my young days the forensic theory of the atonement was the main burden of my sermons . . . gradually it dropped out of my preaching . . . I find the Bible full of the doctrine of the atonement, but how is it to be interpreted? . . . We need a positive and definite pronouncement on this great and vital question."

These quotations are deplorable enough, and as the book in question touches upon fundamental doctrines, which exercise the minds of thinking men who give attention to such matters, it cannot be a waste of time to consider it; and having done so to state what Scripture teaches.

The main thesis of the book is, that during successive periods in the Church's history various theories of the atonement have been current; each theory being the outcome of the ideas that prevailed during a particular era. To quote the author's words: "Each successive age has seen the transcendent mystery in the light of its master idea, and fashioned its doctrine in this mould" (p. 54).

There have been three periods, according to our author: The Patristic, the Mediæval, and the Post-Reformation. In the first, what he calls, the Ransom Theory held sway; in the second, the Satisfaction Theory; and in the third, the Forensic Theory. Each was displaced in turn, and now all have been displaced by still another theory which this present volume unfolds.*

How are these theories of the past regarded? The author does not seem to make it quite clear whether he wholly rejects them or not; nor does he clearly distinguish between the original theory and certain erroneous ideas which became attached to them. Of the Ransom theory he says, "It is indeed a beautiful and effective conception, but it was cruelly abused" (p. 65). Later on, he speaks of "the unsatisfactoriness of the doctrine;" and again, "of its theological crudity." When he comes to speak of the Satisfaction Theory he says, "It dealt the Ransom Theory its death blow." As regards the Satisfaction Theory itself, he commences by praising it, adding, "it is nowhere positively erroneous" (p. 84). Yet, on the next page, he asserts it is constructed apart from the Holy Scriptures, "and is not based upon their teaching." Later, we are told, it is unscriptural "in its fundamental ideas." We should have thought this was sufficient to condemn it at once, and not a cause for commendation.

When we come to the Forensic Theory, we are left in the same doubt. On page 105, we are told, "It possesses this conspicuous merit that it emphasises at least two essential truths." Yet on the next page, we read, "The theory stands in direct and open contradiction to the fundamental article of the Christian faith, that Christ is one with God." Again, "The theory proceeds upon an unreasonable and, indeed, unthinkable assumption, namely, that Christ endured the wrath of God in our room." "The notion is a palpable absurdity." Transfer of punishment is described as a "flagrant illegality" (p. 110). It is "funda-

*The Ransom Theory means—"Sin was conceived as bondage; Christ was the Redeemer; and His life was the Ransom." The Satisfaction Theory is that view which contemplates Christ's death as the satisfaction of God's honor, sin having outraged Him as the Moral Governor of the universe. The Forensic Theory presents the doctrine of atonement in a legal mould. Sin is a violation of God's law. "The punishment had to be inflicted, and Christ offered Himself as a substitute for sinners, and suffered it in their stead."

mentally unscriptural." And the final verdict upon all three theories is this: "Each was fashioned by the spirit of its age, and passed away when a new age dawned" (p. 123), "and this theory (the Forensic) has gone the way of its predecessors." "It is withered like an uprooted tree." "It has passed like its predecessors into the limbo of theological antiquities" (pp. 124-5). "The first theory and the second are now mere 'fossil remains,' possessing only an historical interest; and as for the third, it, too, has passed into the limbo of dogmatic antiquities" (p. 174).

What are we to make of such conflicting statements? On the one hand, we read of a "beautiful and effective conception;" "It merits the highest praise a theory can win;" "Possesses this conspicuous merit that it emphasises at least two essential truths;" and yet, on the other, the Ransom Theory has "received its death-blow;" the Satisfaction Theory is "unscriptural in its fundamental ideas;" while the Forensic Theory is a "palpable absurdity," and a "flagrant illegality," and finally, all have passed away, withered, and cast to the limbo of theological antiquities, and have become mere "fossil remains"! Yet, in spite of this, the Professor proceeds to construct a fourth theory, which not only differs from, but is antagonistic to, all that has gone before.

Is it conceivable that during these three periods, stretching over more than a thousand years, the Church of God held nothing that was permanently true on such a vital and fundamental doctrine as the atonement? After a history of nearly two thousand years is the Church of God only just beginning to discover the truth? If so, what does this make of the work of that other Comforter Who was sent to guide into all truth?

To assert that all the theories held have passed away, have become withered, and have been cast to the limbo of theological antiquities, leaves us absolutely nowhere, and with nothing to stand upon. Nor is such a theory consistent with other statements in the book. On page 53, we read:—

"The truth is infinite, and the Church's knowledge of it has been a continual growth. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she has penetrated ever deeper into the ineffable mystery, and appropriated evermore of the inexhaustible treasures which are hidden in Christ."

Now, if this is true, it must have been so during the three periods to which reference has been made. Judging from the Professor's own report of these three periods does it appear as if there had

been continual growth? Is continual growth in the truth simply the adoption of one theory in the place of another until after a thousand years we are left with little else than "theological antiquities" and "fossil remains?" Is that "penetrating ever deeper into the ineffable mystery" of the atonement? Is that how the Holy Spirit guides and teaches?

On page 57, we read that "our Lord could not at once accomplish the atonement and interpret it. . . . The latter task was reserved for His apostles in after days when He was gone, and the Holy Spirit had come in His room **to guide them into all the truth**" (emphasis ours). Now, did He guide them into all the truth? The statement just quoted implies that He did, and we believe with all our hearts it was so. Then, after all, we **have** the truth of the atonement. It is to be found in the pages of the New Testament. What more do we want, except that the same Holy Spirit Who first imparted this knowledge should explain it to **us**? And He is surely as competent to do the one as the other.

But although our author asserts in one place that the apostles were guided into all truth, he seems later on to rob this of all meaning, for he speaks as though truth is something that each succeeding generation evolves or manipulates according to its own fancy. In other words, as if each generation manufactures the particular kind of truth it thinks it sees, or feels that it wants. Have we then no revelation from God? and is there no such thing as truth that abides? We are told, "each successive age has seen the transcendent mystery in the light of its master idea, and fashioned its doctrine in this mould." Yet, according to the Professor's own showing, all this has come to nothing. Yet he boldly undertakes to "present the eternal truth in the light of the fuller knowledge which is the Holy Spirit's gift to our generation."

Evidently he means the knowledge we possess is fuller than the apostles! Speaking of their knowledge, he says:—

"Each of them proclaimed only so much of the boundless wonder as he had been enabled to appropriate. Each approached it by the path of **his personal experience**, and found in it the satisfaction of his personal need" (p. 51). **And again**, "Each saw . . . **only so much** as came home to him along the line of his personal experience and need" (p. 52). (emphasis ours).

Where is there any room here either for a complete revelation or for inspiration? Are revelation and inspiration merely mat-

ters of "personal experience" and "personal need?" No doubt both these have a place, but something must have been there beforehand to promote "experience," and satisfy "need," and the question is, what is that something? The apostles themselves had no doubt as to what it was. They do not hesitate to speak of "revelation," of "the word of the Lord," of "inspiration," of being "moved by the Holy Ghost." And consequently the New Testament is very much more than a book of personal experience—it is a revelation of "the truth"—"Thy word is truth." All that can ever be known of these matters of which we are treating is there revealed, and no one can know anything beyond what has already been made known, though certainly our **acquaintance** with the truth may be only partial. But the point is that the truth is already there enshrined in the New Testament.

In the face of repeated assertions about "larger truth ever breaking from the Living Word," of "fuller knowledge," which is the Holy Spirit's gift to our generation; and of the "Church penetrating ever deeper into the truth," is it not a little strange that with all this pretended advance such deplorable darkness and uncertainty should fill men's minds within the Church, as the preface to this book suggests. Here are learned men confessing their ignorance and doubt. We are informed "the books which are written now-a-days are either negative criticism, ad nauseum, or futile attempts to galvanise the dead past. The consequence is that the atonement is never preached" (Preface p. vi.). What a curious kind of anti-climax! The result of "fuller knowledge" and of "light streaming in through so many opened windows," is ignorance and doubt! The two conditions are utterly irreconcilable, and leave us without any choice but to reject the view that we have advanced beyond the standpoint of the apostles. Not only is such a view repugnant to every just appreciation of a divine revelation, and its inspired record, but the whole condition of the Church, in which ever quarter one looks, testifies against it. Nor is the book under review an exception. Scripture knows nothing of an advance upon apostolic doctrine, except in the sense of "going beyond," which is apostacy. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith.**" And again, "For the time will come when they will **not endure sound doctrine.**" This is a very different picture from the one the book under review presents.

The apostles themselves never suggest that they were putting forth their "own theory," or that what they said was merely their "way of looking at it." Paul says, to the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all **that which I also received;**" and to the Galatians, he writes, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For **I neither received it of man,** neither was I taught it, but by the **revelation** of Jesus Christ."

THREE THEORIES OF ATONEMENT.

We have seen that the main thesis of this book is that during successive periods of the Church's history different theories of the atonement have held the field, and each in turn has been displaced, until they are all now nothing better than "theological antiquities" and "fossil remains." We are not concerned to bolster up any mere theories, but all three—the Ransom Theory, the Satisfaction Theory, and the Forensic Theory, as they are called, have their foundation in Scripture. Although it is not pretended that all that men may have deduced from, or tacked on to, those theories is correct.

"Ransom" is a well-known Scripture term. It came from our Lord's lips (Matt. xx. 28), and is found in the writings of the Apostle Paul (1 Tim. ii. 6). Indeed, without ransom there could be no redemption. One element in Redemption is the price paid for the recovery of that which has been lost. That Ransom is Christ Himself. Any view of the atonement, therefore, which omits the thought of ransom cannot be a true one.

The Satisfaction Theory is equally based upon Scripture. It lies on the surface of, and is embedded in, the Levitical offerings. The book in question never suggests that these offerings were ordained of God, but affirms that "Israel started on the heathen level" (p. 33). It speaks of "the stereotyped phraseology of the priestly ritual," and again, of "the heathenish conception" (p. 34), in spite of the inspired statement, again and again repeated, "The Lord said unto Moses." We are warned against "the fatal error of interpreting the fulfilment in terms of its dim foreshadowings." But is there not another side to this? Were those foreshadowings so dim, and misleading, that they present to us no likeness at all to the antitype? "The Levitical sacrifices were mere types of the sacrifice of Christ," we are told. But in what

sense were they types, and of what use are they, if we can learn nothing from them and see no likeness? In respect of the Trespass offering we have the Satisfaction Theory clearly indicated. In Lev. v., after trespass in connection with the affairs of everyday life is dealt with, we come to another kind of trespass altogether. Verse 15 speaks of "sin through ignorance **in the holy things of the Lord,**" and we read, "And he shall make **amends** for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and **shall add the fifth part thereto.**" Is there no thought of satisfaction here? In the matter of sin God's holiness has to be taken account of as well as man's need. And Christ's sacrifice to be sufficient had to satisfy the one equally with the other. Indeed, if it had not satisfied the demands of the first, it could not have sufficed for the second.

As to the **Forensic Theory**, are not the opening chapters of the epistle to the Romans all cast in a Forensic mould? The whole of mankind is arraigned before the bar of God. The indictment is set forth. God is in the place of Judge. His right to judge is asserted and maintained. Man is the prisoner in the dock, and when the case is concluded he is speechless—every mouth stopped, and the whole world subject to God's judgment. The very terms the apostle employs are legal terms—law, righteousness, charged, judgment, justification.

We shall have occasion to refer, doubtless, to these theories again, but enough has been said to show that the theories in the abstract, though perhaps sometimes presented in a crude way, and with human additions, are in the main thoroughly scriptural, and so far are they from being "outworn," and "withered," no theory of the atonement can be complete or satisfactory which does not take account of them.

(To be continued.)

"Be courteous," is a command given by God (1 Peter iii. 8), which is as binding on Christians as is the command, "Thou shalt not steal," and for which all are responsible, yet how many Christians dishonour the name of the Lord every day of their lives through rudeness who would feel shocked to think for a moment of stealing. They forget that God's vine is spoiled by "little foxes," as well as by large "boars and wild beasts" (Ps. lxxx. 13).

"He Maketh Wars to Cease."

Psalm xlvi. 9.

Think not by force of arms and will
 The victory to win;
 Nor think by strategy and skill
 To rout the hosts of sin,
 Nay, rather seek the pearl of peace
 From Him Who "maketh wars to cease."

Too long in fearless fleets have lain
 Our confidence and trust;
 Too often, o'er our nobly slain
 We wept, "our cause is just."
 Come now, and seek the pearl of peace
 From Him Who "maketh wars to cease."

Seek Him who breaketh spear and bow,
 Though not a clash is heard;
 Seek Him Who lays the legions low
 By His almighty word.
 Cry, cry to Him, the Lord of peace!
 'Tis He Who "maketh wars to cease."

From Him to Whom hearts stand revealed
 (Read as an open book)
 From Whom no secret is concealed,
 To Him let Britain look,
 And ask the blessed boon of peace
 From Him Who "maketh wars to cease."

Now let the nation seek His face,
 Nor merit dare to claim;
 Plead humbly at the Throne of Grace
 Through One beloved Name;
 Plead for the precious gift of peace
 From Him Who "maketh wars to cease."

LUCY A. BENNETT.

Four hundred prophets told Ahab to "go up" to Ramoth-Gilead for the Lord would give him victory. When Micaiah gave the same message Ahab resented, and told Micaiah to "tell the truth." 400 against one; yet the prophecy of these four hundred did not satisfy Ahab's conscience, and he knew that if Micaiah told "the truth," it would mean defeat instead of victory for him (1 Kings xxii. 6).

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 11

NOVEMBER, 1918.

Price 1d

OUR readers will not be surprised to learn of the necessity which exists, owing to the state of the paper market and extra cost of printing, of raising the price of this magazine, with the advent of the New Year. We have held back as long as possible, but it is now the only alternative. We are sure we can count upon the generous support of our Readers in this emergency, especially as they have been receiving the Magazine hitherto at a sum which has not paid expenses. The price for the coming year will be 2d per month, or by post, 2s 6d per annum, and it may be ordered through any Bookseller, or direct from the Publishers (see cover).

The articles on Isaiah, and the Gospel in the Book of Ruth, and those on the Atonement (just commencing) will be continued, if the Lord will; and if the Lord continue to give it, that ministry of comfort, which many of our Readers, we know, have valued, will not be forgotten. Prayer is earnestly desired for the Editor and all who co-operate with him, and the practical help of Subscribers in making "The Faith and the Flock" known to others is also asked.

"The Lord sent Nathan to David" (2 Sam. xii. 1). It is only one who is "sent" by the Lord that is fit to reach the heart of a backslider. Wisdom, truth, justice, and mercy had to act in their place. Nathan used the sword of the Spirit to convict David of his sin before saying "the sword (of justice) shall never depart from thine house." "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." David believed this, and proved the sincerity of his restoration for "he sent by the hand" of the man whom the Lord had sent to him his offering of thanksgiving when Solomon was born—(2 Samuel xii. 1-25).

The Gospel in the Book of Ruth.

By R. E.

ARTICLE III.

The Meeting with Boaz.

Chapter II. We are at once introduced to a new actor in the scene—Boaz. The name means “strength.” And in the way in which he receives Ruth, and the gracious treatment he accords her, we have a vivid and beautiful presentation of the way Christ receives us. He was a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth and of the family of Elimelech. All this constitutes him a fit type of the Redeemer Himself. The kinsman reminds us that Jesus, the Saviour, took part in flesh and blood. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren”—excluding sin, of course. He was rich, for He possessed all things, but for our sakes He became poor. And He was the Son of God. Elimelech means, “My God is King.” How well qualified He is to meet all our need, and He is as gracious as He is powerful. Let us learn from the history of Ruth’s dealings with Boaz something more of the way in which a sinner is led to Christ, and discover how fully qualified and willing He is to meet every need.

Four things stand out from the narrative in connection with this part of Ruth’s history.

(1) She is ready to take the lowest place. “**Let me now go to the field,**” she says, “**and glean ears of corn after Him in whose sight I shall find grace.**”

(2) She goes in faith and expectation. “**In whose sight I shall find grace.**”

(3) The providence of God is evident. “**Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz.**”

(4) The operations of the Holy Spirit are illustrated. It is “**the Servant that was set over the reapers,**” who informs Boaz about her, and really introduces her to his notice (vv. 5-7). Cf. Gen. xxiv. Luke xiv. “The servant.”

Are not these four things all, more or less, present in every sinner’s conversion and blessing?

I. Ruth assumed nothing, but was content to begin at the beginning and as low down as possible. Naturally her heart might

have prompted her to lift her head, to strive for immediate recognition, because of her connection with Naomi, or to take the ground that a Moabite was as good as an Israelite. How different from all this was her actual behaviour. And surely it is an un-failing mark of the Holy Spirit's work in convicting of sin, that the truly convicted sinner is penitent and lowly, and ready to say the worst about himself. Ruth was content to be a gleaner, and the repentant one is content to accept the name "sinner," and to confess to being guilty and lost.

II. But there was faith likewise. Ruth expects to find grace. And her faith and expectation are centred upon the right person. "After **Him** in whose sight I shall find grace." Could anything be more beautiful in its way than this? No amount of faith will avail if it is not in the right person. The question we have to ask ourselves is, not about our faith, but is it fixed on the right object? The faith we need is the faith of Christ. And further, all we hope to receive must be of grace. Ruth was conscious that she would meet one who would be good to her and give her more than she deserved. Faith in Christ is a wonderful thing, and it cannot be mistaken. Long afterwards it was illustrated in the woman of the seventh of Luke. She comes as a sinner as truly as Ruth comes as a gleaner, but she expected blessing as surely as did the other. She expected to find grace in His sight. Somehow she knew Him to be the Saviour. She had large expectations, and they were not disappointed. The words addressed to her by our Lord, "Thy faith hath saved thee;" "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace;" tell us that. How blessed that in Boaz we learn about a greater than Boaz. One that we can have to do with, as we are and where we are. From all this we learn how we must come to Christ without claim and without any sense of desert, but with the expectation that we shall find grace.

III. How often, too, we can trace the providence of God in conversion, "**And her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.**" How often something has happened, quite unarranged and unexpected by us, which has led to a complete change in our life. Something happens, and the whole purpose and outlook of life changes. We may have an illness, or we may lose a friend, or we may sustain a loss, and we are awakened to a sense of need. A chance word dropped, a meeting with someone

by accident, perhaps hitherto a perfect stranger ; or some message from one of the Lord's servants, listened to in quite an unusual manner, may be the means in God's hands to bring us to Himself. Do we not learn from these providential happenings that there is a God who knows us altogether and superintends our lives?

But another lesson seems also to stand out from this part of the narrative. Unless Ruth had carried her resolution into effect, she would never have met Boaz. The lesson is, to make a beginning. If we cannot see every step before us, let us at all events take the first. It is not enough to have ideas, to form plans, or to make good resolutions, we must act. The prodigal formed the resolution to arise and go to his father, and we read, "**he arose and came.**" Nothing short of this would have relieved his misery and brought him any nearer to his home. So of Ruth we read, not only, "**Let me now go,**" but, "**she went, and came.**" So of old, Abraham's servant could say, "**I being in the way,** the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

IV. But no soul was ever led to Christ apart from the operation of the Holy Spirit. There is, undoubtedly, such a thing as human responsibility. Ruth came to a decision, and acted upon it. There is also God's providential dealings, as we have seen. -But unless the Spirit moves upon the heart and guides, there is no result. He acts, of course, in various ways, and by different methods, but act He must, or nothing is accomplished. We see God's providence in allowing the prodigal to lapse into poverty and lose his all, until he came into dire need, and reached the end of his resources ; but the sense of his father's goodness and that he was perishing, and the desire to return, illustrate the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Though, undoubtedly, we are responsible to give effect to these promptings, even as he did.

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, "**It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.**" It is the Holy Spirit's work to lead men to Christ. His work in regeneration is as important, in its place, as Christ's work in redemption. How gently and encouragingly the servant seems to speak. "**So she came, and hath continued,**" are his words. "She came and hath continued." She was not rebuked for coming. She was not

dismissed as having no right. Every encouragement was given. Had not the Lord God of Israel commanded that it should be so. They were not to gather any gleaning of the harvest, "Thou shalt leave them unto the poor, **and to the stranger**, I am the Lord your God" (Lev. xxiii. 22). What a revelation of the heart of God this simple provision makes to us. The God who created all things—the One who gave the harvest—remembers the need of the poorest and meanest of His creatures. And He would have His people do the same. Did Ruth know of this provision, and was she thus led to take advantage of it? And not only is it written for her, but has it not a voice for all time, and all conditions of men. Provision is made for all, and God makes it as easy as He can for men to be blessed. Every encouragement is given to anyone who desires to come. There is the drawing of the Father, and there is the Holy Spirit's gentle wooing.

"And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even
That checks each doubt, and calms each fear,
And speaks of heaven."

Nor does Christ turn anyone away. Boaz now speaks to Ruth, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence" (v. 8). Does not this remind us of Him who said, "Him that cometh unto me **I will in no wise cast out.**" "Go not to glean in another field." In the New Testament where the parable of the wheat and tares is explained (Matt. xiii.) we are told the field is the world. Let us take it as such for a moment here, and it may yield us a lesson. From another parable in the same chapter we learn that Christ has purchased the field for the sake of the treasure it contains. Ruth met Boaz in his own field. Have we met Christ? Such a meeting may be as real as the one we are considering. On the highway of the world I may meet Christ and become acquainted with him. And He will be to me more than ever Boaz was to Ruth, and a friendship even more wonderful and intimate may be the result of that first intercourse. What a wondrous meeting that was between Boaz and Ruth—between the "mighty man of wealth" and the poor gleaner—between one who was of the kindred of Elimelech and one who was a Moabite—an outcast and a stranger. But that is not half so wonderful as this other meeting we are thinking about between Christ,

the Son of God, and a sinner. He is, indeed, a "mighty man of wealth" for all things are His. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him." Yet He came that we might meet Him, and "He became poor that we, through His poverty might be rich." Have you met Him? You are in His world. He made you. Yet this is not all. He waits to bless you. He wants you to find in Him, all that you, a poor sinner, need. When Boaz met Ruth, from that moment all his resources were at her disposal. If you are seeking Christ, He says to you, "Go not to glean in **another** field." How many are doing this! Not that they can go out of His world, but they try to find satisfaction away from Him. His word is "abide here."

"**Boaz came from Bethlehem.**" The meaning of Bethlehem is "the house of bread." So Christ "came into the world to save sinners," and when He finds them He leads them back to the place from whence He came. "Bread"—that which satisfies need, is what He gives them. He has purchased the field—the world—that sinners in it might find Him. And salvation is just the finding Him. It is the introduction to a Person. Possessing Him, every blessing is ours—forgiveness, eternal life, joy and peace. So many never meet with Him because they carry their heads too high, or are too self-satisfied; or are occupied with other things. He comes to those who have no pretensions and make no claim—who are content to be **gleaners**, counting upon His bounty and accepting all as a matter of grace. It is the gleaning "**after Him**" that leads to the blessing. Only as we meet Him do we find what we want—not in religious rites and ceremonies—though some of these may be right in their place—but the stricken sinner needs a Saviour, and the heart cries out for a Person, and only as we seek the blessing at His hand do we find it. The language of the heart must be "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn **after Him** in **whose** sight I shall find grace."

(To be continued.)

It is only when "with a perfect heart we offer willingly to the Lord" (1 Chron. xxix. 9), that we can "rejoice with great joy." Those who give "grudgingly" know nothing of the "great joy," which David and the Philippians experienced (2 Cor. viii. 5 and ix. 7).

Will Christ come for part of His Church only ?

Are any Members of the Body of Christ left behind at the Rapture ?

Everything—ecclesiastically, nationally, and socially—points to our being on the very eve of the Lord's return. Not the least among these signs is the wonderful and marked way in which He is leading great numbers of His people into a clear and joyful apprehension of the Church's true Hope.

It is not strange that the great enemy of Christ and of " His own " is seeking to counteract this movement of the Spirit. But it is strange, and sad indeed, that devoted and able Christian men are to be found helping on (unconsciously of course) the adversary's work. Such pamphlets as " The First Resurrection," and other similar papers and articles, which have appeared recently, are of this character.

The theory propounded is that when the Lord comes for His people, only the more faithful ones will then be taken, the others—at least for a period—being "left." And as the great Tribulation immediately follows the Rapture, earnest Christians may well anticipate it, if this theory is true, with anxiety and fear. I say, " earnest Christians," for those who follow the Lord most closely are most conscious of coming short. These teachers need to learn that watching for Christ is not promoted by unhealthy self-occupation, nor holiness by undermining or weakening the great gospel truth of God's sovereign grace.

The purpose of the present paper is not to examine detail, but by the presentation of two great foundation truths to expose the root-error of this teaching.

(1) **The Grace of the Gospel.** The salvation which the grace of God " brings " (Titus ii. 11) embraces the past, the present, and the future. As to the past, not only does it clear us from our former sinful history as children of Adam, but its blessing is connected with a past before sin came in—that is, with the election of God " before the foundation of the world " (Eph. i. 4). As regards the present, every believer has for ever passed out of sinnership into sonship (Eph. i. 5) ; it is in grace he stands (Rom.

v. 2). And so far as the future is concerned, coming glory is as inseparable from that grace as is his present justification.

All this is concisely stated—to give one of many scriptures—in the great Gospel Epistle: “ Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son . . . Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called (the Past) ; and whom He called, them He also justified (the Present) ; and whom He justified, them He also glorified (the Future) ”—Rom. viii. 29, 30. The being “ glorified ” is made the more emphatic by a past tense being used instead of the future. Whom He justified He “ glorified ”—not, **will** glorify—the glorifying is looked at as already accomplished, as, in a sense, it is.

It may be replied that although every believer will be glorified, the question is, **When?** Such passages as Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17 ; 1 Cor. xv. 23, say when. It will be “ at **His** coming.” First, we Christians (the living and the dead) will be glorified, and then—to put it simply—we shall be taken to glory. “ We (not some of us) which are alive and remain ; ” “ they that are Christ’s (not some of them) at **His** coming.” That which is waited for, as here set forth, is not our growth in grace, or the exhibition of faithfulness on our part (important as such truth is **in its place**), but the coming of Christ.

God “ predestinated ; ” **God** “ called ; ” **He** “ justified ; ” and the being “ glorified ” is equally **His** act. There is no room for our works, our faithfulness, our watchfulness, or our anything in this passage. We are regarded as absolutely passive, and could have no more to do with our being glorified than we had with our election !

To introduce here conditions of any sort is to do violence to the plainest statements of the Word of God, and to strike at **His** sovereign grace. But some reader may say, Are there not other scriptures which do affix conditions? No, the Bible is uniform as to the fact that all believers of the present Dispensation will be glorified at the moment of the Lord’s return, and taken by Him into the Father’s House. Scripture never contradicts itself, and it is a golden rule to hold to a plain statement in the Word despite any passages that may **seem** to differ : otherwise, further light will not be given. And, indeed, where this rule is not followed people get into a fog, falling an easy prey to erratic and dangerous notions, and in the endeavour to prove them, passages of Scripture are

wrested or trifled with. For instance, referring to the bodies of those who came out of their graves after Christ's resurrection (Matt. xxvii. 52), it is said by the writer of **The First Resurrection**, these saints were "distinguished for their saintliness," and on that account had the honour of "ascending with the Son of God." Scripture says nothing of the kind—not a word nor a hint.

(2) **Our being fitted for, and taken to, Heaven is not a question of our Responsibility.** We are not responsible to beget ourselves in new birth—how could we?—but we are responsible to repent. We are not responsible to become members of the Body of Christ but to believe the Gospel. We are not responsible to go to heaven, but to get right, and to keep right, with God on earth. Seeing every saint—not sinners only—has come short of the requirements of God's law, and that law, even if fully kept, only promised life **on the earth**, what folly to teach that by our holiness or righteousness we can acquire a title to **Heaven**, or the right to enter it earlier than others!

When Paul speaks of **winning** Christ he is using the illustration of a race. If he were using the word **literally**, it would be a denial of all he was specially raised up to teach. The one object of the runner to win the "prize" illustrates the apostle's zeal. An illustration gives a thought, but every Bible student ought to know you cannot build **doctrine** upon an illustration alone.

To connect our responsibility with that line of truth where, in the nature of things, we could do nothing, may minister to spiritual pride, but is confusion, and worse. There is that which we can do, and this is connected with our position in the present creation and with kingdom truth and individual rewards. But entrance to the Father's House is connected with new creation truth. Yet how many read into the simple and unconditional statements of John xiv. 3, 1 Thess. iv. 13-17, etc., the conditions of Matthew xxiv. and the Book of Revelation.

The first part of the New Testament written, and the very simplest in style, was 1 Thessalonians—the epistle which circumstantially reveals the "Rapture." Does not this fact show that our gracious Lord intended that blessed truth as there presented to have a foremost place, and to be understood by the simplest and youngest lambs of His Flock? We are not to puzzle those lambs, or rob them of a new-born joy, but to "feed" them.

The purpose of the present short paper is not to dwell on the deep dishonour it is to Christ to teach that at His coming His Church will be dismembered or divided. It may, however, just be added that, according to Scripture, Christ and the Church He builds are not only inseparable, but are **one**; so that to divide the Church would be to divide "the Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might . . . present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Not the **smallest blemish**, the Holy Ghost declares; but these theories would mean wholesale dismemberment! In Eve, Adam had a complete bride brought to him. Is Christ going to take His Bride to heaven in fragments? To merely ask the question is to demonstrate the folly, and indeed irreverence, of such ideas

H. D. WOOLLEY.

"Abide With Us."

Genesis xviii. 1-5. Luke xxiv. 29.

MEMORIES OF LORD'S DAY MORNING MINISTRY.

What have I, if Thou leavest me?

The Mamre plains are bare.

My Lord, I lift my eyes and see,

Nought can with Thee compare.

I bow and worship Lord, Thy grace,

Thy favour well I know;

Thy smile, the brightness of Thy face,

I cannot let Thee go.

What can I, to prolong Thy stay,

What can my tent supply?

I want Thee, Lord, pass not away,

Oh, listen to my cry!

The shade, the water, and the bread,

They wait but for Thy word;

For Thee a table we will spread,

Pass not away, my Lord.

And saints in later days shall prove

That Thou wilt visit thus,

And ask in confidence of love,

Yea, Lord, "abide with us."

W. G

Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry.

By Dr A. T. SCHOFIELD.

ARTICLE III.

From January to March A.D. 29.

From Jerusalem to Bethany, beyond Jordan; from Bethany beyond Jordan, to Bethany near Jerusalem; from Bethany near Jerusalem, to Ephraim; from Ephraim, through Galilee, Samaria, Perea, Jericho to Jerusalem.

Scripture:—Matthew xix. and xx.; Mark x; Luke xviii.-xix. 27; John x. 40, xii. 1.

After the feast of the dedication, the Lord returned to the sphere of His evangelistic labours in Perea at Bethany beyond Jordan, the poor substitute for the condemned Capernaum. Here was no marble synagogue built by the devotion of a Roman centurion, no lake on the borders of which listening thousands could hear His words; but on the contrary, dangerous enemies from Jerusalem, including Pharisees and others.

It is worthy of note how intensely antagonistic Pharisaism was, and is, to the Spirit of Christ. He blighted it with terrible invective, and pronounced the most terrible woes upon it, but to an **individual Pharisee as a man**, how tenderly He speaks: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee"—thus distinguishing, as ever, between the sin and the sinner.

There was, however, one source of refreshment here, in the children that so gladly surrounded the Saviour—mostly very young; but one, the young ruler whom Jesus loved, was grown up; and Jesus loved him as He loved the little children, seeing in both a simplicity of character, which came as a positive refreshment after the machinations of the Pharisees around Him. Men and women require seeking and converting, but little children as such require neither, but are saved because the Son of Man came for the purpose. We may note in this connection there are no such things as "heathen babies;" babies are not heathen until they cease to be babes.*

Again we recall that this blessed One whose wondrous words

*All who die in infancy are Christ's in virtue of His death.

are now before us and whose footsteps we have reverently traced, is our loving Lord to-day; and poor and empty indeed is that day on which we do not realise this. We have already in the foregoing meditation spoken of His personal character as revealed at this time: we note further that although threatened by "that fox," and in his territory at this moment, Christ never ran away. On the other hand, when the children came, He was never too busy to receive them.

I can only recall one thing that Christ requested for Himself during all the journeys we are now tracing, and that was for a cup of cold water which He never got; but I know that at this very time He says whoever shall give His disciple a cup of water to drink shall be richly rewarded. He never used His power for Himself, but always for others, and His whole life was the expression in every action of the perfection of His human character.

I must not proceed further before re-iterating, that no pen unguided by the Spirit could write the story of such a life without marring it; the very concept is so strange to human thought, the type of character so unique, that the words to describe it must be divinely chosen; and thus we get the extraordinary fact, which it is impossible to emphasise too much, that in four accounts written by His adoring followers, we do not get one word of appreciation of the wonders their pens describe—they simply depict, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what they saw and heard.

In the midst of this busy life come the tidings of the dangerous sickness of our Lord's dear friend, Lazarus. His resurrection, in one sense, is the most wonderful of the three resurrections recorded. That of Jairus' daughter was immediate; the second one raised, had not yet been buried; but Lazarus had been dead four days already when Christ arrived at Bethany. The power of God can go one step further than even Lazarus—"Son of Man can these bones live?" "Behold I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live" (Ezekiel xxxvii. 3, 5).

We know that our Lord could not stir from Perea until moved by the will of God, and it is worthy of note that Mary could not move from the house till called by the Divine voice—"The Master is come and calleth for thee." It is thus that disciples unconsciously show their likeness to the spirit of their Divine Master. Christ could heal at a distance, but He must return to Bethany to test

His disciples faith; and He rejoiced to know they would sooner die with Him, than live without Him.

Another point to be noted here is that our Lord gives thanks to God **before** the miracle is wrought, whether in the resurrection of Lazarus or in the feeding of the 5000; we give thanks **after** an event, the difference being because the action of Christ was always according to God's will, and there never was any question of failure.

"Jesus wept." He was calm, for His soul was in the serenity of those deathless regions far away in heaven; He wept, for His heart was with those that weep in the valley of tears.

There is a close parallel between the resurrection of Lazarus and that of our Lord. In the case of Lazarus we read in John xi. 34: "Where have ye laid him?" "And they say unto Him, Lord come and see." In Matthew xxviii. 6, we read: "Come and see the place where the Lord lay." There was a Mary at both sepulchres; and these are the only two resurrections where we read of the grave cloths on the body, and the napkin about the head.

The differences however are still more striking. In our Lord's resurrection, the strips of cloth in which He was bound, measuring scores of yards, were left still as they were wound round the body, He rising miraculously out of them; whereas in the case of Lazarus the miracle was limited to the return of natural life in an unchanged body, and he came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes.

We find that Christ was the seventh to rise from the dead. Three previous resurrections are recorded in the Old Testament—the widow's son, the Shunamite's son, and the man who touched Elisha; and three in the New Testament—Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus.

In Galilee such miracles brought thousands to follow Christ, in Judea they brought the enmity of the Pharisees to a head (though one reads that many believed in consequence), so that the life given to Lazarus was that which finally compassed the death of Christ.

No doubt there were some to whom, at this time, the love of God in Christ was revealed, as suggested in Browning's wonderful lines writing of the resurrection of Lazarus.

The very God! Think, Abib; dost thou think?
 So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
 So, thro' the thunder comes a human voice!
 Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 "Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
 "Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
 "But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
 "And thou must love Me, *who have died for thee!*"

AN EPISTLE OF KARSHISH.

Our Lord now therefore secures a time of rest and safety before commencing His last journey to the Cross, by retiring to a remote city called Ephraim, probably situated in the wilderness of northern Perea. No such city has been traced here, but it was evidently somewhere in this northern locality, for any part of Judea would have been now unsafe. Here probably a week or two of rest and peace were quietly spent by our Lord with His disciples, and we must not intrude on this sanctuary. When Christ at length left Ephraim, He passed through the borders of Galilee and Samaria to join the Jerusalem caravan, and doubtless on the way visited any scattered disciples in this region. We now reach the last fortnight of our Lord's life, the account of which takes nearly one-third of the Gospels. If the rest of the life were in the same detail, we should require some 40 Bibles to contain it! Having finally bid farewell to the little flock in Galilee, and having cleansed ten lepers, our Lord travels to Jerusalem along the Peraan side of the Jordan Valley accompanied by His disciples and relations and Galilean friends, till He arrived at the fords of Jordan by Jericho on the Tuesday before Passion week. On the way He was strangely isolated even from His own disciples who knew not what spirit they were of, for in these last days before the Cross, James and even John were clamouring for distinction in the coming kingdom which they thought He was to establish in Jerusalem. Here and at the Last Supper the disciples were disputing for the best place while the Master takes the lowest. No wonder the feet must be washed before the breaking of bread!

We note that when our Lord crossed the Jordan, as He did so often, the fact is not even recorded. If Israel has to cross the river a chapter is devoted to it, and a remarkable miracle has to be performed, that they may go over dry shod; even if Elijah or Elisha cross the Jordan the fact is carefully recorded and miracles are

wrought for them on each occasion. For our Lord, however, no miracle is wrought; He crosses as an unnoticed member of the customary passover caravan, and as such He passes through Jericho. The waters of death are dried up for all the Lord's people, but were never dried up for Christ. "None of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed." We never cease to wonder at the lowly grace and humility of the man, Christ Jesus!

It is worth our while here to try and see the journey pictured as it was. Jericho was the most fashionable city in Palestine, the residence of Herod and Cleopatra; it was a beautiful city, well watered and surrounded by endless fruit gardens; it contained magnificent heathen temples to Jupiter and Venus, as well as a large college for heathen priests. We can see the polished crowd of well dressed Greek and Roman citizens on each side of the great highway, watching with contemptuous and incurious eyes the straggling train of the Galilee caravan, who in their speech, their dress, their archaic worship and despised rites, were so far behind the times of prosperous Jericho. Closer observation might have distinguished in the strange procession a little band of some ten or twelve men; no halos round their heads, nothing to mark them, save perhaps their seamless coats showing their Galilean origin; and yet one of these was the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world. We, perhaps, wonder when we think of the blindness of the men of Jericho, but are we quite sure that none of us suffer from the same defect now? Oh! for the spiritual vision, for the opened eyes annointed with eye-salve, that we may see things as they are in their true light as God sees them; that thus we may not miss

"The many splendoured thing;"

that our ears may be unstopped and opened morning by morning;
for;

"The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay shuttered doors."

We all need that word, "Ephphatha"—"Be opened."

But when our Lord in isolation passed with weary steps through this great pagan city His Father had prepared two cups of cold water for His refreshment as He went out through the Jerusalem

gate. One was blind Bartimæus and the other Zacchæus. Seven stages mark the transformation of blind Bartimæus into a seeing disciple—he heard, he cried, he cried the more a great deal, he cast away his garment, he came to Jesus, he received his sight, and he followed Jesus. Zacchæus received salvation as Christ sat in his house that Wednesday night; and thus Bartimæus and Zacchæus established the fact of Christ's saving power before His death, "out of the mouth of two witnesses," in the same way as His birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and return are likewise established in Scripture.

The next day our Lord proceeds along the Jericho road ahead of His disciples, with Calvary before Him. The caravan would probably rest on Thursday night at the Desert Inn, now the Inn of the Good Samaritan; and on the Friday our Lord would reach Bethany, leaving those with whom He had travelled to wind round the shoulder of Olivet, on the further side of which was their camping ground; for at the passover, the city of Jerusalem could never contain the worshippers who came for this feast. Outside the walls, its eastern side was reserved for the Galileans on the Mount of Olives; the southern side and the Valley of Hinnom was for the men of Judah, while all from the west and the sea coast had their camping ground on the west of the city. The northern side was reserved for the Samaritans who never came, and hence this was the only place left vacant and bare. Here was Calvary, and here Christ was crucified.

(To be concluded.)

"The heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer. xvii. 9). It is only one who "knows the plague of his own heart" (1 Kings viii. 38), that can know how deceitful his heart is.

How is it that without "guide overseer or ruler" numberless ants work together in unity? (Pro. vi. 7-8.) It is because all have one object in view, and each one knows the necessity of providing for the future. If every Christian realised his responsibility to do "everything in the name of the Lord" (Col. iii. 17), and had the "glory of God" as his one object in his daily life (1 Cor. x. 31) all would prove their unity as do the ants. Sad to say many do not "consider their ways," and therefore lack the wisdom of the ants.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. X—No. 12

DECEMBER, 1918.

Price 1d

During 1919 we hope to Publish some Special Articles on "Living Christians"—their Life, their Portion, their Power, their Joy—by Dr A. T. Schofield; also by the Editor on the great subject of the Atonement; as well as papers for the comfort of God's people; the first of these entitled, "Why Art Thou Cast Down?" to appear in January (D.V.). The able and interesting exposition of Isaiah by Mr F. C. Jennings will be continued, while other well known expositors and writers will also contribute, including Mr Walter Scott and Mr Fereday.

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Christ's Last Journeys and Public Ministry.

By Dr A. T. SCHOFIELD.

ARTICLE IV.

Passion Week, March A.D. 29 (to Thursday Evening).

Saturday (Sabbath), at Bethany; (Palm) Sunday, at Bethany, to Jerusalem and back; Monday, at Bethany to Jerusalem and back; Tuesday, at Bethany, to Jerusalem and back; Wednesday, at Bethany; Thursday, from Bethany to Jerusalem.

Scriptures:—Matt. xxi.-xxvi.; Mark xi.-xiv.; Luke xix.-xxii.; John xii.-xvii.

In this closing meditation on our Lord's life on earth, we reach the last week before His death.

It was on Friday afternoon that our Lord arrived at Bethany, on His last journey from Galilee, and it was on the following day, in the house of Simon the leper, at Bethany, that our Lord partook of His last feast, if we may so designate it, in distinction from the last supper with His disciples.

The traditional house of Simon is but a very short distance up the eastern shoulder of Olivet from that of the beloved family. The Gospel of S. John seems to suggest that Mary had an official

place on the occasion, and it has been supposed that she may have become the wife of the one whom Jesus had cleansed. The more probable solution that the feast was given by our Lord's friends at Bethany, the house of Simon being chosen, as probably affording the most accommodation, is, however, much simpler.

Before the Lord were gathered on this occasion, all sorts and conditions of men. There was the cleansed leper and the raised Lazarus; there were devoted saints and probably the twelve apostles; there were the friends of Simon; Judas Iscariot was there, and as was common at eastern feasts, which were often more or less public, many from Jerusalem who had come to see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead only a few days before.

This feast is immortalised by the service of Mary. We so constantly associate service with the name of Martha, that it is almost startling to find that Mary rendered any service at all; and yet it was by this, and not by her position as a learner that she was to be immortalised. The box of spikenard that she broke has special interest for us, inasmuch as its fragrant contents could only be obtained from the foot of the Himalaya Hills in India, hence its rarity; but we note, that before its fragrance could flow out, for some reason or other, the box itself must be broken.

There was no sweet odour till this was done. God must have broken things, broken in their self-will, broken in their ambition, broken in their beautiful ideals, and oftentimes broken in their affections, in their health, in their reputation, and seemingly left utterly helpless and forlorn; for it is "the lame that take the prey," as Isaiah tells us; and it is such the Holy Spirit seizes upon and uses for the glory of God.

It was only when Jacob's natural strength at Peniel was gone that God could clothe him with spiritual power; it was the broken rock at Horeb that gave the cool waters to the thirsty; it was when the three hundred under Gideon broke their pitchers, a type of breaking themselves, that the hidden lights shone forth to the destruction of their adversaries; it was when Jesus took the five loaves and brake them that the bread was multiplied in the very act of breaking; it was when His precious body was broken that His life was poured out for thirsty sinners to drink and live; it is when the corn of wheat is broken up by death that it bears other grains.

In the light of this our hearts may well say:—

“Oh! break whatever it may be,
 That holdeth back my heart from Thee,
 Who died my heart to win.
 Have I a box of alabaster,
 Which is not broken for the Master,
 To which my heart but clings the faster;
 Help me my box to break!”

This fragrance was poured on the head and feet of Christ, soon to be crowned with thorns and pierced with nails, but seen now in prophetic vision in death in the silent tomb, where at the anointed head and feet the two angels, witnesses of His resurrection, would keep guard, over our “Mercy seat,” as did the golden Cherubim of old.

Of course the odour filled the house; it always does when such service is rendered to Christ. It filled Paul’s prison at Rome, when he received the fragrant offering from the beloved Philippians, and it fills God’s house now with the incense of worship, in the holy remembrance of His death in the Lord’s Supper.

The odour filled the house, to the intense indignation, not only of the guests, but of Christ’s own disciples, who at once discerned its costly nature. “Why spend money on Christ? Why minister to One who came to minister, and give His life a ransom for many? Why anoint a body about to be pierced, and broken, and crucified, and slain for us? Why waste this large sum of money on One who was about to be sold for nought by His own disciple? The money would feed seven thousand poor, and now it was lost, for it was poured on Christ and nothing but its fragrance remained!” It cost, indeed, nine pounds, three times the price for which the Lord Himself was sold. The chief priests had indeed just purchased God’s passover Lamb for three pounds of the redemption money of the children of Israel, the sacred shekels of the temple!

Their indignation arose indeed to such a height, that they were troubled and “groaned in spirit,” the same word being used here as in the case of our Lord at the tomb of Lazarus, when He “groaned in the spirit and was troubled.” What a picture of the contrast of our thoughts with God’s, and of the blindness and falsity of many of our estimates of right and wrong in Christian life and practice; for here we see the disciples resenting the triumph of good in the highest service ever rendered to Christ, in the same way that He resented the triumph of evil in the death of Lazarus.

On the following day (Palm Sunday) Christ presented Himself as the King of the Jews, the promised Messiah. The necessary

preparations being made, our Lord rode into Jerusalem; but as He turned the corner of the Mount of Olives, and as the shout of the common people, who ever heard Him gladly, and the voices of the children—those choristers of heaven—met His eyes and ears, He burst into a flood of tears—far different from the silent weeping at the grave of Lazarus; it was the anguish and the grief of a husband over his harlot wife! Never was the holy city, which, alas! was now as Sodom, more flushed with material prosperity, and heathen splendour than at this moment. Tier above tier, where now Mount Zion is but a ploughed field, rose the marble palaces, the heathen temples, the circuses and theatres of the semi-pagan city; and it is small wonder that the One whom we must never forget was the Jehovah of Israel, should give expression to His agony of heart, at this supreme moment. For the Prince of the house of David, for Zion's King to enter its gates in a flood of tears, was indeed a dire portent; and none who saw the sight, and lived through the destruction of the city, could fail to connect the two.

The disciples here sang "a new song," a wonderful advance on that of the nativity; at our Lord's birth the heavenly host sang concerning peace on earth and goodwill to men; but in S. Luke xix. 38, the new song is of "peace in heaven and glory in the highest;" and surely this must come first, that the other may follow in its train.

Before we leave this wondrous entry, we may note in passing that only S. John ever mentions the palm—in his Gospel, and in the Revelation.

As the song of the birth at Bethlehem was re-echoed in loftier tones on this memorable day, so the magi came once more from a far country, desirous of seeing Christ; for surely these Greeks (S. John xii. 20) were wise men who had come once more to worship their Lord, and in a deeper sense than at Bethlehem; and we may be sure the gold and frankincense would not be wanting.

Our Lord—the prince of this world being cast out—draws all men unto Him, and drawing always precedes giving. No man cometh but he that is drawn; for Christ ever sees us, before we see Him.

The Jews were greatly puzzled when they heard that Christ was to die, and wanted to know which Christ He was, for at that time, they had a current belief in two Messiahs in the Old Testament Scriptures; there was Messiah Ben Joseph, who was the one who had to suffer according to Isaiah 53, and Messiah Ben David,

who was the one to reign, according to Isaiah 32 and Psalm 72, and they did not grasp how resurrection made the two into one, and was the sole key that can unite the conflicting Old Testament prophecies.

The next day—Monday—the figtree which had already been spared (“this year also”) was still found without fruit, and with a superabundance of leaves. Its final doom (that of the Jewish nation in figure) is then pronounced; but, after all, although on the Tuesday morning it was found to have withered away, in the evening our Lord opens the door of hope, and speaks of it as putting forth a tender branch with fresh leaves, knowing that summer is nigh. The solution of this mystery lies in Romans xi.

(To be concluded).

The Atonement.

ARTICLE II.

By R. E.

But what is our author's own theory? He bases all upon the universal Fatherhood of God and the sorrow He feels at His children's sin. “The sacrifice of the Atonement,” he says, “is the anguish which His children's sin costs the Heavenly Father, and the travail which He has endured to bring them home!” (p. 167). Again, “Since God is our Father, our sin is His sorrow. Its burden lies on Him. He is ‘wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.’” Such is the doctrine of this book—a doctrine which the parable of the Prodigal Son, as recorded in Luke xv., is made to teach!!

To base such a stupendous doctrine as the Atonement upon a parable (really only part of a parable) will be thought by many to be a very hazardous enterprise. It might have been supposed that in the Cross, where the work of the Atonement was accomplished, and in the Epistles where the doctrine of it is expounded we should discover the material for a just and adequate pronouncement as to its meaning. It will scarcely be believed that this book never once brings us to the Cross; never once attempts to expound our Lord's utterances while on it; never once grapples with apostolic statements regarding it!! We do not say that the Cross is never mentioned, but we are never brought face to face with that which is the Atonement. Attention is never once focussed upon it!

But let us consider the teaching upon which our author does base his doctrine of the Atonement. First, as to the universal Fatherhood of God. On p. 133 we read, "He (Christ) never represented God as the Moral Governor demanding satisfaction for His violated honour, nor yet as the Judge insisting on the vindication of justice. **He had one thought of God and only one.** He proclaimed God as 'The Heavenly Father,' and affirmed that all men were His children and sinners His lost children" (emphasis ours).

What we need when we consider such a truth as the Atonement, which touches in its many sided aspects the whole sphere of our moral and spiritual being, as well as our relationship to God, and includes that mighty, all pervading and ever present question of sin, is not some ex parte statement, but an impartial and comprehensive consideration of the whole evidence, and also of the subject in all its bearings. To present God in only one aspect of His character, prejudices the whole question at a stroke. Is it true that Christ had one thought of God and only one? When He pronounces the doom of the cities where most of His mighty works were done, is He representing God as Father or as the Moral Governor of the universe? When He refers to "the day of judgment," does He not represent God as a Judge? (Matt. xi. 20-4, xii. 41-2, xiii. 49-50.) When He likens God to "a certain King which would take account of his servants," and who, in the end, denounces one as a "wicked servant," and delivers him to the tormentors, and then adds, "So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother their trespasses," is not this something like the action of a Judge and a Governor? Especially when the King is represented as demanding payment from the one who owed ten thousand talents.—Matt. xviii. Yet we are told Christ never represented God as demanding satisfaction.

Surely in Matthew's Gospel there is parable after parable which is specially designed to represent God as Governor and Judge. Vide that of the householder (Ch. xx.) ; the husbandmen (Ch. xxi.) ; and of the king who made a marriage for his son. How does the king treat those who refuse the invitation? "**But when the king heard thereof he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**" This is not exactly the action of a father as such. And how is the man treated who had not on a wedding garment? "**Bind him hand**

and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Ch. xxii.) Do not all these instances represent God as doing precisely what we are told He is never represented as doing, viz., "demanding satisfaction," and "as the Judge insisting on the vindication of justice."

The book insists upon the universal Fatherhood of God in the most emphatic way. "Thus the Heavenly Fatherhood," we are told, "is as wide as humanity." "The children of men are all children of God. A believer is a son of God, and so also is an unbeliever" (p. 144). Is this the view of man which was held by our Lord and His apostles? Did they think of all the children of men as sons of God, the only difference being that some were sons still lost, and others were sons found? (pp. 143-4). If so, why do such words as these fall from the lips of our Lord Himself: "Have not I chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil?" And the same individual is later on spoken of as "the son of perdition." Why did our Lord say to the Jews who opposed Him, "Ye are of your father the devil?" And this in the very face of their claim to be children of God. And why, speaking of the Pharisees, does He use these awful words, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (John vi. 70; viii. 44; xvii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 33.) How does Paul address Elymas, the sorcerer, but as "a child of the devil." Do these expressions represent the way in which God would be likely to speak of those He still looked upon as His own children? Does He ever speak of believers in this fashion?

The fact is there is a most marked absence of this term of relationship when men generally are referred to. They are spoken of as "the children of men," as "the world," as "enemies," as the "wicked," but never once, as far as we remember, as God's recognised children. Man in his unregenerate state is always referred to as man. "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared." Here was an opportunity to have put in "His children," if such had been an appropriate thought. When our Lord is distinguishing between the two kinds of seed sown in the field, the distinction He makes is most drastic. "The good seed," He declares, "are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." And one would ask whether the individual described in 2 Thess. ii., as the "man of sin," "the son of perdition," "that wicked" is also a child of God?

The assumption that all men are God's children equally is also based upon the parable of the Prodigal Son.

"The prodigal in the parable stands for the sinner; and it was not only after his return home in penitence that he was a son. He had been a son ere he left his father's house, and he remained a son all the while he was in the far country" (p. 143).

This at once reveals the mischief of basing a doctrine upon a parable. In our treatment of a parable, we must surely leave some room for the story itself, and not make each incident a basis for some doctrinal statement.

"WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING."

There is one passage of Scripture which may seem to conflict with the others quoted. We refer to St Paul's address to the Athenians, in which he quotes from one of their own poets the words, "We are also His offspring." No one can possibly dispute the truth of this. God made us, and we sprang from Him. We were made in His likeness and image. But we must not confound what we are as **creatures**, with the new relationship in which grace sets us. Scripture uses the terms "children" and "sons" as indicating a relationship on another plane altogether from where we are as **men**. The author of "**The Atonement, etc.**," denies this. He sees no difference between the sonship of the **lost** and the sonship of the **found**, except the difference between being lost and found. "In every instance," he says, "the idea is that the work of grace does not consist in making the sinner what he has never been, but rather in making him what he was at the first in God's design, recalling a departed glory and **reinstating him in a forfeited heritage**" (emphasis ours). "The **best robe**" is translated "the **first robe**;" and we are assured the prodigal came back to what he had worn and possessed before. Yet the fact remains that men, as men, **never** were sons in the **Christian** sense. Did the father celebrate the return of the prodigal with nothing new? Everything in the parable seems to indicate the reverse, and this idea is supported by the whole of the New Testament. There we are told of a new creation; and the difference between the old and the new is nothing less than the difference between Adam and Christ. One has only to read the opening chapter of Ephesians to see this. Was Adam blessed, even in Eden and in his unfallen state, with **all spiritual blessings in heavenly places**? Was he "**holy and without blame before God in love**?" Had Adam the Holy Spirit as the spirit of

sonship? Was he a member of Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all? Strange, indeed, would it be if God had failed to mark in some emphatic way the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of His beloved Son. Far otherwise. The blessings of redemption are in keeping with, and commensurate with, **Christ**. He became man in order to accomplish redemption, and bring the redeemed into a new position altogether, viz., His own position as Man before God. And this is expressed in the words He uttered on the morning of His resurrection, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God" (John xx. 17.) The blessings through redemption are as much greater than those originally possessed by man, as Christ is superior to Adam. Yes, "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."—2 Cor. v. 17.

Until the difference is understood between being in Adam and being in Christ, we very much question whether any adequate view of the Atonement is possible. The relationship of **mankind** to God, as His creatures, is one thing; our relationship to God as "children" and "sons" in **the Christian sense**, is quite another, and the Bible never confounds the two. Nor have we any right to falsify these terms or misapply them. Only **in Christ** do we become "children" and "sons," and this is a relationship that never existed on mere **natural** grounds. It is the fruit of grace and redemption.*

*In this connection, there is perhaps one other passage which calls for notice—we refer to Eph. iv. 6, "One God and Father of all, etc." This is an admittedly difficult passage. For one thing, part of the original text is in question. But it is clear that the apostle is here addressing believers, and his previous remarks apply only to them. Why should there be any exception when He comes to speak of one God and Father of all? (The remainder of the verse, or part of it, does go wider.) But whatever the passage may mean, it surely cannot teach that God is indiscriminately the Father of all men (except from the standpoint of creation), whether saved or unsaved, as this book teaches. Such a truth, if it had any foundation in fact, would surely be everywhere on the face of Scripture, whereas it is conspicuous by its absence. While on the other hand, as we have seen, epithets are used of certain men which a father would never use of his recognised children. It may be asked, Why, if all men are alike in this respect, did Christ stretch forth His hand toward His **disciples**, and say, "Behold my mother and my brethren," and make all depend upon doing God's will?—(Matt. xii. 49-50.)

(To be continued).

Isaiah

Chapter IX.

Dense indeed was the darkness in which the last chapter closed; but we know that it is ever "darkest before dawn," so we may naturally expect a dawning to follow such darkness as this. Nor would that expectation be unjustified by the Scripture itself, for you will remember that we have just heard of some who prefer any source of intelligence (even though it be diabolical) to the "word and the testimony" and on whom therefore that dawning shall never rise: but the inference is inevitable that there are others, who do cleave to that "word and testimony" on whom that light shall break.

But, now, between verse 2 and 3 we clearly have one of those strange parentheses that are not uncommon in the holy Word of God. In this case, up to this present year, nearly nineteen centuries have passed since that "great Light" brought to honour the dark road by the sea (of Galilee)—a significant phrase, not merely distinguishing a part of the land, but telling to an open ear how close morally Israel has got to the Gentiles (the sea), for Galilee itself is no longer Galilee of Israel, but Galilee of the Gentiles—they are all on one level morally—"there is no difference."

But in the next verse we see the nation rejoicing as it has never rejoiced yet—that joy then must be future even to this very day. No sane man can say that the nation of the Jews rejoiced at all when that light shone in Galilee. The Jew—that is the nation in its representatives—rejected the Light, and with it both the gracious sorrow of penitence and the sweet joy of pardon. A few received Him: little children cried Hosanna; but the chief priests, the Scribes, the Rulers, the Pharisees, the mass, turned from the Light, and cried "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The Jew must again then travel through that "dimness of anguish"—the terrors still await poor "Jacob;" but he shall be saved out of them, for now we hear:

Thou hast enlarged
 The (once little) nation.
 Joy thou hast given
 Ever increasing:
 They triumph before thee
 As in full harvest—
 As victors exultant
 Dividing the spoil.

For the yoke of its burden,
 The staff of its shoulder
 The rod of its tyrant,
 Thou hast broken to splinters.
 As in the day when
 Midian's yoke was
 Smashed by Jehovah.

For the boot (of the soldier)
 In war-tumult trampling:
 The cloak (of the soldier)
 In blood saturated—
 Are but for burning
 And fuel for fire.*

This verse 3 brings us to a most important question: "Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased joy" cries the joyful prophet. Now what nation **can** that be? What nation is alone beloved as a nation, "for the fathers' sakes?" I write on what is called "Christmas Day, 1917." In tens of thousands of "Churches" throughout Christendom, will these words be read, and who that hears them will ask: "To what nation does the prophet refer?" But is it not a fair—a vital question to ask?

Can there, however, be one shade of doubt, or difficulty? The Church is not a nation, but is taken out of them. Christendom is not "a nation" at all; but is made up of many nations; and while I do not say that each of these nations of Christendom, may not **claim** to be specifically favoured of God, yet only the most amazing folly and arrogance would claim to be **the one unique, elect** nation of God—the very claim would, and does, bring it under the reprobation of the rest.

It is Israel—Israel alone. It is the Jewish people, cast away for a time, but not forever, and now at this third verse, not only restored as a little remnant, to the land of their fathers, but under the renewed smile of Jehovah, ever growing in numbers, and in joy proportioned to that growth.

But if so (and again I venture to say, "Who can deny it?"), **not one letter of this is fulfilled on this 25th December, 1917, in**

*Let me here, once for all, disavow in these attempts at a metrical and free rendering so far any idea of improving on the wording of the Authorised Version—save here and there, perhaps, by corrections due to later research than was attained in 1611, and as illustrated in both verses 3 and 5 above. But we all know that at times a change of locality, even for the worse, is not without benefit to health; so old truths, put in some new (and let it be granted, inferior way), may still become more clear, even because in less familiar dress.

Christendom at all! It is—it must be—still future. We have no part in this third verse. We are living between the second and third verses of this chapter of Isaiah in that unnoticed, and, to every Old Testament writer, unknown parenthesis in the course of time of which the Spirit of God frequently speaks in the New Testament, as for example: “Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery **which was kept secret since the world began**, but now is made manifest . . . by the scriptures of the prophets (or better, “prophetic scriptures,” that is, of New Testament prophets) according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”

Oh, the joy of that hour to the poor, long-suffering, but ever-beloved, and now redeemed nation! It is indeed “life from the dead” (Rom. xi. 15). It is the day of which her prophets have spoken as the resurrection of the nation (Isaiah xxvi. 19; Ezekiel xxxvii. 11-14; Daniel xii. 2).

Two figures are employed to express it. First, “They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest.” Indeed it is Israel’s great harvest. It is the feast of tabernacles, at that time—like that of Pentecost long ago, “fully come.” Israel’s year is now complete, nothing but the ingathering remains. But at that time Jesus does not come up to that feast, as once He did: “as it were in secret” (John vii. 10), but very “openly,” with clouds and great glory, and every eye sees Him. Jerusalem has been captured, and is suffering all the horrors of a captured city (Zech. xiv.). The little remnant of faith that has held the citadel against the combined armies of the Roman Empire is about to be exterminated, and He comes for their deliverance—well may they exult.

It is Jehovah’s intervention again: once more is the nation delivered from the taskmaster. Israel is likened to a poor beast of burden, the neck under the yoke; the shoulder pierced with goads; the back scored with the driver’s rod—all these indignities are inflicted on Messiah’s people! With great indignation He interposes and breaks all these to splinters. It is as it was in the day of Midian, when 300 men, without weapons, or armed only with trumpets, lamps, and broken pitchers, defeated all the mighty host of Midian.

(To be continued.)