

A PRAYER

O Friend of Sinners, Friend of Sufferers,
too!

I see Thee with compassion ever new
Stoop down to minister to fallen man,
And calling us to help Thy glorious plan.
"Take care of him," we hear the Saviour
say

Before, in that white cloud, He went away.
"Spend without grudging; keep account,
and then

I will repay thee when I come again."
O Holy One, what hast Thou to repay
That we can claim from Thee in that great
day?

What have we risked or done * * *
For which to ask repayment at Thy hands?
—Catharine Hankey.

COMFORT IN DEATH*

The approach of death tests the value of all our possessions; and the solid comfort which God's word is then fitted to impart proves its divine character, even to the ungodly. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," is the wish of many more than the wicked prophet of Aram. The Rev. Richard Cecil's words well describe the rich consolations which the Christian possesses in life's latest hours: "Sitting," he says, "in my blanket, with the Bible before me, I seem like old Elwes (the miser) with a bushel of bank-notes and India bonds; but with this difference, that he must have his all taken away, and I shall take all mine with me."

A caravan was once pursuing its way through Hindostan when one of the company, fairly overcome by fatigue, sunk down upon the earth, and was coolly left by his heathen brethren to perish. A Christian missionary, who was travelling behind, stopped beside the poor old man, and perceiving his end not far off, he knelt beside him, and whispered in his ear, "Brother, what is your hope?" Rousing himself, the dying man was only able feebly to articulate the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and then with a few long-drawn breaths his spirit passed away. The missionary was greatly

amazed; but in the hand of the dead he observed a little piece of paper. Taking it carefully from the grasp of the corpse, he found it to contain the whole of the first chapter of the First Epistle of John, in which occur the words that the departing one had found, in life and death, to be indeed a kiss of Christ's mouth.

"I shall never forget," wrote the Rev. Mr. Cecil, from whom I have already quoted, "the day when I stood by the bedside of my sick mother. 'Are you not afraid to die?' I asked. 'No.' 'No! Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?' 'Because God has said, Fear not; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'" (Isaiah 43:2.)

Ebenezer Erskine, at an early period of his ministry, preached from the words in Isaiah 43:3, "I am the Lord thy God;" and the consideration of the covenant relation in which Jehovah thus reveals Himself afforded Mr. Erskine peculiar delight. All through his useful life, the thoughts thereby suggested animated and consoled him; and when he came to die, he remarked to an inquiring friend: "I am now doing with my soul what I did forty years ago; I am resting on that word, 'I am the Lord thy God;' and in this I mean to die."

THE RESCUE

A ship was burned near the mouth of the British Channel. Among the passengers were a father, mother and their little daughter, not many months old. When the discovery was made that the ship was on fire, and the alarm was given, there was great confusion, and this family became separated. The father was rescued and taken back to Liverpool, but the mother and her infant child were crowded overboard and they drifted out of the channel with the tide, the mother clinging to a fragment of the wreck with her little one clasped to her breast.

Late in the afternoon of that day, a vessel bound from Newport, Wales, to Boston, was moving slowly along, with only a light breeze, and the captain was

impatiently walking the deck, when his attention was called to an object some distance off, which looked like a person in the water. The officers and crew watched it for a time, and as no vessel was near thought it impossible that this could be a human being. But it was thought best to get out a boat and row to the object.

The boat was accordingly lowered and manned. It was watched with considerable interest by those on board, and they noticed that as it drew near to the drifting speck, the rowers rested on their oars for two or three minutes, then moved forward, took in the person or thing, they knew not which, and returned to the ship. When the boat's crew came on board, they brought with them **this mother and her child**, alive and well, and the sailors said that as they came near, they heard a female voice sweetly singing; as with a common impulse the men ceased rowing and listened. And then the words of the beautiful hymn, sung by this trusting Christian, all unconscious that deliverance was so near, came over the waves to their ears:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last."

In due time the vessel arrived in Boston; the mother wrote to her friends in England, and thus the father learned of the safety of his wife and child, and, in about four months from the time of their separation, they were happily re-united.

What a beautiful illustration this affords of the truth that God never forsakes those that love Him. A child of His may be placed in circumstances of great trial, suffering with pain and sickness, lost in the desert, in peril at sea, drifting away, as it may seem, from all earthly help, as were this mother and her babe out upon the deep; but one who has trusted in Him is never out of His sight—never where He cannot hear a cry for help. And although deliverance does not always come in the way it is hoped for or expected, yet in some way every trial and sorrow shall be made a blessing to those who love God.

THE MISSING ONES*

One summer evening, for a part of our family worship, I read the fourth of 1 Thess. Before retiring to rest I seated myself on my easy chair, and mused on the last few verses of the chapter, and as I mused I fell into a deep sleep, and had a most wonderful dream. My mind seemed to be clear and distinct, and my intellectual faculties stronger and brighter than in my wakeful condition.

I thought I had awakened in the morning, and was somewhat surprised to find that my wife was not beside me as usual. Supposing, however, that her absence was but temporary, I waited, expecting her speedy return to our chamber; but after the lapse of what I considered a reasonable time, as she did not make her appearance, I arose and dressed.

My wife's apparel was where she had placed it on retiring, and I felt confident she was somewhere about the house. So I went to my daughter Julia's room, thinking she might know the whereabouts of her mother; but after knocking several times without response, I entered and found that she also was missing.

"Strange, passing strange!" said I to myself; "where can they both be?" Then I went to the room of our son Frank, and found him up and already dressed, which was something quite unusual for him at an hour so early. He said he had passed a very restless night, and thought he might better get up. I told him of the absence of his mother and sister from their rooms, and requested him to look around and see if he could find them. In the meantime I hurriedly completed my toilet, and soon Frank returned and said the missing ones were nowhere to be found, and that every door leading outward was securely locked, as on the preceding evening. We were at our wits' end, and what to make of this strange occurrence we did not know. On again visiting Julia's room we found on a stand her well-marked open Bible. One prominent verse attracted my attention; it read, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not

The Son of Man Cometh."

This passage, my wife had always de-

clared, referred to the coming of Christ for His saints, the redeemed Church, according to 1 Thess. 4:14-17, while I insisted that it meant only the preparation for death. But I am digressing. Frank and I concluded that, without waiting for breakfast, we should each take a different route, and visit some of our most intimate friends, in quest of our dear ones.

I first called on my wife's sister, Mrs. E., who with her husband, were good, respectable people, members of a Christian Church, though rather worldly minded. After I had rung the bell several times, and waited somewhat impatiently, she appeared, and apologized for her dilatoriness by saying that she was "in a peck of trouble," and had to prepare breakfast herself, for her colored servant girl, whom she had always considered to be a real good Christian, had played her a mean trick. "She had gone off somewhere, without even putting the kettle on the range, or saying a word to any of us. But what puzzles us to know is, how she got out of the house, for the doors are all locked and the keys inside, just as we left them last evening on our return from Mrs. B.'s progressive euchre party."

"Indeed," said I, "it is exceedingly strange," and then I explained to her the object of my morning visit. When she heard of

The Mysterious Absence

of my wife and Julia, she became so very nervous that I was glad to change the subject by saying that as I had not yet breakfasted, I would join them in their morning repast. When her husband heard my story he treated it with a good deal of levity, and declared that my wife was only playing me a practical joke, to induce me to rise earlier in the morning. He was sure the missing ones had secreted themselves somewhere about the house, and when I returned home I would find them all right.

As we seated ourselves at the table, Mrs. E. said we would have coffee without milk, as her milkman, who had heretofore been very reliable, had failed to make his appearance.

Presently the door-bell rang, and Frank entered in a state of excitement, saying he

had been all over enquiring for his mother, and in almost every house he found trouble similar to our own. Almost every family was anxiously

Searching for Missing Ones

He had just come from our home where he found the servant girl alone, but much agitated in consequence of the numerous calls she had had to answer about missing friends. He also stated that the streets were thronged with excited people, hurrying to and fro, many of them weeping bitterly. At this announcement, Mr. E. showed evident signs of alarm, and related a conversation he had held yesterday with a friend, whose religious ideas he looked upon as quite heretical.

His friend insisted that a vast majority of church members in these days were but nominal Christians, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," and that the love of the masses for religious things was at a very low ebb. "My friend also assured me," said Mr. E., "that the Scriptures clearly taught that when the elect number of Christ's Church would be completed Christ would come as unexpectedly as a thief in the night and call His saints, both dead and alive, to meet Him in the air. The transformation would be effected in the twinkling of an eye, and although the call would be made with a shout and the sound of a trumpet, yet none would hear it but those for whom it was intended. Then would be realized the import of Christ's words, "Then shall two be in the field, one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left' I fear that time has now come, and, sad to say, we are among the left ones."

Now, as the morning was far advanced, it was suggested that we go down to our business places. Frank had already gone to his office, and I, with a heavy heart, wended my way along the avenue among an unusual throng of men and women whose faces betokened

Intense Sorrow.

In the business parts of the city I observed that many stores were closed, and those that were open did not appear to be doing any business. Every saloon that I passed was open, as usual, with groups of

men outside, apparently engaged in serious discussion. As I passed the City Hall there was no perceptible diminution of the usual crowd of political "hangers on" around the building.

When I reached my own store I found that my bookkeeper and the faithful old porter, who had served me so many years, had not yet put in an appearance. My two other clerks were on hand, doing nothing; nor did I feel like asking them to do anything.

Yesterday I agreed to sell to a worthy mechanic a small piece of land which I owned in the outskirts of the city, and had an appointment to met him at my lawyer's office to sign the contract, but he failed to come, and I presumed he also had joined the absent ones. I then went to the Chamber, and found the largest gathering of merchants that I had seen there for many months. Instead of the lively and noisy bustle of buying and selling, and of clerks and messenger boys running to and fro, there was a solemn gloom pervading the whole assembly. By unanimous consent, and in consequence of the great calamity that had overtaken the community, it was voted that "three days' grace be allowed on all contracts falling due on this day." I will not attempt to set forth any of the reasons and speculations that were advanced as to the cause of our present troubles, but we all agreed that the visitation was a supernatural one, and that in some way we who were left on earth were blameable for it.

In the evening mostly every church in the city was open, with overflowing congregations. Everybody was anxious to know the cause and

Meaning of the "Great Visitation,"

and to learn how lost hopes might be regained. Many of the pastors had gone with the missing ones, but some were present in their churches. All order of service was dispensed with, and noisy confusion prevailed; crimination and recrimination were bandied to and fro between the pastors and the people, the latter asserting that if the pastors had done their duty and taught their flocks the plain truths of the Bible, instead of lulling them to sleep with philosophical and moral essays, they would not now be in their present sad condition.

In my own church the pastor was present, with scores of persons whom I had but rarely seen at meetings.

The pastor was speaking when I entered the room, and was entreating the audience to endeavor to allay their feelings while he would attempt to speak to them for a few minutes. Quiet being somewhat restored, he said, "The pastor's heart is bleeding at every pore in sympathy with his sorely afflicted people. The anguish which I experience at being, in a measure, the cause of our present unhappy condition is indescribable. None of you can realize the

Keen Disappointment

I endure at this result of my labors. I am accused of having preached too much about the affairs of this life, and too little about the heavenly state of the things to come; and of having kept you in ignorance of the imminency of the awful visitation which has manifested itself among us this day. In reply to all these accusations, I can only say that I have taught you the same theology that was taught to me in college, and which I, in common with the great majority of our ministerial brethren, firmly believed to be the teachings of God's Word.

"But now I have to confess that I was sadly mistaken, for, after what has occurred, I cannot help believing that God's Word means just what it says. My pastoral labors during all the time I have been with you have been excessive, and in consequence I have not been able to devote to the study of prophecy the time which a subject so deep and intricate demanded."

Here the electric light suddenly went out, and there arose such fearful screams that I sprang to my feet in terror—and—awoke!

My wife, who was in an adjoining room, hearing my sudden uprising, hastened to see what was the matter. Oh, how glad I was to see her, and to realize that my terrible experience in my easy chair was only a dream. But the more I thought of it afterwards the more solemn seemed the Scripture truths which it contained, and the more was I impressed with the importance of having our lamps trimmed and burning, ready to go out and meet the Bridegroom.

THE COMING ONE* Tune "Saved by Grace"

Some day the Lord shall come,
I cannot tell how soon 'twill be,
But this I know—in Heaven my home,
He has a place prepared for me.

Refrain:

And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story saved by grace.

Before He comes if death befall
How sweet to rest with Christ in light!
For unto Him, my all in all,
My soul shall swiftly take its flight.

The silver cord may fail and break.
But Death, O Death, where is thy sting?
For, O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!

To sleep or wait for Christ is well;
I would not choose which it shall be,
Content to know that I shall dwell
For evermore, my Lord, with Thee!

OUR LORD'S CALL AND TRAINING (Read Mark 3:13)

It is highly interesting and helpful to note in this, the briefest of the four Gospels, the Lord's wonderful patient and gracious, yet faithful ways with His disciples. The value of it for ourselves is that inasmuch as He is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," and as our needs are the same as theirs, in our journey through this life, we can thus take comfort in the assurance that this, equally with the Old Testament, is recorded that "we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Such, we judge, is the Divine intent in these precious and holy records of "the days of His flesh" here below.

Commencing with Chap 3:13, we find:

(1.) Our Lord's call of His Apostles. Here, He advisedly takes His place upon a mountain as their "Lord and Master" and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him."

This should not be mistaken for His general call to sinners, at large, to come to Him for rest and salvation, as seen in

Matt. 11:28, or as in this Gospel, in saying: Repent ye and believe the Gospel" (ch. 1:15). Neither should it be confounded with His call to discipleship, of which Simon and Andrew, James and John, Levi and others are examples. (See ch. 1:16-20.) It is neither of these, but an added call of disciples to the high rank of **apostleship**, to be in an especial sense Christ's men in this world. The words here given seem to be significant of this, "He called unto Him whom He would," but it was not of sinners, on the plain of the world, but of disciples up into a mountain, and for a distinct and special object. When they had answered to His call, our Lord ordained or appointed twelve, and these were rightly in all our minds His apostles in distinction from the general rank and file of His disciples or followers, who might or might not be "disciples indeed," as our Lord intimates later on. **Discipleship** was an act on their part more or less voluntary, **apostleship** was His act in appointing to a special place and service.

But we must now note the reasons given for this our Lord's call.

- (1.) "That they might be with Him."
- (2.) "That He might send them forth."

Both of these statements involve much more than at first sight appears; the first indicating that whatever they might receive or learn, on the one hand, or give or do, upon the other, it was, as it were, but the by-products. The primary object of the call was to **companionship with Christ**, beyond which no higher privilege could possibly be conferred.

In several ways the Lord has pledged His presence to His people, as follows:

- (1.) To all of His own.

In His sweet, assuring promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

- (2.) To those who keep His words.

In His promise of a spiritual manifestation. "If a man love Me he will keep my words . . . and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:21-23).

- (3.) In the assembly of His saints.

"Whosoever two or three are gathered

together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

(4.) To the **opened heart**, in the midst of apostasy.

"If any man open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20).

But none of these are to be taken as the Lord's call here "to be with Him." Peter, later on, tersely describes this, as "having part in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell" (Acts 1:25). How high and holy was such a privilege, and how awful, too, the sin of apostasy from such a place! Many are the phases of our high and holy callings in the Scriptures, but none can be more appealing to our hearts than this one:

"To be with Him."

How deeply was its honour impressed on the apostles' minds the words, "He went in and out among us," may well indicate. (Acts 1:21.)

But there was another object and it was rightly secondary both in its place and importance. It was, "That He might send them forth." The first meant that His called ones should be "in training" with Him; the second, that they should be "ordered to the front." This double relation to our Lord may well be linked with our double responsibility to:

(1.) "Hold fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9).

(2.) Hold forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:16).

The first suggests His company and the committal of a sacred trust, the other indicates a world of need, and our relation and witness towards it.

A little suggestion of the high dignity and sacred responsibility of this call to apostleship seems to be given in verse 9.

"He spake to His disciples that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude." We do not read of His ever using this little ship unless it be in Chap. 4:36, where they "took Him as He was in the ship," but none the less it was there at His disposal, it was "sanctified," (set apart), and "meet" (made suitable to), "to the Master's use," and next, must become, as it were, "prepared to every good work." In this there is a moral order, which cannot be set aside, viz.:

(1.) "Prepared to every good work" (2 Tim. 3). This is by separation to the Lord.

(2.) "Furnished to every good work." This is by study of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

(3.) Ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). This is by the truth governing us in communion with God.

II. The Lord's furnishing of His own.

His object in turning from the proclamation with which He commenced (ch. 1:15), and from the "mighty works," which were His credentials to men, as God's apostle to "parables" is clearly given (Ch. 4:11-13), and is in direct contrast to the popular idea as to it. He did not speak in parables to make His meaning plain, but rather to make it hidden. So He says, That one class might not see, and that another might see more fully. Thus He meant to lead on those who had the heart to learn His ways and to turn back those who were following Him from unworthy motives.

But the Lord's sending forth had also different relations, which it is important for us to carefully consider. They are these:

(1.) To preach.

(2.) To have power.

(a) To heal sickness.

(b) To cast out devils.

The first again is of the highest importance, "to preach." The reason for this is that it has "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21), and He has ordained that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Confirming this we read that Cornelius was told "words whereby he and all his house were saved" (Acts 11:14). What words they were there is no question about in the record in Acts 10. Their climax was, "To Him give all the prophets witness that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (43 v.).

It is well in these days of "fads and fancies" to specially note this fact that Peter did not preach to his earnest hearers:

(1.) Himself or his party. He told Cornelius, who fell at his feet, "Stand up: I myself also am a man." "He preached not himself, but Christ Jesus, the Lord."

(2.) **The Holy Spirit.** He knew the Spirit's mission here too well to put His **unfinished** work in the place of Christ's **finished** work, for peace with God. We repeat he did not preach the Holy Ghost, nor something on our part to be **done** in order to receive Him. He knew the Spirit was received as Paul reminds the Galatians by "the hearing of faith," and not by prayers, doings, givings, offerings or sacrifices.

(3.) **Water Baptism.**

No, while Peter told his smitten brethren, the Jews, to "Repent and be baptized every one of them," and to "save themselves from that untoward generation," which was by baptism, he did not so witness to these Gentiles.

He preached Christ alone to them and they believed on Him with the blessed result that they were sealed the moment they believed, and so seeing that they had thus been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one Body, Peter asks, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

How plainly is this in vivid contrast to the many now who either preach one Baptism or the other, as though Scripture contained but little else. We have yet to meet a soul truly grounded in the faith, or one at all well-instructed in the Scriptures, who make a hobby of either of these, and it is a significant mark of heresy to exaggerate to undue prominence either an ordinance or a doctrine, for the Holy Spirit is given "to guide us into all truth," and this is incompatible with hobbies.

But to "heal and cast out demons" was also part of the commission of these apostles of our Lord. This rightly leads us to consider what their special place was, and Scripture answers precisely thus:

(1.) **To commit the facts and faith of Christianity to others.**

Luke says "they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Ch. 1:2).

(2.) **To bear testimony to Christ risen.** "One must be ordained to be a witness of His resurrection" (Acts 1:22).

(3.) **To confirm the Word spoken by the Lord.**

"At the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Heb. 2:3).

(4.) **To give commandments by the Holy Spirit.**

"Let him acknowledge that the things I write are the commandments of the Lord"—Paul (1 Cor. 14:37).

"Be mindful of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Peter 3:2).

"He that is of God heareth us"—John (1 John 4:6).

(5.) **To deliver unto Satan.**

"To deliver such an one unto Satan" (1 Cor. 5:5).

"Whom I have delivered unto Satan" (1 Tim. 1:20).

(6.) **To establish God's order for His people.**

"They delivered them the decrees to keep" (Acts 16:4).

"Keep the ordinances (traditions) as I delivered them unto you" (1 Cor. 11:2).

"To be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (11:16).

"So ordain I in all assemblies" (1 Cor. 7:17).

(7.) **To ordain elders and deacons.**

"Look you out seven men, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

"They ordained them elders in every Church" (Acts 14:23).

Such in brief was apostolic work, to establish Christianity in a hostile world, and to order it according to God in both the faith and godly practice.

To the fact that they were the apostles of Christ, God bore them witness, "both with signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. 2:4). This witnesses to the apostle's statement that the Church was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20). The apostles established God's new order of things, Christianity, the prophets completed the canon of Scripture, thus giving us the double legacy of the living Church, and the lively oracles of the Word of God. Thus our apostles and prophets exist in the Word and the Church of God, and because of this we refuse to own any other as being genuine, and coming from God.

The healing of human bodies, and casting out of demons were thus their credentials and being deeds that were superhuman called men's attention. Next, they were wonders that attracted them and finally they were the signs of greater realities, which God delighted in His grace to bestow. Tracing the record of all this display, it is to be noted that even an apostle and his fellow labourers were left with infirmities, suffering and sicknesses, while others were raised up to health (as see the cases of Paul, Timothy and Trophimus, in contrast to Publius, 2 Cor. 12:7-10; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20; Acts 28:8. Our Lord gave a first set of twelve apostles and since no others of the same order, but they are with us yet in the church. B. C. G.

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

A few Scriptures brought together may be helpful to establish the soul in the knowledge that dark and mysterious as is the Beyond, save to Faith, which sees what God sees, yet there is plenty to assure us that Death, for the people of God, is no retrograde, but an advance, from "good" to "better" as the glorified state will be to "best"—to be both with and like our Lord in glory.

One of the earliest Scriptures witnesses that however dim was the candle of the Prophetic Word, as compared with the full-orbed light of Christianity, yet God gave His people even then a solid basis for their faith, so that their hope made them not ashamed. Thus we read as part of God's covenant with Abraham: "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace" (Gen. 15:15). Can we believe that this, as part of God's blessing of His servant, could possibly mean that he would be either "silent in the grave," or even worse, "shut up in a prison" for more than a millennium until Christ rose from the dead? We trow not. His fathers were not on the earth, where they once lived, but had passed to "the congregation of the dead." But our Lord has let His light in upon it, and told us that these dead still lived, for the living God was their God, and they all lived unto Him: So in the unseen world, they were in peace, and resting, comforted of God.

Jacob mourning the sad loss of his beloved Joseph says, "I will go down into

Sheol unto my son mourning." Sorrow would be his lot from the bereavement here, but he would be comforted there, and if "Israel loved Joseph" here, he would not be robbed of him there. His dead would be his living then.

David's words as to his child, just dead, assures the same thing, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). God could not yield to David's tears, and spare the child of his sin, but David believed that God would give him back, and that before the resurrection, i.e., when David went. Both would be together, enjoying each other's company by and by. Right or wrong, such was David's comfort, and our Lord has told us in two passages of His word how this could possibly be. In Matt. 18:10, He said of little children, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father, which is in heaven, for the Son of Man is come to save the lost." In Luke 19:10, He says of an adult, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

But passing by all else in the Old Testament, our Lord taught that God as the God of Abraham, etc., was "the God of the living," for they both lived to Him in the present, and would be raised by Him in the future (Matt. 21).

Three bright examples of the place of the believer with Christ at death are the dying thief (Luke 23), the dying martyr, Stephen (Acts 7), and the dying apostle, Paul (2 Tim. 4). "With Me," with Christ at death, while our Lord's holy body was in Joseph's new tomb, and the thief's, perhaps, still on the cross, they were together in Paradise, the third heaven, home with God.

The second, Stephen, saw Jesus in the glory of God and asked, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and straight to Him he went (Acts 7).

The third, Paul, had been there ahead, had seen the good land of his possession and brought back its grapes, and said, "with Christ, far better." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1-6; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8).

May our hearts then rest in the assurance that while our reward may still await His coming, yet rest and joy untold will be ours as soon as we are "cut off and fly away" (Ps. 90). B. C. G.

CUT OFF OUT OF THE LAND OF THE LIVING

Among the various and appalling sufferings of our adorable Lord, as given in the Psalms, we find one kind which we fear has been overlooked in a great measure, if not entirely ignored, or disbelieved in. It is that of His being "cut off out of the land of the living," being "taken from the earth," "taken away in the midst of His days."

Some in their zeal to be accounted "heavenly minded," speak often as though "the chief end of life" was to be heartily weary of it, to long to go out from all that is here below and so to be out of this wicked world. Others are truly homesick, weary and long to be at home with their Lord, and be at rest, which is indisputably part of our Christian character. One has well said, "Only the man who longs to be with his Master is fit to remain here, and to properly represent Him here."

But true as this is, in part, at least, it is **only part** of what Scripture teaches on this matter.

In Psalm 22, where at least seven phases of our Lord's sufferings are grouped together by the Spirit of God, we find these words: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Ps. 22:15). Here it is plain that our Lord who speaks of His joy in living here as man, deeply felt it to have His strength go from Him, to be "weakened in the way," and to be brought down from the vigour of life to man's lowest humiliation, of death—God's curse upon man as a fallen being. Why should He, God's Holy One, who had no sins, die as though He were a sinner? But one answer can be given by all sound Christians, that is, it was God's necessity and ours, that He, who was the Only One death had no claim upon, must needs die that we might live.

In the next Psalm (40), that presents our Lord's sufferings instead of death being an element of His suffering, it is **poverty**. After all else has been gone over as to "the horrible pit" of our sins, "the miry clay of our humanity," the innumerable evils that

compassed Him," etc., He breaks forth: "But I am **poor and needy**." He was in the lowest of our circumstances yet His resource was "Yet the Lord thinketh upon Me," followed by "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, etc." (Ps. 41).

Again in Ps. 69, how deep were the waters our Lord passed through, "They came in unto my soul," He says, "I sink in deep mire, the floods overflow me," and finally He adds, "Reproach hath broken My heart."

Then in Psalm 71, among "the great and sore troubles" that fell to His lot one was He went down into death, the depths of the earth.

But it is Ps. 102 where after "sorrow upon sorrow" is detailed, He says, "He **weakeneth my strength** in the way, He **shortened My days**," then He cries out, "O take me not away in the midst of my days" (vv. 23, 24).

Now mark the answer of God, as quoted of our Lord in Heb. 1:10-12:

"Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth. The heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure. They shall be changed, but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (vv. 23-27).

Thus while our Lord rightly shrank back from Death as God's judicial decree against men, yet He surrendered Himself to His Father's will, laid down His life, and tasted death for every man.

But in Isaiah 53 this "cutting off" is viewed in a still more striking way, viz.:

"Who shall declare His **generation**? for He was cut off out of the land of the living." As said the wise woman of Tekoa, "They shall quench my coal, and not leave to us **name nor remainder upon the earth**" (2 Sam. 14:7). So with our Lord, with no posterity and His sun setting at noonday, would His name perish from the earth?

Ah, this is God's miracle, who had decreed, "A **seed** shall serve Him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a **generation**." There in the very throes of death, brought as He says into "the dust of death," man's deepest humiliation, a dying thief beside Him becomes His seed, and after His cry-

ing out with a loud voice another confesses Him as righteous and the Son of God. And as to the final issue God has also decreed, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." (Comp. Ps. 22:30 with Isaiah 53:11.)

But over against this glorious fruitage is put the travail of his soul and dying in the prime of life, identified with man as under Divine judgment, reckoned among transgressors, accursed as hanging upon a tree. Yet did He "endure the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of God."

Blessed and adorable Lord! And should we be called as well to go through death, how assured may we be that He will say to us, "Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed," and though He would not have us think lightly of so great a reality yet would He have us know that He "giveth us the victory." B. C. G.

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS

In our Lord's wonderful survey of the Holy Scripture with His disciples, after His resurrection, he said: "All things must be fulfilled which were written

- (1) in the Law, and
- (2) in the Prophets, and
- (3) in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

Whatever else, then, can be found of sound and Scriptural teaching in these Psalms, we may rest assured that Christ Himself is one of their chief subjects. Yes, we would add, Christ in His wonderful Incarnation, in His dependent life, in His faithful witness, in His sufferings and death, in His glorious resurrection, in His ascension into heaven, in His gift of the Spirit, in His present session in heaven, and in His coming again in glory. It may astonish some to see this array of subjects for beyond a reference here and there, as they think, of a vague character, in relation to our Lord's sufferings on the cross, they have never traced out these various prophecies of Him, and so shared what the Apostles were privileged to enjoy in our Lord's marvelous tracing out of Himself in these Psalms of David and other parts of the Sacred Word.

It has been long known to many Bible scholars that many of the Psalms were prophetic, and to others, more recently,

that this "Pentateuch of David," as the Hebrews style it, is in a subjective or experimental way, what the law or "Pentateuch of Moses" is objectively. That is, the Psalms develop and emphasize the great leading truths announced in those earlier Books, viz. of Life, Redemption, Access to God, Wilderness Walk and of Review or Remembrance of the Way.

The five Books of Psalms are as follows, as we have gathered up from other Biblical writers:

- (1) Ch. 1-41, "The state of the Jewish Remnant before being driven out of Jerusalem, and Christ, the source of all their blessing."
- (2) 42-72, "Their complete ruin, but redemption in the latter days."
- (3) 73-89, "The sanctuary, and the holiness of God in His ways with them."
- (4) 90-106, "The first failed man replaced by the second, and the world under His hand."

- (5) 107-150, "The moral conclusion, God and man at last found together."

Each Book ends with a double Amen, and a note of praise, and each following Book repeats, as it were, the subject of the preceding one, as it starts out.

How striking is the Pentateuchal parallel! Genesis opens with a man, a tree, and a river; Psalm 1 presents a blessed man, an evergreen tree, planted by the river of waters.

Exodus opens with the oppression of the enemy and Israel's groaning; Ps. 42 presents the tears and fears of the godly remnant in the latter days, from "ungodly nation and the deceitful and unjust man."

Leviticus presents God speaking out of the Sanctuary, and Ps. 73 shows it to be the place of communion with God, and also of restoring grace (17-28).

Numbers is God's order for the wilderness way; Psalm 90 gives the prayer of God's leader in the wilderness and His leading them by the right way.

Deuteronomy gives the rehearsal of God's order and of His people's, and the law repeated; Ps. 107 is God's rehearsal, and the ultimate praise He looks for, and often so long waits for.

The general theme, as the Apostle Peter says (1 Pet. 1:18), is that of the sufferings and glory of Christ, but linked with

that is the sufferings and future glory of Israel, and also wider of all creation.

The first Psalm presents a Blessed Man, walking apart from the world and its ways and in communion with God, enriched by His favor and in contrast to the ungodly who shall perish. That this has so scant a measure of fulfillment in the lives of God's people leads some to regard it as an ideal Psalm, a standard never to be quite realized. True, it was only fully seen in Christ our Lord, but at the same time the "life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal bodies" and in the measure in which it is so the Psalm describes both Christ and His own.

B. C. G.

THE CONSCIENCE OF MAN

The conscience is that faculty of the soul which judges good and evil. It has been called "the eye of the mind," and is the power of psychic discernment, as the eye is the power of physical vision. But all history declares and everyday life confirms that it alone is not competent to guide man. Like the physical eye, it cannot see in the dark, and is subject to affections that impair, and sometimes annul, its usefulness; with this important difference: the physical eye cannot suffer a serious impairment of its functions without the knowledge of its possessor, whereas the conscience may be so perverted as to call evil good, and good evil, while its unhappy possessor walks in darkness, knowing it not. And when this is the case, havoc is wrought indeed, for "wilful error is limited by the will, but what limit is there to that of which we are unconscious?" Take the notable example of Saul of Tarsus persecuting the church of God. "I thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," he said, "which things also I did" (Acts 26:9). There was conscience; but its possessor was walking in darkness and knew it not until the day he went to Damascus, and saw a light and heard a voice from heaven. He had a good conscience, he said (Acts 23:1), but a good conscience is not enough. It must bow to Him Who is Light, and be guided by the Book called a lamp and a light. "For the Word has authority as well as light. It tests the truth of conscience by giving light, but it speaks with the authority of God. I do not believe in the conscientious-

ness of a man who pleads his conscience against the Word of God."

Eight different states of conscience are mentioned:

Good (1 Peter 3:16).

Good (sic) (Heb. 13:18).

Defiled (Titus 1:15).

Purged (Heb. 9:14).

Pure (2 Tim. 1:3).

Evil (Heb. 10:22).

Seared (1 Tim. 4:2).

Weak (1 Cor. 8:10).

"We trust we have a good conscience" (Heb. 13:6), wrote the apostle, when asking for the prayers of the Hebrew saints. And when he wrote "good" he used, not the ordinary word for good, "agathos," but a word that means "beauty" as well as goodness: "kalos," beautiful and pleasing. How blessed to have a conscience like that! In Titus 1:15 we read of a defiled conscience—the conscience of the defiled and unbelieving to whom nothing is pure, but both mind and conscience defiled. In Hebrews 9:14 we read of a purged conscience. Here the apostle uses a medical term, "katharizo," which means to cleanse. The same word in another form, "katharos," we find in 1 Tim. 3:9 and 2 Tim. 1:3. A pure conscience, one that is clear or clean. In Heb. 10:22 we read of an evil conscience. In 1 Tim 4:2 we find a seared conscience, one branded as with a hot iron. In the 8th chapter of 1 Cor. we find a good deal about a weak conscience; and again the apostle uses a medical term. This time it is "asthenes," a word translated in other places, "sick," "impotent," "without strength," "feeble." Let us read this chapter; there are only thirteen verses.

The subject is, "the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols," v. 4. It seems there were in that day, brethren who were, as yet, not entirely free from the thrall of idolatry out of which they had but lately come. Idols were everywhere, and the sinister belief in them cast its dark shadow across the minds of the weak. The flesh that had been offered in sacrifice to idols was often sold in open market, with nothing to differentiate it from other meat. To the intelligent Christian it was all the same—the idol was nothing, and the meat of sacrifice neither good nor evil. He could sit down in the very temple of the idol and eat a

dinner of flesh, because he had knowledge and liberty. The truth had made him free. But the Holy Spirit had a warning for him; he was to consider his weak brother and act in grace. If a brother without knowledge were to see him who had knowledge eating in an idol's temple, he might do the same thing himself because he was weak. Example would have more power over him than conscience, because his conscience was weak. Thus his weak conscience would become defiled. So St. Paul would have eaten no meat while the world endured, if it had hurt the conscience of a weak brother, though the weak brother were in the wrong.

This chapter has sometimes been taken to prove that whatever I think is wrong, my brother must abstain from; that if a thing offends my conscience my brother must not do it. But it is a totally false thing to make conscience a law. "A law is a thing imposed upon a person, whereas the essence of conscience is that I discern between good and evil in myself, and that becomes a law to me. Law is imposed by a law-giver," not by a weak brother. This chapter is not addressed to him at all. It is an appeal to those who have knowledge, in behalf of one who is in the wrong, who follows others to his own defilement.

The thing imposed upon Adam in the Garden of Eden was neither good nor evil in itself. Obedience to God's command was the test. Neither were the trees, behind which he hid, good or evil in themselves, but he used them to shut God out. The keeping of the Sabbath was neither good nor evil in itself, but it was part of the law. Neither is eating meat good or evil in itself, but I am to walk charitably. Thus I see the important principle that what I renounce for my weak brother's sake must be in itself neither good nor evil. If it is intrinsically good I shall not renounce it. If it be intrinsically evil, I must renounce it for my own sake, not for my brother's, but that I may not sin against God. I cannot give up murder, theft and covetousness for my brother's sake, nor lying, gambling and swearing; for these are sins. But I can give up the use of my piano, bicycle and camera for my brother's sake, or the eating of meat or the drinking of wine, for these are neither good nor evil. Intemperate eating of meat is gluttony,

and that is evil; intemperate drinking of wine is drunkenness, and that is evil.

Eleanor Van Winkle.

LOOK TO HIM*

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22).

"Me"—"I am God, and there is none else."

Here we have the glory of the Person.

Saved. In this word we have the wonderful result of looking to such a One—salvation.

All. Here we see the scope, the world-wide range, of the call—it is universal.

A look is the condition.

A Saviour-God is the object.

A full salvation is the result.

And invitation is given to all.

What a full gospel! what a remarkable text!

Now, dear reader, pause, and ask yourself—Have I looked? Am I saved? Make this an intensely personal question. In looking to Christ by faith there is salvation for the soul. It is not by working, nor by feeling, but by looking; that is, by believing. The bitten Israelite looked at the brazen serpent; he lived. The sinner is bidden to believe on the Son of man lifted up; he gets everlasting life. "I am God, and there is none else." No; for "there is none other name given . . . whereby we must be saved." I pray you look not to your fancied merits, your earnest prayers, your charitable actions, your deceitful feelings; salvation is in Christ alone. **Look to Him.** The immediate result is that you are saved.

—J. W. S.

"BE TRUE"*

"Thou must be true thyself,

If thou the truth wouldst teach;

Thy soul must overflow, if thou

Another soul wouldst reach:

It needs the overflow of heart

To give the lips full speech.

"Think truly, and thy thoughts

Shall the world's famine feed;

Speak truly, and each word of thine

Shall be a fruitful seed;

Live truly, and thy life shall be

A great and noble creed."

—H. Bonar.

TELL JESUS*

When thou wakest in the morning,
Ere thou tread the untried way
Of the path that lies before thee
Through the coming busy day;
Whether sunbeams promise brightness,
Whether dim forebodings fall,
Be the dawning glad or gloomy,
Go to Jesus—tell Him all!

In the calm of sweet communion
Let thy daily work be done;
In the peace of soul-outpouring
Care be banished, patience won.
And if earth with its enchantments
Seek thy spirit to enthral,
Ere thou listen, ere thou answer—
Turn to Jesus—tell Him all!

Then as hour by hour glides by thee,
Thou wilt blessed guidance know,
Thine own burdens being lightened,
Thou canst bear another's woe;
Thou canst help the weak ones onward,
Thou canst raise up those that fall:
But, remember, while thou servest,
Still tell Jesus—tell Him all!

And if weariness creep o'er thee
As the day wears to its close,
Or if sudden, fierce temptation,
Bring thee face to face with foes—
In thy weakness, in thy peril,
Raise to heaven a trustful call;
Strength and calm for every crisis
Come—in telling Jesus all.

"SICKNESS AND HEALING"*

'What a groaning creation we are in!
'And we ourselves (Christians) groan
within ourselves,"—part and parcel of it,
from which there is no exemption, until He
comes for Whom we wait, our "Blessed
Lord and Saviour."

But how many Christians are puzzled
over their sufferings and sicknesses, and
Satan often tempts and annoys such, and
then "faith-healers" cross their path some-
times, and add to their misery. One such
I met who had been cured "by faith," she

said, of heart disease, and her daughter
also. But strange to say, she did not have
faith enough to take in John 5:24, and in
no wise could we be sure (she affirmed)
that we had Eternal Life, and would not
come into judgment in the future.

Such is often the case with this sort
of people, yet they are a source of trouble
to many. One old brother I met in New-
foundland, they had visited him in the
hospital and got him to search himself to
see if he "had faith enough," and of "the
right kind," and at last, the dear old brother
was in real misery.

Let me say this to those who read this:
"Faith is simply believing what God says.
"We receive His testimony and set to our
seal that God is true." No matter what
that testimony may be, do you do that.
dear brother or sister? If so, that is the
qualification that pleases God, and glorifies
Him also.

Can you find a case of any one of the
Apostles doing a miracle to heal one of
the Lord's people since the Holy Spirit
came? Dorcas may be brought forward as
a case; Acts 9:36-41, but that is not done
by any one, who truly believes "absent
from the body is to be present with the
Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). And again, "To die
is gain," and "which is far better" (Phil.
1:22-23).

Dorcas did pass through death, and was
made alive, only to go the same way again;
not cured of her sickness, which was unto
death!

We might look at three of God's people
(servants) that seemed to be very valu-
able Christians in a dark day, standing for
God and His truth when many were giving
it up: Timothy, Epaphroditus and Trophi-
mus.

Timothy is one whom the Holy Spirit
calls what few of us could claim as our
title: "But thou, O MAN OF GOD" (1
Tim. 6:11). What a name he has, given
by God! A title we should all covet, yet
he seems to have been a weak brother, with
"often infirmities" and stomach disorders.
Still, the Apostle Paul, who had such in-

tense love for him, and power to heal, instead of doing so, tells him to try and help himself in a natural way, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23).

Here was one who seemed to be so much needed, and if he had been more robust would have been more vigorous in the work of the Lord, but alas! his body would only allow him to do so much, and the rest he had to leave with God to find another workman for.

Epaphroditus. He is sick, and we learn from the inspired record it was "because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death" (Phil. 2:30). The long journey he had taken from Phillipi to Rome, carrying with him the things that the saints had sent to the aged apostle ch. 4:18 (we know not what, but they were in God's holy sight a "sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing") had proved too much for his strength, and the result was he "was sick, nigh unto death."

Why did the Apostle not heal him? That he had power, we believe, as we shall see later, but he believed what he preached: "All things work together for good to them that love God." Do we believe this precious promise, or do we only quote it when everything is going along smoothly with us? What a difference it would make in our varied trials and sicknesses, by the way, if from a heart, resting thoroughly in God's love, we could say "ALL things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

Trophimus comes next. (2 Tim. 4:20). "I left at Miletum sick." The words of another I will quote here: "The great Apostle of the Gentiles, with the gift of healing, leaves his friend behind him at Miletum sick." There was need of this. God in His governmental ways sometimes lays His children by. The Father finds it needful, at times, to put forth His hand in wholesome discipline. It is often very good, very necessary, to be left in this condition of Trophimus at Miletum. Nature may revolt against it, but we may be sure it is healthful to the soul. There he had a lesson to learn, that he could not learn anywhere else, not even as Paul's companion.

The Spirit of God often makes use of such hours, days and weeks, to teach us some of our most sanctifying lessons. Very often, at such a time, we take a solemn review, and the result is self-judgment in God's presence, with the sure result, we acknowledge, "In many things we all offend"—something so needful, but in the bustle of constant service is much neglected.

First, we find Trophimus in Acts 20:4 accompanying Paul into Asia. Then in his company in the City of Jerusalem (Acts 21:29), and next in a sick bed at Miletum. Here the curtain drops. He could calmly review the past, and often so can we, and look ahead also into the future with confidence, since we have learned from the Apostle's lips, who had been in Paradise himself.

To die.—"Is Gain"
 "Far Better"
 "With Christ"
 "At Home."

And all that those sweet words contain to those that have been taught of God to know that when there, it is "to go no more out forever!"

We see no healing here, but what a difference we find, when in the Island of Melita; there he heals the father-in-law of Publius, the chief man of the Island, and yet they were barbarians!

And, "So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the Island came and were healed" (Acts 28:8-9). No faith here, surely, that they could boast of; no, they must surely have given the glory to the God whom Paul served. But not so with the so-called "faith healers"; their faith is, with most, "an idol," and shuts out the God of all grace.

"Signs are not to them who believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Cor. 14:22).

Dear fellow-Christian, do we yet need a sign of His love? Surely not! Let us get back to Calvary once more, and look, and look, until He is more than ever dear to our heart, and let God's Word find its place there. "He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him also freely give us ALL things!"

"ALL things work together for good to them that love God." Say yes, say it NOW, dear child of God. "LORD, I BELIEVE. Help Thou mine unbelief."

Precious thought, my Father knoweth,
Careth for His child,
Bids me nestle closer to Him
When the storms beat wild.
Well I know the heart that planneth
Naught but good for me.
Joy and sorrow interwoven,
Love in all I see.

A. H. Stewart.

LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S HISTORY

Genesis, Chap. 20-21.

In the Philistines' Land

This section opens with Abraham's removal from Hebron, where he had experienced such precious fellowship with God, to the land of the Philistines. We do not hear of any divine direction being given to him at this time, and considering the results which immediately follow it would appear to be a movement parallel in its character to that earlier excursion into Egypt. In fact the whole scene in this twentieth chapter bears a striking resemblance to the former experience. If the man of faith moves without God's direction, can it be otherwise than that failure will spring up? Yet how slow we are to learn this lesson, and how we must be brought back to it again and again. It shows the greatness of His grace and mercy with Whom we have to do. Humiliation cannot but follow, and that at the hands of the very fleshly power to which we may have yielded. Is God not sufficient to keep us, if we are only where He would have us? Of course, if we are not there, it is both easy and natural for us to adopt the devices of the flesh and rely upon our own wisdom. God does not leave the man of faith without showing to him the futility of his own way, and how blessed it is when the root is reached and confessed (v. 13), for then He can bring in the restoration of what was temporarily lost, and even bring further blessing to him (v. 14-16). Yea, the very things, which if received and used apart from hu-

miliation and confession when we have sinned, would only increase our shame and departure from God, may be made a ministration of blessing resulting in increase to us.

How touching, too, to see the care of God in providential ways for the interests of His wandering child, as set forth in His dealings with Abimelech. And as we are called to see this in our course individually, surely it should be as the drawing of His hand, not only preserving our interests, but operating to restore us to a proper balance and judgment as to our path and relationships.

With the work of restoration effected, we are not only blessed ourselves, but become those who can bring blessing to others (v. 17-18). Thus God exhibits the largeness of His grace.

If it has been the flesh and its fruits, and God's mercy in restoration, which we have seen in the events of the twentieth chapter, it is now grace in its triumph of fruitfulness and joy which we get in the next—a blessed contrast. God fulfills His promise, Isaac is born. This brings in deliverance from the bondmaid and her son—from the flesh as being given any place, from fleshly action as proceeding from the flesh having a place, and from the fruits of it having any place in our relationships. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son."

This deliverance is brought in only through the lesson of death of which circumcision is the type. If the meaning of Isaac, "he shall laugh," is to be fulfilled to the man of faith and grace (Sarah) it must be through this lesson being learned (v. 3-4), and that also in connection with the eighth day—the day of new beginning, in fact a beginning in resurrection power. Thus we may find these things put together for us in Col. 2:11-13, and the full unfolding of these great truths which set the believer free to serve in newness of spirit and bear fruit unto God we find in Romans 6, 7 and 8. Here we cannot go into their precious detail, but may the Christian reader turn to these blessed Scriptures himself and study them diligently with much prayer, using the helps which God has given, and the reward will

be great, the soul filled with laughter, and the practical life with the joy of God's grace. Thus will growth, maturity, and feasting be the portion enjoyed (v. 8).

To carry forward the interpretation of our chapter it seems necessary at this point to bring in the dispensational aspect of the history. The coming of Isaac and the consequent joy and deliverance from old conditions may well picture for us the coming of Christ and the truth of Christianity as the Epistles give it to us. This operated to set aside Law and its fruit as the ground of obtaining the promise; and the flesh, too, upon which alone law could make its demands. In result grace came into her full and predestined place to reign and rule through righteousness. "Ye, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are children of the promise" (Gal. 4:28).

In what God says about Ishmael we get a picture of Abraham's seed according to the flesh who remain identified with law and its curse. That seed is rejected for the present until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and during the time of rejection they wander in a wilderness until the water of life is spent, and there seems nothing but death can ensue. It suggests the desperateness of that condition which will yet overtake those who stand for the earthly seed in a coming day—the time of Jacob's trouble. But out of their straightened circumstances will be heard the voice of weeping—the anguished cry of the remnant in the last days (v 14-16). God will hear this cry and answer it with promise of exaltation, and the opening of the hitherto blind eyes to see the Well of Living Water, to drink and live. Then will Israel no longer dwell in the wilderness of Beer-sheba—"the well of the oath," their oath to do all required of God which only brought them gall and bitterness, but they shall dwell at Paran—"their beautifying," resulting from God's grace in which He will once more take up and beautify them with the blessings of the new covenant. Then, indeed, will the nations be married to Israel, even as a daughter of Egypt becomes Ishmael's wife. It is a scene suggestive of Millennial blessing which closes the chapter. Abraham is sought of the Gentile who owns that God is with him,

even as in that coming day the Gentiles will seek Israel who will then have become a true seed of faith. Then, too, will it be seen that it is the perfect sacrifice which binds all in covenant relation, and the Lord is called on as the everlasting God. Peace will then reign, strife being banished (it existed at the beginning of this picture, v. 25), and full blessing result.

Thus the history of Abraham closes, having carried us through varying scenes affording much material for meditation, and providing many a helpful lesson to which we shall do well to take heed. May the Lord enable us to profit by this brief review.

John Bloore.

ALL IS WELL

In the centre of the circle
Of the will of God I stand.
There can come no second causes,
All must come from His dear Hand.
All is well! for 'tis my Father
Who my life hath planned.

Shall I pass through waves of sorrow?
Then I know it will be best;
Though I cannot tell the reason,
I can trust and so am blest.
God is love, and God is faithful,
So in perfect peace I rest.

With the shade, and with the sunshine
With the joy and with the pain;
Lord, I trust Thee! both are needed
Each Thy wayward child to train.
Earthly loss, did we but know it,
Often means our heavenly gain.

J. G. W.

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SPRING'S MYSTERY*

I walked adown my garden path one day,
My weary heart with heavy care oppressed.

Release me, Lord, I cried; I would not stay;
The life beyond alone can bring me rest.

My time-worn life, like this lone, leafless tree,
Is withered past all fruit; my hope is dead.

I can no longer serve humanity;
The spring of strength is gone, and hope has fled.

I came again. "What miracle is this
In bursting bud and blossom that I see?
Hast thou new life received, and shall I miss
The secret sweet—God's holy mystery?"

Dear tired heart, spring's mystery is ours,

Did we but now His loving word believe.

Come to His sun and rain and with the flowers,

New life in bud and bloom from Him receive.

EVERY LITTLE HELPS*

The truth is that, more often than not, we cannot estimate the real value and helpfulness of what seem to us little things, and what we have to keep in mind when some apparently small and insignificant opportunity of usefulness comes to us is that "every little helps!"

It is the littles, after all, that bulk most largely in the sum of human happiness or misery, and even the weakest and most helpless of us need never fear that He who expressly sanctified the gift of even such a little thing as a cup of cold water, and who saw sublime self-sacrifice in the offering of a widow's two mites, will spurn the very least of our littles, if they are the best we can give.

The best! Ah, yes! For that is the standard by which God judges all our work for Him. Whatever you do for God, what-

ever you give to Him, take care that it is the best and the utmost of which you are capable, and leave Him to measure the value of your offering.

Above all, never try to persuade yourself that, because you cannot do what the world counts as much, you need do nothing. "He that is not with Me," said Christ, "is against Me." Either you are helping His work, or you are hindering it. Loyalty to Him will not allow you to be a hinderer. Be a helper, then; and, however small and humble your sphere of work for Him may appear in the eyes of men, let it be your comfort and encouragement to remember that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth," and that "EVERY LITTLE HELPS!"

"THIS THING IS FROM ME."*

(1 Kings 12:24.)

"Life's disappointments are veiled Love's appointments."

My child, I have a message for you today; let me whisper it in your ear, that it may gild with glory any storm clouds which may arise, and smooth the rough places upon which you may have to tread.

It is short, only five words, but let them sink into your inmost soul, use them as a pillow upon which to rest your weary head.

"THIS THING IS FROM ME"

Have you ever thought of it, that all that concerns you, concerns Me too? For "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of Mine eye" (Zeph 2:8).

"You are very precious in My sight" (Isa. 43:4). Therefore it is My special delight to educate you.

I would have you learn when temptations assail you, and the "enemy comes in like a flood," that this thing is from Me, that your weakness needs My might, and your safety lies in letting Me fight for you.

Are you in difficult circumstances, surrounded by people who do not understand you, who never consult your taste, who put you in the background? "This thing is from Me." I am the God of circumstances. "Thou camest not to thy place by accident, it is the very place God meant for thee."

Have you not asked to be made humble? See, then, I have placed you in the very school where this lesson is taught; your surroundings and companions are only working out My will.

Are you in money difficulties? Is it hard to make both ends meet? This thing is from Me, for I am your purse-bearer, and would have you draw from, and depend upon Me. My supplies are limitless (Phil. 4:19). I would have you prove My promises. Let it not be said of you, "In this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God" (Deut. 1:32).

Are you passing through a night of sorrow? This thing is from Me. I am "The Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." I have let earthly comforters fail you, that by turning to Me you may obtain everlasting consolation (2 Thess. 2:16-17).

Has some friend disappointed you? One to whom you opened out your heart? This thing is from Me. I have allowed this disappointment to come, that you may learn that

"The best friend to have is Jesus
He will hear you when you call,
He will keep you lest you fall,
The best friend to have is Jesus."

I want to be your confidant. Has someone repeated things about you that are untrue? Leave them to Me, and draw closer unto Me, thy shelter, out of reach of "the strife of tongues," for "I will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday" (Psa. 37:6).

Have your plans been all upset? Are you bowed down and weary? This thing is from Me. You made your plans, then came asking Me to bless them, but I would have you let Me plan for you and then I take the responsibility, for "This thing is too heavy for thee, thou art not able to perform it thyself alone" (Ex. 18:18). You are only an instrument, not an agent.

Have you longed to do some great work for Me, and instead been laid aside on a bed of pain and weakness? This thing is from Me. I could not get your attention in your busy days, and I want to teach you some of My deepest lessons. "They also serve who only stand and wait." I want you to learn to sing

"I am not eager, bold or strong.
All that is past;

I am ready not to do
At last, At last!"

Some of My greatest workers are those shut out from active service, that they may learn to wield the weapon of all-prayer.

Are you suddenly called upon to occupy a difficult and responsible position? Launch out on Me. I am trusting you with the "possession of difficulties," and "for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto" (Deut. 15:10).

This day I place in your hand this pot of holy oil, make use of it freely, My child. Let every circumstance as it arises, every word that pains you, every interruption that would make you impatient, every revelation of your own weakness, be anointed with it. Remember, "interruptions are divine instructions." The sting will go as you learn to see Me in all things. Therefore, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day. . . . for it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land" (Deut. 32:46-47).

Laura A. Barter-Snow.

AN OLD-TIME WORSHIP MEETING (Read 2 Chron. 29.)

The full account of this assembly occupies almost this entire chapter, but for brevity sake, we will note it only from verse 20. The priests have just come to the king saying: "We have cleansed

- (1) "All the house of the Lord, and
- (2) "The altar of burnt offering
- (3) With all the vessels thereof
- (4) The shewbread table
- (5) With all the vessels thereof.

"Moreover, all the vessels which King Ahaz cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and behold they are before the altar of the Lord."

The king recognizes these matters to be not only great and important ones, but pressing matters, and so we read of him:

- (1) "Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and
- (2) "Gathered the rulers of the city, and

(3) "Went up to the house of the Lord" (verse 20).

The first fact plainly showed his zeal for God; the second, his regard for others; the third, his desire for true and scriptural worship in his day and age.

The next record is a **threefold** one, in two different relations, for they brought:

(1) Seven bullocks—Christ in obedience even unto death.

(2) Seven rams—Christ in His consecration to God.

(3) Seven lambs—Christ in His submission and suffering as the sin offering.

(1) "For the **Kingdom**—the sphere of rule.

(2) "For the **sanctuary**—the sphere of worship.

(3) For **Judah**"—the sphere of teaching and discipline.

This, too, is followed by another double and also **three-fold** action.

(1) "They killed the **bullocks** and sprinkled their blood.

(2) They killed the **rams** and sprinkled their blood.

(3) They killed the **lambs** and sprinkled their blood."

Then as to the he-goats for the **sin offering**, we have another **three-fold** action:

(1) "They brought them **before the king and congregation**.

(2) "These laid their **hands** upon them.

(3) "The **priests** killed them, and made reconciliation with their blood."

This, also, is followed by another **three-fold** action, on the part of the king, who

(1) "**Commanded** that the offerings be made for **all Israel** (v. 24).

(2) "Set the **Levites** in the house of the Lord with cymbals, etc. (v. 25).

(3) "**Commanded to offer the burnt offering** upon the altar (v. 27).

The Levites, too, were appointed to praise with three things:

- (1) **Cymbals,**
- (2) **Psalteries,**
- (3) **Harps.**

This also had a **three-fold** basis, "the commandment

- (1) "Of David, the **King**;
- (2) "Of Gad, the **King's seer**;
- (3) Of Nathan, the **prophet**;

for so was the **commandment of the Lord** by His prophets."

One more trinity of characters brings us to the climax.

(1) The **Levites** stood with David's instruments.

(2) The **priests** with the trumpets, and

(3) The **King** commanded to offer the burnt offerings.

And now for the first time we hear of **worship**, though all previously done led up to this result. How simple, precious and soul-stirring is the first record of it:

(1) "When the **burnt offering** began.

(2) "The **song of the Lord** began also, with

(3) The **trumpets and instruments** of David."

And how generally was the joy of the Lord realized by them.

(1) "The **congregation worshipped**.

(2) "The **singers sang**,

(3) "The **trumpeters sounded**."

All this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering,

(1) The **King and all present** bowed themselves and worshipped.

(2) The **King and princes** commanded the Levites to praise.

(3) The **Levites** sang praises, bowed the heads and worshipped (vv. 29, 30).

The chapter closes with the **three-fold** record also of

(1) The **Congregation's** burnt offering.

(2) The **priests** flaying them,

(3) The **Levites** helping them.

This, too, was of a **three-fold** nature.

(1) **Burnt-offerings** in abundance.

(2) Fat of the **peace-offerings**.

(3) The **drink-offerings** for every burnt offering.

All was thus sacredly regarded, as "the affairs of God," and thus we read:

(1) So the service of the house of the Lord was **set in order**.

(2) Hezekiah and all the people **rejoiced**, for

(3) God had **prepared the people**: for the thing was done suddenly."

B. C. G.

READING GOOD BOOKS*

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). They do not

care enough for the Supper to leave their yoke of oxen, the piece of ground. It does not say that their sins shut them out from the Supper, neither was it the piece of ground, the oxen, or the wife that were in themselves the evil; but in their case they became so, because their minds were intent on them to the slighting of the Supper.

And is it not just the same now? Is it not a question of whether a thing is right or wrong, but what savour have the things of Christ to our souls in it? It may be a very small thing. If we find

THE READING OF A BOOK

makes the manifestation of Christ to become less precious to us, we have got away from God, and we cannot tell where the next step may take us. Satan often cheats us in this way. The soul is put to the test day by day, whether the things that are revealed by God in Christ have so much power over us as to engage the heart; but if other things have come in between, when we want the enjoyment of the things of Christ, we shall not have it, and it will show us how far we have got away. If anything comes in and takes the freshness of Christ from your soul, take heed, for if the oxen are thus cared for, when you have opportunity for the things of Christ you will have no taste for them.—From "The Man of Sorrows." J. N. Darby, Studies in the Gospel of Luke. Newly issued.

"CHRIST. . . LOVED THE CHURCH"

"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. . . nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also doth the Church: for we are the members of His body." The great thought of "the Church" is in our Lord's mind; and it is the Church He nourisheth and cherisheth, not a mere fragment of it, of which there is no word at all.

We should avoid getting occupied with a thought which is other than that of our Lord Jesus. The Church as a whole is His object of love and care as truly as when the saints were "all together," and our thoughts should expand so as with Him to take in the Church in its totality, not only those we might deem the faithful, the spiritual, or a more holy portion of the saints. Constant occupation with the idea

of a remnant, and the thought that we only are it, tends to obliterate from our mind the scripture thought of the Church, and to endanger our settling down with the sectarian idea that we are the only people Christ is caring for at the present hour; and from this to our degenerating into a sect with fresh ideas and correct views is not a great step. We should have a care lest we hurt ourselves and mislead others by cherishing unscriptural notions; and certain if we do not have the whole Church of God on earth in our faith, mind, and heart, in our worship, teaching, testimony, and discipline, we shall not answer to Christ's mind regarding His saints. Let us beware of entertaining un-Christlike ideas and belittling the Church, or Christianity, or Christ's love, care, and work for the whole body and every member of it. It is to be feared that most saints never rise worthily in their thoughts, so as to take in Christ's mind and heart for the Church, because of this constant occupation with themselves. The depreciating words which one sometimes hears as to the ungathered saints among the sects of Christendom, as if they were not really the living members of Christ's body, and equally precious to Him as objects of His present love and ministry, are very painful, as they indicate minds and hearts not in concert or sympathy with the Lord's thoughts. It is "THE CHURCH" Christ is to present to Himself glorious, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; and there is no object so near His heart now as the Church, His body, and His Bride.

—Extracted.

"Do not be puzzled about to-morrow and what you may have to do then. Leave to-morrow with the Lord; He is never puzzled. Our being puzzled is the result of self (flesh) having been engaged perhaps about to-morrow, which we down here may never see.

"The living God said: 'I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.' There is a grand text for you! His eye journeys with Himself and does not need to see to-morrow. I can only be watching Him if near to Him and understanding His ways."

G. V. W.

"BEHOLD THE LAMB"

Twice repeated is this statement in John I, by the devoted John the Baptist, once "Behold the Lamb of God," as our Lord Jesus was coming unto him, and then again as he "looked upon Him as He walked." The first may well suggest our Lord's sacrificial work, as His coming to John, as he baptized sinners to repentance in Jordan was, as it were, but a shadow of His cross. The second as distinctly suggests our Lord's path of lowly obedience to God and service to men, which moved John's heart to worship and testimony to Him.

The place of this event is given by the Divine historian as Bethabara, meaning "The house of the ford," or the place where the Jordan might be crossed, and we have a reference to such in Judges 7: 24, a ford which the men of Ephraim took in the time of Gideon. Suggestive enough it is that where Jesus went into death, of which Jordan is the figure, is the place for His people to enter into their possessions, and thus prove that "Death is ours." Our Lord's coming there now reminds John of His previous coming to him to be baptized there and of his own frank confession, "I knew Him not." It also intimates that where the soul becomes savingly acquainted with Christ is not, first of all, in tracing His holy footsteps, or in being moved by His tears and sorrows, but by seeing Him go into death, "to fulfill all righteousness."

John had previously set himself aside in testifying that he was not Elias, nor "that prophet" (one like Moses, Deut. 18:18), but simply "a voice" to call attention to another, as yet unknown, but thus his soul was ripe for the fuller revelation. After His baptism, our Lord was led or driven into the wilderness, and there He met the arch-tempter and overcame him. Then, after the 40 days of His sore temptation, He comes to John again, not now to be baptized by him, but to be borne witness to by him, as the Lamb of God, the sacrificial lamb, the Sin Bearer. This John truly "spoke not of himself," but by the Spirit of God, which he is said to have

been "filled with" from his birth. But "the Spirit, the Water and the Blood agree in one." The Father's Word of this lowly, obedient one: "This is My Beloved Son," the Son came to John in the Jordan and among repentant sinners, and the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. John announces that the Deliverer long looked for has now come, but first of all as a Sufferer, because so it was written: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief" (Isaiah 53).

What Israel had practised by Divine command for over 1,500 years also gave force to John's proclamation. The lamb once taken in Egypt as the Passover was chosen, kept up, sacrificed and eaten. The morning and evening lambs of the daily burnt offering, and the innumerable others of various kinds all pointed on, to what? John supplies the answer. To Jesus, as the Lamb of God. Some may have mistaken the shadow for the substance, and vainly thought that their sin was atoned for by the temporary sacrifice, but those who "were of faith" looked for "One to come," and for "redemption in Jerusalem." Apart from the host of other witnesses Isaiah 53 prophesied of God's servant being "led as a lamb, the chastisement of our peace upon Him, and his 'soul made an offering for sin,' so there was no excuse for any soul staying at the finger post instead of going as it pointed forward to the Great Reality.

The purity of the Lamb of sacrifice was carefully noted, as "without blemish and without spot," and of Jesus we read: "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 9:26). He was born in poverty, and but scantily clothed at the event of His birth. He was brought up also in a place which bore an unsavory name, and yet was "the Holy One of God." He lived among people of lax morals, and yet was utterly unlike them. Among formalists he lost nothing of His fervour of spirit; among sinners He knew no sin but was without it in thought, word and deed. He loved the souls of men and "went about doing good." He alone could say: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 7:46). Of Satan he said, "The prince of this world

hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). In short, in all His ways and relations, he **"KNEW no sin."** But He knew sorrow, as none other than He ever did or could. Of Him the Spirit of God has recorded, that **"He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief."** The evil of this world, as a scene of rebellion against God and High Heaven, burdened Him continually, and the **"zeal of God's House ate Him up."** He endured the contradiction of sinners, against Himself, and reproach broke His heart, and yet deep as were all these sorrows, and beyond all those that ever any but He ever knew, yet there were deeper ones still, or else **"the testimony of Jesus" is not "the spirit of prophecy"** which the Word of God says it is. This **"candle, shining in a dark place,"** witnessed that far beyond all the sorrows that He experienced at the hands of men and Satan, **"it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief."** Let men ignore it, deny it, ridicule it or scorn it, as they may, there stands the record, **"and the Scriptures cannot be broken"**—thrice holy, incontrovertible truths, which stand or fall together—

(1) He was bruised for our iniquities (Is. 53:5).

(2) **"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him"** (10 v.).

(3) **"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand"** (10 v.)

The necessity, on the one side, was **ours;** **"our iniquities testified against us"** and must be righteously met and put away. Because of this we read, **"The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all."** If this does not teach vicarious atonement, substitution, sacrifice, then language has no proper meaning and is only a jargon of empty sounds. But everything in heaven, earth and hell witnesses to it as the Great Reality and calls upon us to **"Behold the Lamb of God."**

Heaven witnesses to it by opening to Him as He simply pre-figured it in His baptism, by covering its face in the sun at His death, and by welcoming Him in at His ascension. Earth witnesses to it by every ache and pain we suffer here below, either physically, mentally or morally. They are but the forecast of **"judgment to come."** Hell witnesses to it by its being

"outer darkness," or the place men choose by their rebellion against God, where Christ is not the light, and **"the pains of Hell once gat hold of Him."**

In anticipation of these atoning sufferings, our holy Lord prayed that **"the cup might pass from Him."** If He had not, He would not have been God's **Holy One.** If He had not taken it at His Father's hand, He would not have been the perfectly obedient One. He was proven to be both, and while **"He knew no sin"** yet **"was made sin"** for us. Blessed and holy **Mystery of Love!**

His holy Person in every part of it was actively engaged in the sacred transaction. His Body, He said, was broken or given for us and went down into the tomb. His soul was **"made an offering for sin"** and **"poured out unto death."** His spirit He dismissed to His Father on the completion of His offering of Himself. But all this, while the plain proof that He was Man, **"the Man, Christ Jesus,"** was of no avail, had He been merely man, for a creature, however good, cannot exceed his duty, or have any merit or grace to spare. Hence He was **"the Word made flesh,"** **"God manifest in the flesh,"** the true God and eternal life. If He was not this, then the Holy Scripture makes us, by its own plain statements, idolators of One, who is not God. But there is no deception in this glorious mystery of godliness, and its voice to us is:

"He is thy Lord, worship thou Him."

"Behold the Lamb of God."

So may we do for His Name's sake.

B. C. G.

SORROW ON THE SEA*

"There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet" (Jer. 49:23).

**"I saw a new heaven and a new earth.
... and there was no more sea"**

(Rev. 21:1)

I stood on the shore of the beautiful sea,
As the billows were roaming wild and free;
Onward they came with unfailling force,
Then backward turned in their reckless
course;

Ever and ever sounding their roar,
Foaming and dashing against the shore;
Ever and ever they rose and fell

With heaving and sighing and mighty
swell,

And deep seemed calling aloud to deep
Lest the murmuring waves should drop to
sleep;

In summer and winter, by night and by
day,

Thro' cloud and sunshine holding their
sway.

Oh! when shall the ocean's troubled breast
Calmly and quietly sink into rest?

Oh! when shall the waves wild murmuring
cease,

And the mighty waters be hushed to peace?

It cannot quit—it cannot rest—

There must be heaving on ocean's breast;
The tide must ebb, and the tide must flow

Whilst the changing seasons come and go.
Still from the depths of that hidden store,

There are treasures tossed up along the
shore;

Tossed by the billows—then seized again—
Carried away by the rushing main.

Oh! strangely glorious and beautiful sea,
Sounding for ever mysteriously;

Why are thy billows still rolling on

With their wild and sad and musical tune?

Why is there never repose for thee?

Why slumberest thou not, oh! mighty sea?

Then, the ocean's voice I seemed to hear,
Mournfully, solemnly, sounding near,

Like a wail sent up from the caves below
Fraught with dark memories of human

woe;

Telling of loved ones buried there,

Of the dying shriek and the dying prayer;

Telling of hearts still watching in vain

For those who shall never come again.

Of the widow's groan, and the orphan's cry,

And the mother's speechless agony.

Oh! no, the ocean can never rest,

With such secrets hidden within its breast;

There is sorrow written upon the sea,

And dark and stormy its waves must be;

It cannot be quiet—it cannot sleep—

That dark relentless and stormy deep.

But a day will come, a blessed day,

When earthly sorrows shall pass away;

When the hour of anguish shall turn to
peace

And even the roar of the waves shall
cease:

Then out of its deepest and darkest bed

Old ocean shall render up her dead,

And freed from the weight of human woes,
Shall quickly sink in her last repose.

No sorrow shall ever be written then,

On the ocean depths, or the hearts of men;

But heaven and earth renewed shall shine

Still clothed in glory and light divine.

Then, where shall the billows of ocean be?

Gone! for in heaven shall be "no more sea";

'Tis a bright and beautiful thing of the
earth.

That cannot share in the soul's "new
birth";

'Tis a life of murmur, and tossing, and
spray,

And at resting time it must pass away.

But, oh! thou glorious and beautiful sea,

There is health, and joy, and blessing in
thee;

Solemnly, sweetly, I hear thy voice,

Bidding me weep and yet rejoice:—

Weep for the loved ones buried beneath,

Rejoice in Him who has conquered death;

Weep for the sorrowing and tempest tossed,

Rejoice in Him who has saved the lost;

Weep for the sin and sorrow and strife,

And rejoice in the bliss of eternal life.

The above fine poem, written by Capt.
M. A. S. Hare, of the Eurydice, some years
since, has mournful interest in it.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST*

This is a very solemn subject, and yet it is one most satisfactory the better we understand it. I believe every act of our lives will be set forth there; so that God's grace and dealing with us with reference to our own acts will be known there. It is said in Rom. 14, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." The judgment seat is there referred to in connection with the admonition to the brethren, not to judge one another with respect to a day, or eating meat. I am disposed to think that only the deeds will be matters of manifestation; but so much is every act of our lives dependent on inward feelings, that it is in one sense hard to distinguish between deeds and thoughts. Acts always declare the strength of the thought or feeling. I believe all our doings shall be detailed there—not to us as in the flesh for condemnation, but to unfold to us the

grace which has dealt with us, regenerate and unregenerate. In God's counsel I am called before the foundation of the world, and therefore I apprehend that our whole history will be detailed there; and in parallel line, the history of His grace and mercy toward us. The why and the how we did this or that will be declared then. It is declarative, and not judicial for us. We are not in the flesh before God—in His eye, blessed be His name, we are dead; but then, where we have walked after the flesh, we must see how we lost blessing. What a loss it has been to us; and, on the other hand, His ways toward us all, in wisdom, mercy, and grace, will be fully known and comprehended for the first time. Of course, there will be no replying, but each history will be like a great transparency. How you yielded and how He preserved; how you slipped, and how He rescued; how you approached danger and shame, and how He by His own hand interposed. I believe it will be the bride making herself ready, and I regard it as a wondrous moment. There will be no flesh there to receive condemnation, but the new nature will enter into the transcendent love and care, which in true holiness and justice, even in grace, have followed us every step of our journey. Passages in our lives, now utterly unexplained, shall be all seen clearly then. Tendencies of our nature, which we may not think would lead to desperate issues, and to curb which we may now be subjected to a discipline which we have not interpreted, will be fully explained there; and still more the very falls which distress us sorely now will be shown then as used to preserve us from worse. I do not believe that we shall get anything like a full view of the evil of our flesh till then. How blessed to know, that then, not only in the purpose of God it is done with, but it clings no longer to us; and, on the other hand, I believe the display of His grace individually to us will be so magnificent that even the sense of the evil of the flesh that were ours, if it were possible to intrude, will be prevented by the greatness of the other. Why do we not deny and mortify our members when we remember that hour? The Lord enable us to do more to the glory of His grace.

The subject leads the soul into a very full sense of our individual place, to think of each giving an account of himself to God.

I do not know that the judgment seat of Christ is used oftener than in Rom. 14, and 2 Cor. 5. In the former, to prevent private judgment; in the latter, to provoke to present well-doing and self-judgment, in view of that day.

POSITIVE CERTAINTY*

"I wish I had the certainty of being saved that some people have," said an anxious soul.

"Do you really believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Of course I do."

"Well I want to ask you a simple question. Can you read?"

"What a question to ask."

"O, but I fear you cannot or do not read the Bible."

"O, I have been reading it for the last twenty years."

"Reading the Bible for twenty years, and yet uncertain as to your salvation! I tell you plainly, you have been reading your heart to find certainty, instead of the Bible. Now we will just test you.

Paul has a word to all you uncertain people: "Be is known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man (the Man whom God raised from the dead, and on whom you believe), is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." Acts 13:38-39. You say you believe, and God says 'you are justified.'

Do you not see this simple truth; that it is God's Word to you which gives certainty?—Christ's work saves you—God's Word gives certainty. If He gave Christ to die for your sins, and raised Him from the dead—where are your sins? If on the cross He bore your sins, and is now in heaven without them, where are they? Forgiven and forgotten! 'By grace ye are saved.' Is not that God's word to your soul? Believing that gives certainty. I am certain I am saved. God's Word is my warrant—my sure ground of confidence. The work of the Cross saves—the Word of God about it gives assurance.

AMEN*

I cannot say,
Beneath the pressure of life's cares to-day,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I had rather walk this rugged way,
If Him it please.

I cannot feel
That all is well, when darkening clouds
conceal
The shining sun;
But then, I know
He lives and loves; and say, since it is so,
"Thy will be done."

I cannot speak
In happy tones; the tear drops on my
cheek
Show I am sad;
But I can speak
Of grace to suffer with submission meek,
Until made glad.

I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things
to be,
When He is love;
But I can see,
Tho' often dimly through the mystery,
His hand above!

I do not know
Where falls the seed that I have tried to
sow
With greatest care;
But I shall know
The meaning of each waiting hour below,
Sometime, somewhere!

I do not look
Upon the present, nor in Nature's book,
To read my fate;
But I do look
For promised blessings in God's Holy Book;
And, I can wait.

I may not try
To keep the hot tears back—but hush that
sigh,
"It might have been,"
And try to still
Each rising murmur, and to God's sweet
will

Respond, "Amen!"

Some Explanation Of

BRETHREN IN CHRIST*

Who Meet for Worship, Gathering Alone
to the Name of the Lord Jesus,
On the Ground of the One Body.

(John 4:28; Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 10:16).

Believing the name of "Brethren" to belong equally to all children of God, we disclaim the title of "THE Brethren" as distinctive; for we do not mean either to un-Christianize others, or to forego our relationship with any member of the household of God (Eph. 2:19); and all we mean by rejecting other names than Christians, brethren, believers, etc., is, that we unite together solely in the name of Christ, and as brethren who have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19). Being made priests unto God (Rev. 1:6) to offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5), we neither deem any man appointed as leader essential to any act of worship, nor do we need any help for our infirmities but the Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27), knowing also that Christ maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:34), nor can we recognize any gift or qualification for office, except it come from above (Jas. 1:17; Eph. 4:8; 1 Cor. 12:4).

We do not, however, reject Christian ministry, but accept it thankfully in its widest extent, whether in rule or pastoral care, teaching, exhortation, preaching, or ministering to the saints in any way, even to the cup of cold water (Acts 20:28; Rom. 12:7, 8; Eph. 4:12; 2 Cor. 8:4; Matt. 10:42); believing that every joint supplies strength and ministers nourishment to the body, unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19). Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us (Rom. 12:6), we desire that there may be perfect liberty for their exercise. In our meetings for worship, we are prepared to receive portions of scripture, an exhortation, etc., from any brother, as he may be led by the Holy Spirit, or to unite, as the Lord may enable us, with any brother who can pray or sing with the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15, 26, 31; Eph. 5:19); but, conscious of the weakness and

folly of the flesh, we would entreat our dear brethren to be "slow to speak," and to wait humbly for the Spirit of truth to lead them according to the written word of God in all they may utter.

In an assembly of believers gathered together on scriptural principles, we believe we have room to hope there will be such as can speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3); since THE SPIRIT, who divideth to every man severally as He will (1 Cor. 12:11), abideth ever as Ruler, Guide, and Comforter in the Church of Christ on earth till He come again (John 14:16; John 16:14; 2 Cor. 3:17). According to the word of God (1 Cor. 14:24, 25), when an unbeliever comes into such an assembly, he will not be deceived by being called to join in a service which he cannot perform (Rom. 8:8).

We come together the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7), only desiring that all who are partakers of that one loaf should indeed manifest that they are one body (1 Cor. 10:17); heavenly in character, because the LORD, the Head of the body, the Church, is risen (Col. 3:12; Eph. 2:6). Therefore, we consider it due to the Lord, who presides at His own table, that those partaking thereof give good evidence of new birth, soundness in the faith, and godliness in their walk and associations. We are commanded to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6), and we are required to judge those that are within (1 Cor. 5:12; Heb. 12:15). By the grace of God, we would cleave to the simplicity that is in Christ, not only in outward matters, but in spiritual things; avoiding "strifes of words," yet earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and building up ourselves only on that (Jude 20). And thus we would assume a position where the whole Church of God, the body of Christ, may meet, and the world cannot. We hold that no difference of judgment or experience ought to hinder communion and visible unity amongst those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (Phil. 3:15, 16). In simple obedience we pray for all men (1 Tim. 2:1); and, according to our ability, preach the Gospel to every creature.

Acknowledging our own exceeding weakness, yet deeply lamenting the wide-spread departure from the apostles' doctrine in the professing church, we desire to cling to the word of God alone, walking in obedience to all therein revealed for the Church's guidance.

We believe implicitly in the full inspiration of the Bible, and receive it as in very truth the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

From it we learn that man is utterly lost and ruined by nature and guilty by practice, unable to save himself; but that through the atoning work of Christ Jesus, and that alone, every believer is justified from all things, and, being born of God, has eternal life and is therefore forever secure. We see also in Scripture that all such are sealed with the Holy Spirit and baptised into one body.

We look for the Savior's return to receive all His redeemed to Himself, and to set up His kingdom in power and glory over all the earth.

We believe in the eternal blessedness of the saved and the everlasting doom of all Christ rejectors.

Reader: What Think Ye of Christ?

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, OR PERDITION*

One second after your death, it will be of no consequence to you whether you died in a palace or a hovel. But your whole eternity will hang upon the state in which you die. If sin works such havoc, and sins have such fearful consequences in this world, what must they entail in the next? Men reap as they sow in this world, but God does not definitely execute judgment upon sins in this life. "After death the judgment," "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). The Lord Jesus came as "the light of the world" to give men the knowledge of God, of their state as lost sinners, and of their future as such. He drew aside the veil of the dread future, and in faithfulness taught men the truth of sin, its punishment and its remedy. Every writer of the Epistles of the New Testament announces the certainty of coming judgment. Peter and Paul, in the book of Acts, proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ as the future judge, as well as the present Sav-

hour. "He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). In the book of Romans, Paul announces the coming of the "day of wrath." Peter writes concerning "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"; while the book of Jude abounds with references to past, and warnings respecting future judgment.

The word translated "Hell" in the Authorized Version of the New Testament signifies either "Hades" or "Gehenna." Hades is the state of disembodied spirits; or the place where the wicked are reserved for judgment. Gehenna is the place of final judgment, the lake of fire, the second death.

In eleven places where the word hell is used in the New Testament, hades is meant.

In twelve places where the word hell is used Gehenna is meant. We instance three of each. First, Hades: "And in hell (hades) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment" (Luke 16:23). "For if God spared not the angels but cast them down to hell (hades), and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4). "And death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them" (Rev. 20:13).

Second, Gehenna: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (gehenna) (Matt. 10:28). "And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire" (gehenna). **This is the second death**" (Rev. 20:14). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers (now called spiritualists), and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire (gehenna); which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

We see then from Scripture that death does not touch the soul, and that the soul subsists after death, and apart from the body, and that the souls of the unsaved at death enter hades there to await the resurrection and subsequent judgment. "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2:9).

The body that at death is buried is to be raised again.

"The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:29). The resurrection, then, is the raising of the body, and its reunion with the soul. The distinction between soul and body at death is carefully maintained in Scripture. In this paper we treat of that resurrection only, which the Lord terms "the resurrection unto judgment." The epistle of Peter speaks of this as the

DAY OF JUDGMENT

and perdition of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7). "And I saw a Great White Throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away" (Rev. 20:11). "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:13). "Then shall he say unto them . . . depart from me; ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). "And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

At the last judgment, death and hades having given up their dead, their office is at an end; God has no further use for them. Death has delivered up the body and Hades the soul. The place of the lesser and temporary punishment, hades, is done with, and the souls whom it has given up, reunited to the bodies, are consigned to the place of the greater and eternal punishment, the second death. Thus we see clearly, at the end of the Millennium what will be the righteous judgment, and the punishment of sin on those who reject and despise God's great salvation, it will be the everlasting witness of His holiness, and the perpetual vindication of His character. We are sometimes reminded by thoughtless

persons, who are ignorant that God is infinitely Holy, Righteous and Just, that He is too kind and loving to permit judgment to come to any. This is a false sentimentality, and only expresses how false and unreal an estimate they have placed upon the "God of all grace." While God is kind and gracious, it is equally true that He is righteous and just and must therefore punish sin.

Christ was made a sin offering * * * "Our sins, our iniquities were laid on Him." He bore them under judicial wrath, being, "Made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). But if in spite of this, proud man refuses the grace, mocks at God's judgment and spurns His offer of mercy, there can be no security, no peace and no salvation. "For without shedding of blood is no remission" (forgiveness, pardon) (Heb. 9:22). God could not in righteousness forgive on any other ground than that Christ hath suffered for your sins. "The just for the unjust that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). The Bible speaks of judgment as God's "strange work." He delights in showing mercy, "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). "Who will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4).

The fall of man is no mere theological dogma, but a fearful reality, to which the world's history and the stern, sad facts of our experience bear terrible witness. Sin is not simply an ugly word in the Bible or on preachers' lips; it is a dark, foul reality, which blights and curses the world by its presence.

Now there are those, as the Word tells us, "Who being unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction." They tell us that death is a cessation of conscious existence, that "the soul" is simply "the life," and that it terminates with the death of the body. This theory falls at once before the words of the Lord Jesus: "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28). The body dies and is buried, but the soul continues to exist, and is beyond the reach of weapons formed by man.

The ordinary Greek word rendered "eternal" is "aionios" used to express the exist-

tence of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the duration of the life and salvation given to the believer, it is also used to show the duration of the punishment of the wicked literally the word rendered "eternal or everlasting" means "for the age" rendered usually "forever"; or in another form yet stronger, for "ages of ages" as the following scriptures will show. "His eternal glory" (1 Peter 5:10). "Even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20). "Eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). The above uses of the word in Scripture are enough to establish its meaning. Now compare with the above the following, where the identical word is again used. "Eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:2). "Everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46). "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 1:7). If the word does not mean "eternal" in the latter passages, then it does not mean "eternal" in the former. Thus a doubt would be cast on the "eternal life" of the believer as well as on his "salvation," redemption" and the "inheritance," etc.

All who die in their sins in the rejection of God's infinite provision for the forgiveness of those sins, will have to endure the consequences of those sins. There is no way of salvation but through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the way, the truth and the life." And every sentiment whatever be its type or character, that prevents us from believing in Him however honestly entertained, is a fatal delusion. "The gospel * * * is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). God's word stands. "Who-soever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16) and the Saviour Himself said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment" (John 5:24).

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"THE SWORD OF THE LORD"

This expression is found in a brief prayer of the "prophet of sorrows," Jeremiah, in these words:

"O thou sword of the Lord, how long shall it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest and be still" (Jer. 47:6.) The answer is given to this touching appeal thus:

"How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon and against the sea shore? There hath He appointed it" (verse 7).

These words are plain and unmistakable and teach us this: (1) That Jehovah the Saviour God, Who bids us "Look unto Me, all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved," has a sword also, the symbol of warfare and the weapons of judgment and destruction. A right enquiry then is, When and where is this used, and are we in danger of its being given a charge against any of us? If so, how can we avert so dread a calamity and escape the just judgment of a God, of whom one of His servants says: "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 6:18).

In the quotation from Jeremiah we are told it was "the Word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza."

Such is its inspired heading, and its burden is given in a highly illustrative manner as follows:

"Thus saith the Lord: Behold waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; then the men shall cry and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl."

Then the figure changes from that of a resistless, devastating flood to that of the sweep of a triumphant and crushing host of warriors, thus:

"At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands."

This strongly figurative language, however, is explained in the prophecy as being

"The day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper that remaineth."

The reference is too plain to be mistaken—to three distinct places who were foretold as being "appointed to destruction," and history records the fact that it came true and travellers note the present desolation of two of them at least.

BUT, and here is where many professed believers in the Bible balk at the full truth of what is written. Has "the sword of the Lord" any present charge and if so, where has He appointed it? The raising of this enquiry may be more helpful than any attempt at answering it, so we close with the council, "Search ye out of the Book of the Lord and read." B. C. G.

"YE ARE COME"

(Heb. 12:22)

Such is the simple, certain declaration of the inspired writer to the Hebrews in that marvellous letter, which is God's great antidote for Ritualism, whether ancient or modern.

"Ye are come," then, is the statement of a fact true of those addressed, entirely apart from the question of whether they knew it for certain, or in simple faith took God at His Word or not.

First, let us enquire who are the "Ye" of the Apostle's statement, and then to what had they come?

I. Those having God's Revelation.

Those whom God has spoken to by or in His Son, or in other words, given His fuller revelation of Himself in Christianity (Heb. 1:2). Thus they are first addressed.

II. Those whose sins are purged.

The seated High Priest in Heaven is the proof which the Apostle adduces of these blessed and glorious facts:

1. He did it alone—"by Himself."
2. What He did—"purged our sins."
3. The proof—"He sat down."

III. "The Heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

The wording of this sentence means much. It does not say those who are earning salvation, who deserve it, or are hoping for it, but who are "heirs" of it. To

be practically such there is usually a legal document, a written testimony, some assurance of the fact that the receivers have fallen heirs to what is not theirs, by either work or purchase, but by the will of a testator.

IV. Sons on their way to glory (2:10).

These are also the "sanctified" or "brethren" of the 11th verse, "the assembly" of the 12th, and "the people" of the 17th verse.

What a constellation of heavenly characters, all in, this little word of three letters, **Son!** Let us examine them.

(1) "The Sanctified" or set apart. No work of theirs is here, for the sanctified are the result of the Sanctifiers, and this relates to God's will, Christ's work, and the Holy Spirit's witness (Heb. 10).

(2) "The Brethren" tells of common kin, as our Lord said to Mary at the tomb, "Go to my Brethren" (John 20:17).

(3) "The assembly" tells of a company, a unit, having definite limits, a within and without—the Redeemed of God.

(4) "The children" bespeaks a common life and nature, from one Father, and in one family.

(5) "The people" tells of a common status, a citizenship, and a country—all of which are said to be heavenly (Cp. 1 Cor. 15:48; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:16).

V. "Holy Brethren."

God's pilgrim people, having an Apostle and High Priest to their profession, Christ Jesus, worthy of more glory than Moses. Called out from bondage and the fear of death to the rest that remaineth, they have also full provision for the way.

VI. "Partakers of a heavenly calling."

They had a past, a guilty past, their sins, a present of being "brought to God," and a future of being "brought to glory," and God's calling secures all for them, and marks out their character, as "heavenly men by birth."

VII. The House of God (ch. 3:6).

In this Moses was a faithful ministering servant, but over it "Christ is a Son," and we are part of that Divine House, if we are truly of "the household of faith," which the testings of the way makes manifest.

VIII. Partakers of Christ (2:14).

As God once decided the question be-

tween Korah and his rebellious company and the sons of Aaron, so is He deciding to-day between mere professors with a name to live while dead, and the possessors of eternal life, partakers of Christ who "hold the beginning of the confidence until the end." What is of Himself is abiding.

IX. "The saints" (6:10).

These are seen presented also as those

(1) Who have fled for refuge to Christ (6:18);

(2) Who have an anchor to their souls (6:19);

(3) For whom the Forerunner has entered within the veil (6:20).

(4) Whom the Great Priest saved completely (7:25);

(5) Whom He lives to make intercession for (7:25).

X. "The Redeemed" (9:12).

These are seen as

(1) Having purged consciences (9:14);

(2) Being called to eternal inheritance (9:15);

(3) Represented in Heaven (9:24);

(4) Their sins borne by Christ (9:28);

(5) Looking for Him to come (9:28).

XI. "The Worshipers" (Heb. 10:2).

These are described thus:

(1) "Once purged."

(2) "With no more conscience of sins" (v. 2).

(3) The sanctified (a) by God's will (10 v.), (b) by Christ's work.

(4) Perfected forever (14 v.).

(5) The pardoned—"sins and iniquities remembered no more."

X. New Testament Priests (Heb. 10:19).

These are said to have

(1) Boldness to enter the holiest (20 v.).

(2) A new and living way into it (20 v.).

(3) A Great High Priest (21 v.).

(4) Hearts sprinkled (22 v.).

(5) Bodies washed.

(6) Faith to confess (23 v.).

(7) Knowledge of the truth (26 v.).

(8) Illumination (32 v.).

(9) An enduring substance (34 v.).

(10) Confidence, having great recompense of reward.

XI. "Believers" (10:39).

Of whom it is said they

- (1) Draw not back to perdition;
- (2) But believe to the salvation of the soul;
- (3) Who come to God (11:4-6);
- (4) Who please God (5 v.);
- (5) Who trust God (7 v.);
- (6) Who obey God (8 v.);
- (7) Who rest in God (19 v.);
- XII. Heavenly runners (12:1).
- (1) Who are to lay aside weights and sin;
- (2) To run with patience (1 v.);
- (3) To consider their leader (3 v.);
- (4) To endure chastening (7 v.);
- (5) To lift up feeble hands (12 v.);
- (6) To make straight paths (13 v.);
- (7) To follow peace and holiness (14 v.);
- (8) Look diligently against evils (15 v.).

XIII. God's covenant people.

Who have **not** come to the Mount;

- (1) That might be touched;
- (2) Burned with fire;
- (3) Blackness;
- (4) Darkness;
- (5) Tempest;
- (6) Sound of a trumpet;
- (7) Voice of words.

But who **had** come to

- (1) Mount Zion—The place of God's throne;
 - (2) City of the living God—His home;
 - (3) To an innumerable company of angels;
 - (4) To the church of the first born;
 - (5) To God the Judge of all;
 - (6) To the spirits of just men;
 - (7) To Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant;
 - (8) To the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than that of Abel.
- These were to "Refuse not Him that speaketh" (25 v.).

XIV.—A Kingdom of Priests.

"Who have received a Kingdom that cannot be moved" (12:28).

"Who have an altar," peculiarly their own.

They are exhorted to:

- (1) Serve God with reverence (12:28);
- (2) Let brotherly love continue (13:1);
- (3) Exercise hospitality (13:2);
- (4) Remember others in trial (3 v.);
- (5) Be content with their lot (5 v.);

(6) Remember their leaders (7 v.);

(7) Go forth to Christ without the camp (13 v.);

(8) Offer the sacrifice of praise (15 v.);

(9) To do good and communicate (16 v.);

(10) Obey their leaders (17 v.);

(11) Pray for the Lord's servants (18 v.);

(12) Salute all their leaders (24 v.).

Such are the fourteen or double seven of relationships in which Divine grace has placed us in this our day of privilege and responsibility, which reveal somewhat of the "some better thing, which God has provided for us" of this dispensation. Let us then "search out of the Book of the Lord and read" and then "suffer the word of exhortation" as here given, commencing with "giving more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" and closing with Christian salutation to all our leaders and all the saints.

This marks out souls in proper relation to God as their own God, known and worshipped by them, in the beauty of holiness, and the sphere of His interests among men, "the assembly of His saints."

B. C. G.

RABBI NATHAN*

A little while ago I was told about a strange Jewish rabbi, who lived like a hermit. After a long search, I found him in a wretched little house outside the town. I was told, "He was all alone, old, sick, poor, and shy of people." I stood at his door, not without nervousness. It was not easy to find a suitable word of exhortation and comfort to go with the material gift. His door had no bell. I saw through the key-hole the figure of a man in a Talith (praying shawl), swaying his head continually, as Jews do in prayer. Not to disturb him, I waited outside. A woman passing by asked whom I was waiting for. "I want to see Rabbi Nathan," I replied, "and I am waiting till he has finished his prayers."

"You will have to wait a long time, then," she said laughingly. "The queer old chap is praying all day long—he has nothing else to do. Just knock."

I did so. In a few minutes the door opened; an old man, leaning on two sticks, looked at me inquiringly. With some embarrassment, I gave my name, and apolo-

gized for disturbing him. His greeting was not too friendly, but I was asked to step in. The room was small, bare walls, dim light, a bed, a table, a bench and a bookshelf with old folio Talmuds formed the whole furniture. At first we were both embarrassed, but when I looked into his face, and two kind, soft, child-like eyes looked out of the pale, old face at me, all shyness disappeared and an innocent conversation began. I heard the strange story of his life. The only son of well-to-do parents, his childhood was happy. Gifted, industrious and ambitious, he obtained at twenty-six the office of rabbi. A loved wife, happy, healthy children, good friends, completed the family happiness; so that they were a living illustration of the 128th Psalm. But all the earthly happiness was swept away as though by a sudden storm; blow followed blow; in two days he lost his wife and five blooming children. By the carelessness of a friend, he lost his property at the same time, and his friends disappeared. "Old Job," said the rabbi, smiling, "had at least three sympathizing friends, but I had not one left."

Broken down in body and soul, he left his home and now lives, an unknown hermit, in a strange place.

A year ago his last child, a widowed daughter, died in the hospital at Riga, where she found the Saviour. The rabbi read me some sentences from her last letter. She wrote: "I know that I stand on the threshold of eternity; my days down here are numbered. Do not be sad, darling father, for I leave this world gladly. I am going home in peace, for I know that my Redeemer lives. God is my dear heavenly Father, and Jesus, the Messiah, is my Redeemer and Saviour, who came into the world to save sinners. I am very happy to be a child of God, and look forward joyfully to be with the Father soon where my Saviour has gone before to prepare a place for me. You will have my small property; it will be useful to you in your old age; but you will find more than all the treasures of the world in the little book (the New Testament) which I send with this. I am sure that you will comply with the last request of your dying child, darling father, and read the precious Book attentively. It will be a source of light and power and comfort to you, as it has been to me. I can write no more. * * * *

Farewell, darling father! May we meet again in Father's beautiful home!"

The old man could not command his voice to say more, and only pointed to the table where there lay a well-worn New Testament. The words of John 16:32 were twice underlined: "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." After a few minutes he said: "Thus the bright star of Jacob (Num. 24:17) appeared to me in the darkest night of my life. My new life began with the death of my last child. I am beginning now to understand God's wonderful ways. The greatest revelation of the Messiah Jesus seems to me to be contained in the words, 'Our Father.' This is the key to heaven, the free entrance to God. There is more in this single word than in all the great Talmud folios. It is true I heard God's voice in former times, but it was the voice of the Law at Sinai in thunder and lightning, which made my soul quake before the thrice holy God (Deut. 5:25). But in the Gospel I hear the voice of my dear heavenly Father, who gave us His dear Son, through whom we are made the children and heirs of God. For with the words, 'Your heavenly Father' (Matt. 6:32), Jesus restores to us the old lost title of nobility, so that we may come confidently as God's children to the Father and say, 'Abba, Father.' I learn to love and understand my God and Father better, the more His Spirit reveals to me the secret of the New Testament. This is my only task now."

"Who provides for your bodily wants?" I asked.

"A good old woman comes every day and does what is necessary, that is enough," he said smiling.

I asked if it were not lonely. Another smile came as he answered cheerfully, "I am never alone. One is always with me." So saying, he pointed to the wall near his bed, and I now noticed two slips of paper. On one could be read in Hebrew, "Have we not all one Father?" (Mal. 2:10). On the other were the words: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

"That is what He has promised me, and He has kept the promise. He never leaves me alone," was the rabbi's happy assurance.

LIVING, NOT DEAD*

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 20:32).

Not dead are they, our dear ones, though
 departed
 From reach of love's warm touch, and
 yearning sight;
 They live in scenes beyond our power of
 vision,
 In realms of light.

The loved, familiar forms, now gently
 sleeping
 Within their quiet, temporary home,
 Were but the mortal tents where lodged the
 spirits
 Now safe at home.

Free from the taint of human sin, and
 frailty
 That tempted here their eager feet to
 stray;
 Free from the difficulties that encompassed
 The narrow way.

The longing thirst for fuller, wider know-
 ledge
 Is satisfied; fulfilled their ardent hope.
 They know as they are known, with higher
 powers
 And larger scope.

We know not how their happy souls are
 dwelling—
 Or if Heaven is some far distant sphere;
 But we do know they are at Home with
 Jesus;
 This calms all fear.

Only a little while, and then the dawning
 Of the glad day when we shall meet again,
 And with them share the glory of that
 kingdom
 Where Christ shall reign.

Till then, in Him our Lord, we are united;
 They dwell with Him, and He in us abides;
 One faith, one hope, one love, alike in-
 spires us
 One Shepherd guides.

Perfect wisdom is arranging all events that
 meet us here,
 Love divine, unchanged, unchanging, will
 go with us through the year.
 Psa. 30. Psa. 18:32.

And oft after anxious provisions of man
 Flashes in with a silence, God's excellent
 plan.

"That Thou should'st think so much of me,
 Being the God Thou art,
 Is darkness to my intellect,
 But sunshine to my heart."

THE CHURCH HERE FOR HER LORD*

1. The Church did not exist in the days
 of our Lord (Matt. 16:18). He did not
 say, I have built, or am building; but, "I
 will build my Church."

2. It was known in the mind of God
 from all eternity (Eph. 1:4; 2 Hess. 2:13;
 Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 2:7-9).

3. God first revealed the Church to St.
 Paul (Eph. 3:2-6). —

4. Its first historical notice (Acts 2:47).

5. It consists of neither Jew nor Gen-
 tile, as such (1 Cor. 10:32).

6. It is composed of Jew and Gentile
 (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11; Rom. 10:12).

7. It is united into one body (John 11:
 52; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:15, 4:15, 16, 5:30).

8. The Holy Ghost unites the members
 into one body, the body of Christ (1 Cor.
 12:13; Eph. 1:23; 1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 1:
 18, 24).

9. Christ is the head of that body (Eph.
 1:20-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18).

10. It is the fulness of Christ (Eph.
 1:23; Col. 1:18-24).

11. It is perfect in Him; Christ's per-
 fection will be hers (Col. 1:18, 28; 2:9, 10).

12. It is the vessel for the display of
 God's glory (Eph. 3:20, 21; Rev. 21:23,
 24).

13. The wisdom of God is made known
 by it (Eph. 3:10).

14. It possesses the knowledge of
 the mystery of God's will (Eph. 1:9; 1 Cor.
 2:16).

15. It is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

16. Its blessings are Spiritual, not carnal; Heavenly, not earthly (Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:3, 4).

17. It is the habitation of God (Eph. 2:22).

18. It has a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1); a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20); a heavenly country (Heb. 11:16); a heavenly home (John 16:2); a heavenly hope (Col. 1:5); it is seated in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).

19. It is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; Rev. 19:7; 22:1-2-9).

20. It is co-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:11; John 17:22).

21. Its present position is: 1, an espoused virgin waiting for her Lord, and her marriage (2 Cor. 11:2; Luke 12:36; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 10:37; 1 Peter 1:13; Rev. 19:7; 22:20); 2, a partaker of Christ's rejection and sufferings (1 Pet. 4:12, 13; James 1:12; Rom. 8:17; Acts 5:41).

22. Its future is: 1, to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Thess. 2:1); 2, to reign with Him (Rev. 1:6; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Gal. 4:7; Rev. 20:4); 3, to judge with Christ (Dan. 7:22; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8; Zech. 14:1, 3 and 5; Rev. 19:14-18; Jude 14:15).

Her Endowments

Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, hast hid these things from the wise and Lord of heaven and earth, because thou prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:27, 29).

Her Power and Wisdom

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:3, 4).

"We have this treasure in earthen ves-

sels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7).

Her Motive

"The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:14).

"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts. 4:20).

"Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9).

Her Time for Working

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2).

How Long to Work

"Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

"The time is short" (1 Cor. 7:29).

Companionship in Her Work

"We, then, as workers together with Him (Christ)" (2 Cor. 6:1).

"We are laborers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9).

"They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" (Mark 16:20).

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age)" (Matt. 28:20).

1.—Working in the Church

"Able to admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14).

"Ye that are spiritual restore such an one" (Gal. 6:1).

"Teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16).

"Comfort one another" (1 Thess. 4:18).

"Comfort yourselves together and edify one another" (1 Thess. 5:11).

"We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak" (1 Thes. 5:14).

"Looking diligently (being bishops) lest any man fail of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15).

"Have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:25).

"Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification" (Rom. 15:2; 14:19).

II.—In the World

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

Every member has not the same gift.

"And He (Jesus Christ) gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and SOME pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11, 12).

Each member has some gift.

"From whom (Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

"As every man has received a gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

Christ the Object

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23, 24).

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5).

In Instead of Christ

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).

For His Glory

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Faithfully

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

Zealously

"Whatsoever thing hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecc. 9:10).

Christ's Example

"Jesus said, I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the

night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

"Jesus said, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

Marks of a Good Minister

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:1-6).

The Preparation

"They shall be all taught of God" (John 6:45).

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17).

"When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16).

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

Encouragements to Work

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecc. 9:1).

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all

waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass" (Is. 32:20).

"Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9, 10).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Encouragement to Weak Ones

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42).

"God set the members, every one of them in the body as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness" (1 Cor. 12:18-23).

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salueth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

Christ's Estimate of His People

"By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

"There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

"A glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The Christian's Estimate of Christ

"The chiefest among ten thousand. He is altogether lovely" (Cant. 5:10, 16).

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? there

is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. 73:25).

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ" (Phil 3:8).

The four-and-twenty elders fall down . . . and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy to receive glory and honour and power; for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:10, 11).

Her Principles and Motives in Holiness

1. Being dead with Christ (Rom. 6:3-13; Gal. 2:21; Col. 3:3).

2. New creation in Christ (John 3:5, 6; 2 Cor. 5:17; Ephes. 2:10).

3. Present resurrection with Christ (Col. 2:12; 3:1; Ephes. 2:4-6).

4. The love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 15; Eph. 5:1, 2; Col. 3:13).

5. Oneness with Christ (Rom. 12:5; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 6:15; 1 Cor. 12:27; Ephes. 5:30); 1, as regards acceptance (Eph. 1:6); 2, as regards righteousness (Rom. 3:25; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21); 3, as regards peace (John 14:27; Ephes. 2:14); 4, as regards life (John 11:25; John 16:6 and 19; 1 John 5:11, 12; Col. 3:4); 5, as regards future glory (Rom. 8:17; John 17:22).

6. The daily watching, looking, and loving—the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: 1st. Faith is exercised by— (1 Cor. 15:52-58; Col. 3:4). 2nd. Hope is animated by— (Phil. 3:20, 21). 3rd. Comfort is realized in times of trial by— (1 Thess. 4:13, 16; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18 and 5:1). 4th. Holiness is encouraged by— (Titus 2:11-13; 2 Peter 3:11; 1 John 3:3). 5th. Patience is practised by— (James 5:7).

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LOVE'S MINISTRY*

Aye, aye, gudewife, I hear the bells that ca'
To e'enin' worship in the gray auld kirk,
Whase windows shine through snawy
flakes that fa'

Abune the lane graves whitenin' in the
mirk.

Fain wad I gang to bend my heid in
pray'r,
To read the Book oor haun's hae turned
for years,
An' sing the psalms until my hert nae mair
Was chokit wi' its foolish doots an'
fears:

Fain wad I gang, as in the days gane by,
When you an' I gaed couthy, side by
side,
But here the nicht thegither you an' I,
Kennin' it is the Lord's ain will, maun
bide.

Ye needna vex yôur hert to haud me here,
The nicht is cauld, the room is bricht an'
warm,
The kettle sings its sang o' hamely cheer,
An' on the window dirls the winter
storm.

Noo let me turn your pillow for ye—so,
An' ease ye up a wee bit—just a wee,
Until ye drink your cordial, an' its glow
Rins through your veins, the hope o'
health to gie.

I canna thole to see ye lyin' there,
To ken ye coont the 'oors when I'm
awa',
To come frae wark an' see your vacant
chair,
You that were aince the hertnin' o' us a'.

The warld to me could gie nae joy mair
great
Than jist to see ye daunerin' aboot,
Here in the hoose, an' then ayont the gate,
Syne to the kirk wi' me again gaun oot.

But ta' your time an' drink your cordial
doon,
An' when you're dune we'll read the
Book again,

Then pray the nicht may bring ye slumber
soun'

An' saft as dreamless sleep o' wearit
wean.

Nae mair I hear the kirk bells ringin' oot,
The folk are gathered in, their pray'rs
arise;

Oor pray'rs can rise wi' theirs, ower sinfu'
doot

An' lift to Him that dwells abune the
skies.

For weel I ken, gudewife, He taketh kent
O' ilka pray'r that gange frae lips sin-
cere;

The wants o' herts, in kirk or hame, are
kent,

An' still the Faither a' His bairns will
hear.

James Strang.

"ALL GRACE," "MORE GRACE" AND
TRUE GRACE

(1) "The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10).

(2) "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. . . . full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

(3) "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

(4) "Of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace or upon grace" (John 1:16).

(5) "He giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

(6) "He giveth more grace" (Jas. 4:6).

(7) "This is the true grace of God, wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. 5:12).

How full of "the consolations of God" are these precious statements of our Holy Bible. We may not quite put them among "the exceeding great and precious promises," but they are, at least, of that nature, and are both great and precious assurances. The first is the prayer for the flock of God by one who was an under-

shepherd of that flock, by appointment of the Great Shepherd, who bade him, "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, etc.," (John 21).

The second is the proclamation of "God manifest in the flesh," God's revelation in the person of His Son, and with it the assurance of plenteous grace—for He is here said to be "full of grace and truth."

The third is the assurance that the grace which God is the alone source and sovereign of, and which His Beloved Son was full of when here amongst men, is still, as ever, available, for God is able by His Holy Spirit to "make all grace abound toward us."

The fourth is the blessed possession of, in common, by all who have received it, of this grace, and as it were in instalments, for it is "grace upon grace."

(5) This gives the terms of grace, and that in a two-fold way, (1) that God gives it and (2) that only the humble receive it at His gracious hands, for while He giveth liberally, it is only realized by those who take. "He filleth the hungry with good things and sendeth the rich empty away" (Luke 1:53).

(6) The sixth even more fully emphasizes the fact that grace is undeserved favor, for it suggests restoring or reclaiming grace, ever flowing out to us and as at the first in our need as poor sinners meeting us where we are.

(7) This is our rearguard assuring us that come what will we have not only a path to walk in, but a position giving us of God, of unalterable blessing, standing in the favor of the blessed God, according to the worth and merits of the sacrifice of His beloved Son.

May we realize how great are our possessions in Christ, and enter upon them by faith for He hath said, "If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land."
B. C. G.

THE GOSPEL, CHURCH AND WORLD*

A letter to Mr. Chas. R. Drum (of Syracuse, N.Y.), visiting evangelist to Miami, Fla.

Dear Mr. D.,

Having been a regular attendant at the meetings recently held in Miami, and an attentive listener to the talks you gave, I take the liberty to write you, expressing my appreciation at some of the messages

you brought to those who gathered under the tent.

Especially would I thank you for your talk on John 3, one Sunday evening, which was a clear setting forth of the Gospel so much needed these days.

Your message regarding our Lord's return also impressed me, it being the most Scriptural exposition of that subject I have listened to in a great while. I believe this to be a very precious truth, and only deplore the fact that its importance is almost entirely lost sight of by the churches. Moreover, the Word is very clear on the subject, and only those who follow man's, rather than the Holy Spirit's guidance, are liable to be led into the vagaries exhibited by some in these days.

As you stated, and truly, the N. T. teems with references to this subject, and the O. T. for that matter. It meets one at every turn, it is our hope (Titus 2:13), our comfort (1 Thess. 4:18), our incentive to Christian Service (1 Pet. 5:1-4)—in fact, it is, or should be, the all-important truth to the Christian. The sad part of it is that the professing Church has lost sight of her Hope—has left her first Love (Rev. 2:4), and is endeavoring to reform matters and make the world a pleasant place in which to live, apparently oblivious to the fact that the world (as such) is under condemnation, and that its only hope is in Him, Who—when he comes—will reign in righteousness (Is. 32:1), and rule with equity (Ps. 98:9).

In view of this, I believe the present war to be highly significant, especially in regard to the abolition of the Turkish power from Europe and the opening up of Palestine and Mesopotamia to their rightful owners. The greatest miracle of history—the Jew—for nineteen hundred years a wanderer and an outcast, has had a national gathering or "Parliament" each year since 1898, with its objective "Palestine for the Jews" and it seems that their hopes are to be soon realized. This is all necessary to allow of a fulfilment of Zech. 12:9-14, which shows the Chosen People in the land (though in unbelief), when the Lord comes.

There are indications of the formation of an "United States of Europe," and this, too, is all in accord with prophecy and the

end, for Rev. 13 and Dan. 2 and 7 shows us that the coming head of the reformed Roman Empire is to hold sway mainly over the territory now covered by the warring nations. This man is not to appear until the Church is removed (2 Thess. 2), and if the whole world is almost breathlessly awaiting the coming of such a "man" as Scripture declares he will be—how near must be the coming of Christ for His Church!

I was also pleased to note the stand you took in regard to the Sovereign Grace of God—a point sadly deficient in the theology of our Methodist friends especially. The New Birth, as you stated, provides for a "once and for all" salvation—independent of our feelings—wholly dependent on the promise of God to all who believe in His Son.

I have always been puzzled to know what satisfaction is to be found in a faith that calls for effort on our part, except as we are exercised by love for the Lord Jesus Who completed our redemption, and Who finally exclaimed, "It is finished."

I wonder if you will bear with me awhile if I try to suggest a few things that seem to me to be of vital importance to a correct understanding of the Truth as revealed in the Scriptures?

Firstly—In preaching the Gospel, do we impress sufficiently on the people the fact that, without Christ, they are **LOST**?

I am sure you will forgive me if I am personal—I do not mean to pose as your critic—but, believing (as I do), that the Word of God is very plain in its teaching, I would like to pass on a few thoughts for your consideration.

For instance, when a delegation from some friendly "Order" comes to a meeting, have we any Scriptural warrant for expressing our appreciation at the "good" work they are doing and send them away with a happy feeling that they, at least, are doing something to make the world better? Now I am not disputing the fact that they are making the world better—I believe they are, and I also believe that Satan is well-pleased to have it so. These Orders—many of them—welcome into their secret embrace men holding all shades of opinions and beliefs—or none. I was a member of

one year ago, the local secretary of which was an infidel, so I am not exactly supposing.

Be that as it may, the whole object of these societies is to eliminate in a measure, the ills of mankind—the effects of sin, and to make, if possible, a better order of things **apart from Christ**.

This, I believe, to be in absolute accord with the wishes of the enemy, who is called in Scripture "the god of this world" (or age), not a demoralizing, horned and hoofed monster whose main desire is to degrade—but a being of exquisite beauty (Ezek. 28: 12-17). The "Son of the morning" (Is. 14: 12-17), so mighty and of such dignity that the Archangel durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said the Lord rebuke thee (Jude 9). We cannot speak of him lightly, nor discount his wisdom (Ezek. 28:12). He is the **deceiver** of the whole world (Rev. 12:19), and at the present time, "The whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). Are we then to welcome with open arms members of an organization whose professed ideals are of the earth earthy? I speak as a Christian whose citizenship is in the heavens, heavenly (Eph. 2:6). Ought we to make these people think they are **doing a good work**—helping the cause of Christianity in the World, etc., when God declares that the efforts of unregenerate humanity to please Him are **absolutely futile**. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). In dealing with all such matters as these—Friendly societies, amusements, yes and even church memberships, besides the hundred and one other matters that perplex many, there is only **ONE** test necessary for the Christian to apply, and it is this: Is it (the doubtful matter) of the **World**, or is it of God? (1 John 2:15-17). Where did it originate? What is its purpose? Does it lift men to Christ, or make them self-satisfied and self-centred? Is it of the Father? Is it?—"honest now." If not, it is absolutely and emphatically of the **World**, and thus allied with the realm of which Satan is the god. It may seem a hard saying, but it is nevertheless Scriptural, that whosoever will be friendly toward the world is at **ENMITY WITH GOD** (Jas. 4:4).

The **only** path for the Christian is one

of entire separation from these things and unto God.

Again, if I may refer to a statement I heard you make on several occasions, viz., that the Church is the greatest organization in the World. To this I can heartily agree, for the professing Church is the greatest organization in the World, and is very imposing and far-reaching in its influence. But was not this anticipated? Matt. 13 tells us of Christendom becoming as a great tree, in the branches of which the birds of the air find lodgment. We remember that Satan is the "Prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and birds are certainly representative of the influences of evil (Rev. 18:2). What is not called "Christian" to-day? In the words of the prophet, it is being said, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, ONLY LET US BE CALLED BY THY NAME TO TAKE AWAY OUR REPROACH" (Is. 4:1). And what a reproach it is!

The Lord Jesus never told HIS followers to start a temperance movement, nor a friendly society, nor any of these moral or political agencies. HE never told them to erect huge churches, to go hopelessly in debt for the same (and then appeal to the world to help them out), or to employ worldly talent to sing His praises to the people. And they think, and are so led by their teachers, that they are rendering God service. How offensive must these things be in the sight of an all-holy and all-righteous God!

In joining hands with all such unregenerate men, as well as with political leaders, heads of fraternities, etc., do you not see that Christians are assisting Satan to cast out Satan? Which is impossible—for a Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:25-26). And if it were possible for Christians to unite with such, "Then is the offence of the Cross ceased!"

We are driven to the conclusion, then, that all these movements, so full of energy and endeavor, are Satan's deceptive counterfeit to the Gospel, which is the ONLY Power of God unto Salvation and deliverance from the world and its things. And if any seem to be contentious in this, we have the plain and unmistakable Word

of God which tells us of the last state of the professing Church being so awful that it is only fit to be spued out of the mouth of Him whom it has dishonored (Rev. 3:16).

So that the organization referred to is clearly not of God, for it is manifestly allied with evil.

What, then is the Church if not an organization? I need hardly refer to the passages which speak of the Church as "His Body," "The Body of Christ," etc. Is the body (humanly speaking), an organization? Or is it not rather an **organism**, with the mind, life and energy of the Head working in every member? Even so, the Church (as God sees it) is actuated by the Divine Life of its Head—even Jesus, and when He comes every member of that body will rise with Him in Glory, leaving the organization to meet the horrors of the Great Tribulation, and the terrors of the Anti-Christ!

The beginning of the end is upon us. . . . how it behooves those who know the Truth to proclaim it fearlessly. I know that the "Fatherhood of God" and "Brotherhood of man" teaching pleases the masses—but it is not of God. God is the Father only of those who have been born again, and men are brothers only (apart from the family sense) as they are brethren in Christ. The true church is still a "little flock," so much so that our Lord asks the question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find (the) faith on the Earth?" Doubtless He will find faiths—many of them, but THE Faith once delivered to the Saints—how about that? Do we find it to-day. . . . do we?

Stephen D. Wall.

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SEVENFOLD GRACE IN FIRST PETER

"This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5:12).

So says the Apostle Peter, at the close of his beautiful first pastoral epistle. What did he mean? That those to whom he wrote, as being:

I. Redeemed by the Blood of Christ,

II. Born again by the Gospel,

had not merely received these great blessings as God's free gift, but they possessed them **unalterably**—for "in the grace of God" or His unmerited favor, was their only standing before Him.

But as he thus gives this happy character to the entire epistle, we may do well to see that it has a sevenfold relation to it, thus evidencing that this grace of God "abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

I. Grace for the pilgrim pathway.

After addressing them as God's elect, sanctified and redeemed ones, he adds: "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied" (ch. 1:2). In this he gives us an example of spiritual arithmetic, yet leaves us to supply the figure of faith by which we multiply it. "According to your faith be it unto you."

II. Grace at the end of our pathway.

"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 13).

This is not the good start of being "saved by grace, and not of works" as in Eph. 2:8-9, but the completion of the great matter, or the last instalment of it, when "grace begun shall end in glory," at the coming of our blessed Lord and when to all His gifts by the way, He adds His rewards at the end.

III. Grace stored up in the Lord Jesus.

How many who know a little of being "saved by grace" seem content with so little beyond it, instead of "growing up unto salvation by the sincere milk of the word," because they have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." If He is the storehouse of grace, then how infinite is the supply, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him" (Col. 1).

IV. Grace for life's relationships.

"Being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered" (3:7).

While the Apostle notes it specially as applying to the marriage relation, as being the closest and most intimate in life, yet it applies equally to all the others, of children and parents, servants and masters, as these need it also to fulfill life's responsibilities.

V. Grace for stewardship in ministry.

"Minister. . . . one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (4:10).

The first thing required of us in the possession of whatever gift Christ has given, is to "hold fast the faithful word," but the next is to be generous as well as faithful, and "hold forth the word of life." For this, he assures us "every man has received the gift"—the grace is manifold—the ability God-given, and the result that God be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.

VI. Grace toward the flock of God.

"God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (5:5).

Here he gives instruction as to shepherds and the flock, the elders and the younger, then adds: "Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." What a blessed prescription, this, for many of our assembly ills, just as of old, when the Grecians murmured, the Hebrews then chose seven Grecians to dispense their widow's portion (Acts 6).

VII. Grace for Suffering and Final Victory.

"The God of all grace Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (5:10).

Here, surely, we have all kinds of grace; grace, first, midst and last, grace for both the start and finish, grace to sustain by the way, and to perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us in the end. So be it, Lord, we pray, for Thy Name's sake, now and to eternity.

B. C. G.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?***(An Answer to Enquiries)**

We believe in the absolute and perfect inspiration of the Bible; which we hold to be, not in name only, but in reality—the WORD OF GOD.

Having in it the perfect revelation of the mind of God, we refuse all human creeds as being both unnecessary, and a slur upon His Word.

We, however, have no uncertain belief in the doctrines unfolded in the Scriptures—the fall and absolute ruin of man; his guilty, lost and helpless condition; the utter worthlessness of works, law-keeping or reformation as a GROUND of salvation; the amazing love of God in providing a Saviour in His blessed Son; the spotless perfection of Christ, both in His divine nature and His true humanity; atonement by the blood-shedding of Christ on the cross, by which alone redemption has been accomplished; His resurrection as the proof of God's acceptance of that atonement.

We also see in Scripture the absolute necessity for new birth by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, and of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law.

We see that the believer is warranted to have the fullest assurance of his present and eternal salvation, and that this assurance comes not through feelings or experiences, but by the word of God.

We also see that being saved by a work once for all, the believer can never be lost, but is as secure as though he were in heaven already—because of Christ's death and resurrection.

We see, however, that Scripture guards from abuse of this doctrine by insisting upon good works as the fruit of salvation, that the believer is to reckon himself dead to sin, and to live not only a moral life, but one of love and devotedness to Christ and of separation from the ways and thoughts of the world.

We believe that the proper hope of God's people is not the improvement of the world, but the coming of Christ for His own, to raise the dead in Christ, and change the living, and then take them all out of the world, which He will then purge and cleanse by judgments preparatory to the Millennium, when Israel and

the nations of the earth will inhabit it under His rule, but His Church will always be in Heaven.

We hold that rejecters of the Gospel and all the wicked will "have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," eternal punishment and not extinction or restoration. We therefore believe in an earnest and affectionate presentation of the simple gospel of the grace of God.

As to Church Government, we refuse, as unscriptural, all denominational names, and all systems of human devising for church order. Believing that the Church is one body, composed of all believers, we refuse to assume any name that is not common to all the people of God.

We see, however, a scriptural order of meeting, worship and discipline and seek to carry this out.

As to ministry, we refuse all ordination as merely human, but recognize the various gifts which Christ has given for His whole Church.

We believe that when a company of Christians is gathered for worship, there should be no human leader in charge, but that all should be left to the Spirit of God to use whom He may choose, in prayer, praise or exhortation. (1 Cor. 14).

We refuse all thought of salary or stipulated remuneration for the preaching of the Word but hold ourselves responsible to minister in temporal affairs to those who give themselves to the Lord's work.

We take no collections at public meetings, and refuse all help from the world.

We meet in hired halls, or other modest buildings, believing such to be more in accord with the spirit of Christianity.

As to ordinances, we believe in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper, which last is celebrated weekly.

S. R.

"BROUGHT TO GOD"

(Rom. 4:23; 5:11)

I. The basis of the new relationship. Ch. 4:23-25.

1. "Delivered for our offences." The sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. "Raised again for our justification." His resurrection, the declaration of God's acceptance of His atoning work, and the proof of its eternal efficacy.

II. The result for faith. (Chap 5:1-2).
 1. Peace in view of all sins—the past.
 2. Access to a perfect standing in grace—the present.
 3. Boasting in hope of the glory—the future.

III. The Outcome for Experience. (Vs. 3-5).
 1. Tribulation working patience.
 2. Patience, experience.
 3. Experience, hope.

The same attitude as to the future, which faith reached on the basis of the Word, is now reached by experience.

IV. The Spirit and the Love of God (verses 6-10).

1. This love to us when we were sinners.
 2. All wrath removed, by His Blood.
 3. Saved in the power of His resurrection life.

V. God our boast.

On the ground of this grace, He, Himself is the boast of the reconciled sinner. This is more than joy, which fluctuates. We can always boast in God, even if our joy is low. S. R.

MARY AT THE SAVIOUR'S TOMB

(John 20:11-18)

I. The depth of Mary's sorrow.

"Mary stood without weeping." Faith would have wept tears of joy at the sight of the empty tomb, but her tears were not the expression of faith, but of sorrowful unbelief. The Saviour had said He would rise again, and faith, resting on His word, would have sought a living Saviour, and not a dead one. It was love to Him, however, if not faith in a Saviour's word that led her there. Love looked at the Saviour, through the distorted medium of her own heart, and weeps; faith looks at the Saviour, through the medium of His word that cannot lie, and always rejoices."

There was mingling in Mary's heart deep affection and clouded faith. She sought a Saviour, not as had been promised, and groped in darkness. Blessed as it is, however, to see sunshine without a cloud, yet the cloud. The angels at the tomb "sat" to express the mind of heaven on earth. They were the representatives of heaven it is even blessed if it be mingled with

"Sitting down" is expressive of rest and satisfaction, and their attitude seems to say: "Heaven is at rest now that the tomb is empty." The resurrection of Christ gave efficacy to His work on the cross. It was heaven's seal to the atoning efficacy of His sacrifice, and the angel's attitude expressed the mind of heaven with regard to it. God was satisfied—heaven was at rest now.

A similar truth is indicated by this attitude in Heb. 10:12: "This man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God." His attitude expresses in heaven the same truth as that of the angels in the empty tomb. Christ Himself was satisfied with His own work on the cross. He rested in it, for it was perfect. In Christ all is perfection, and therefore all is rest.

But, though Mary saw angels there, angels from heaven in shining apparel, does it calm her troubled spirit? Oh, no! Bright and glorious as the sight may be, Jesus eclipses all! She wants Him, she seeks Him. There may be glory and majesty there, beauty and grandeur, but the man of sorrows surpasses it all. It is Him she seeks!

Yet while we look on and wonder at Mary's unbelief, do we possess her love?

The angels ask her: "Woman, why weep-est thou?" Here we learn a deeply instructive lesson—the utter inability of any but the Saviour Himself to meet the need of the heart. Angels may say, "Why weep-est thou?" but that is all they can do. They cannot speak that word, "Mary," that makes the desolate heart sing for joy. Jesus only can do this. It is the music of His voice, and His only, that awakens an echo in her heart. The heart was made for God, and none but God can meet it. This is God's own work, which He will not entrust to another: "I, the Lord, search the heart," and He only who knows it can deal with it. He can shut it, and He can open it; He can draw over it the cloud of sorrow, or irradiate it with the sunshine of joy.

II. The exclusiveness of her affection.

Mark how Christ-appreciating she is. She says, "They have taken away my Lord, out of the sepulchre, and I know not where

they have laid him." She says not the Lord, nor our Lord, but my Lord. She speaks as though he were hers, her very own, and no one's else. "My Lord," she says. And is not this ever the language of true affection? So Paul says, "The Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." So Thomas speaks also: "My Lord and my God." So the Bride, in the Canticles, says, "My beloved is mine, and I am His."

III. The nearness of her heart-cure.

But where was Mary all the while? She was in the presence of Jesus. He stood at her side, and she knew it not. Her faith seemed to be dark, but she was in His presence, the certain pledge that every cloud would soon vanish, for darkness cannot abide in His presence, all is light there. But Jesus speaks to the weeping Mary, and His words seem to contain a gentle rebuke. "Woman," He says, "why weepest thou?" It is as if He said: "Why weepest thou since I am risen? Is this a time for weeping, sadness and sorrow, when all around should be glad? Why weepest thou? Mine enemies should weep, the world may weep and lament, Satan and his hosts may be terrified and dismayed, but, woman, why weepest thou? You looked for a dead Saviour; behold a living One at your very side. O woman, why weepest thou?"

And how quickly, and how simply, the Lord can give peace to the heart? It needs only a word from Him, and all is done. Mary had flitted from one object to another in search of Him and was turning away in despair, when she is arrested by the sound of a well-known voice—the voice of her Beloved. He spoke only a word, but oh, what volumes were wrapped up in it! "Mary," He says, and she answered, "Rabboni," and in a moment every cloud vanished from her mind, every sorrow from her heart, and every tear from her eye. "The Good Shepherd knoweth His sheep, and goeth before them." He went before her, and calling His sheep by name, he led her from the wilderness of sorrow and ignorance, into His green pastures of joy and gladness. Her joy was full. It was but a word, it is true, but the music of the voice of Jesus poured through

it, and that was enough. It was but a word; but it awoke an echo in her heart, for it was the word of God, and not of man. Who speaks like God?

IV. The Reward of Mary's Love.

Mark the especial honor the Lord puts upon love. Mary's faith was in eclipse, but her heart loved the Saviour. Like the Bride in the Canticles, she, too, might have said: "I sleep, but mine heart waketh." Faith may be eclipsed, but the heart that loves Him shall not remain in darkness. Mark the honor the Lord places on her. She was the first of all the disciples who saw Him; the first who spoke to Him; the first who drank in His life-giving words; the first one commissioned to carry the glorious news of a risen Saviour to His weeping disciples and to comfort with the fact of their blessed position with Him, before their God and Father.

V. The Upper Room at Jerusalem.

Mary had delivered her message, and the disciples assembled to speak of Jesus, when "Jesus Himself came and stood in the midst of them, and said unto them: Peace be unto you." They came to speak of Him. He came to meet them. The Lord loves the assembly of His people, and always honors their rallying together. But what is His message? It is peace. This is emphatically the message of Jesus and of Jesus only. It was proclaimed over His manger at Bethlehem, left with His people ere He came to the cross, seen in the Blood flowing from His side on Calvary's hill, and now breathed in the upper room at Jerusalem.

But this peace has no doubtful source. "When He has so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side." Here was its source—the wounded hands and pierced side of Jesus. Peace from a crucified Redeemer.

F. A. W.

Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Gras for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 18c. year, in U. S., 18c., Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada.

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THE CORD OF LOVE

We cannot see the twinings
In God's long cord of love;
We cannot see the windings
By matchless wisdom wove.

E'en as a skein, when ravelled,
Still holds the hidden end;
So love's mysterious windings
Around our chastenings blend.

The cord can ne'er be broken,
'Tis held by God alone;
The Lord's seal is the token—
He knows, He keeps His own.

And when the Father chasteneth,
His children's faith to prove,
The cord is held by Jesus—
The unseen end is love.

Love, deep, divine, unsearchable,
Love is the binding cord,
And, hid beneath the chastening,
Twines round the saints of God.

"PEACE" IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

1	"To guide our feet into the way of peace"	(Luke 1:79)
2	"On earth peace, good will toward men"	(2:14)
3	"Let Thou Thy servant depart in peace"	(2:29)
4	"Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace"	(7:50)
5	"Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace"	(8:48)
6	"First say, Peace be to this house"	(10:5)
7	"If the son of peace be there"	(10:6)
8	"Your peace shall rest upon it"	(10:6)
9	"His goods are in peace"	(11:21)
10	"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay"	(12:51)
11	"He desireth conditions of peace"	(14:32)
12	"Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest"	(19:38)
13	"The things that belong unto thy peace"	(19:42)
14	"He saith unto them Peace be unto you"	(24:36)

This Gospel, of the four, can be truly called the "Gospel of Peace," for in a special way it presents the truth of salvation, and the Lord Jesus, not as King, or Pro-

phet, or "God manifest in the flesh," but as the Son of Man, and the Saviour of the lost. It is not, of course, confined to this elementary truth, while that is, so to speak, the pivot on which all the others revolve, and all in perfect keeping with this character.

I. God's Way of PEACE. The first reference, as is common with the primaries, presents the entire subject, or a comprehensive view of the matter, the WAY of PEACE. It is the last of three objects for which our Lord Jesus came, as here given:

1. "To give the knowledge of salvation unto His people."
2. "To give light to them that sit in darkness."
3. "To guide our feet into the way of peace."

The Way of peace suggests, at once, a start, a course, and an end, and comprises our initial acceptance of Christ as our Saviour, the following in His footsteps, and the final result, in glory.

But "the way" is also a reminder that man is no longer in Eden, but outside of it, and so brings to mind the following Scriptures:

1. "They are all gone out of the way"—man is lost.
2. "We have turned, every one, to his own way"—perverse.
3. "There is a way, that seemeth right unto a man"—blinded.

But Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Man, then, being lost, disobedient and deceived, never until he is truly repentant does he find Christ as the Way, or come unto God by Him.

II. His terminal—"Peace on earth." The announcement of the herald angel of "good tidings of great joy" in a "Saviour, Christ, the Lord," awakens this burst of praise in the heavenly choir:

- "Glory to God in the highest;
"On earth, peace,
"Good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

In this trinity of blessing, they found their delight, but to poor humans, blinded by Satan and warped by selfish aims, how little it seems to be true, or is understood and appreciated aright, and from our low

viewpoint, we might judge that only an angel's eyes could see it to be true.

"Glory to God" is, alas, but little even aimed at, for all sin is His dishonor, and the creature's robbery of, and rebellion against Him. How blessed, then, to realize that the first aspect of our Lord's mission was to give "glory to God"! This, as we contemplate His life and death and resurrection, is readily seen, but to see "peace on earth" needs indeed a seer's eyes, and not a sinner's alone. It is true that many see it "coming," and herald the good time as about to be ushered in, but only to expose their own folly, and thus the angel's message seems to many but a mocking of their disappointed hopes. But if we yet can have no glorious millenium on earth, until He shall come whose right it is to reign in righteousness, and so bring in universal peace, yet by our soul's choice of Him, as our Saviour and Lord, we can anticipate the wider blessing. By throwing the heart's door widely open, we can thus receive Him, and also go to Him where He is, yet hidden in the heavens.

III. His sample case—departing in Peace.

While the full result of our Saviour's blessed work is delayed through the world's rejection of Him, God gives us blessed samples of it in bringing His Millennial Dawn to those who in true repentance welcome "the Dayspring from on high."

Scan this lovely portrait, in Luke 2, of this Man of Jerusalem:

1. "He dwelt" in Jerusalem—"the city of peace"—profession.
2. "Simeon"—"hearing," "faith cometh by hearing"—faith.
3. "Just and devout"—position and practical—righteousness.
4. "Waiting for the consolation of Israel"—hope.
5. "The Holy Ghost was upon Him"—endowment.
6. "It was revealed unto him"—revelation.
7. "Came by the Spirit into the temple"—communion.
8. "He took the Saviour in his arms"—delight.
9. "He blessed God—worship.
10. "Said, Now let Thy servant depart in peace"—peace.

Thus, ere the fuller revelation was given by Paul of "absent from the body, present with the Lord," and of the heavenly rapture of living saints, we find one, at least, who believed that his "departing" was not to a prison house in Sheol, but to be with God. With Christ in his arms, and the Holy Spirit upon him, where else could he go?

IV. His Assurance—Go in PEACE.

To the penitent woman of the city, weeping at His feet, our Lord, while fully noticing her tears, her hair, her kisses, and the ointment, yet passed by them all to emphasize her faith, as giving her His triune blessing, of forgiveness, salvation and peace. He saved her because she needed it, as a sinner. He assured her of it by His Word, else she might have gone with doubts and fears, and so reflected on His grace.

V. His comfort—"Go in peace."

A weary, disappointed soul, who could find help in none other than our gracious Lord, came behind Him and only touched His garment. Healed on the spot, yet to simply know it by feeling it was so, He would not have, and so searched out, trembling and prostrate, she declares before all the truth and hears Him say "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." In this one brief message, He assured her of Relationship, Comfort, security and peace.

VI. His ministry—"Peace to this house."

With no niggard hand our Saviour gives, and so sending out His 70 preachers, He bade them "first say, Peace be to this house." No belligerents, disputants, or hard denounciators were these "harvesters" of our Lord. Their ministry was one of reconciliation, of God beseeching, and their manners must be worthy of it. They come to impart, to dispense the bounty of a King, and they were neither patrons nor paupers, but ere they went in to abide they had one enquiry, "Has our Master a welcome here."

VII. His enquiry, Is the Son of peace here?

1. "Sent two and two before His face"—His heralds.
2. "Sent forth into His harvest"—His workmen.

3. "Sent forth as lambs among wolves"—**His charge.**

His charges were ten-fold:

1. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest"—**communion.**

2. "Go your ways"—**obedience.**

3. "Carry neither purse, scrip nor shoes"—**dependence.**

4. "Salute no man by the way"—**concentration.**

5. "Say, Peace to this house"—**courtesy.**

6. "Go not from house to house"—**contentment.**

7. "Eat what is set before you"—**self-denial.**

8. "Heal the sick that are therein"—**compassion.**

9. "Say, The Kingdom of God is come nigh"—**testimony.**

10. "Wipe off their dust against them"—**faithfulness.**

VIII. His blessing. "Your peace shall rest on it."

Just as in Queen Esther's feast, all was bounteous and free, but no compulsion. It was not the "Thou shalt" of law, but the "Let us" of grace. Their dove bore its olive branch only to those who reached out the hand to take it in. If welcomed, the King of peace entered in the person of His messengers; if not, they passed on their way in peace, and the greater loss was that of the refusers of so great a blessing.

IX. His enemy—"his goods are in peace."

No good warrior ever underrates his enemy, and our Great Captain is no exception. He describes Satan as "a strong man armed, keeping his palace, his goods in peace." But if our Lord Jesus thus estimated Satan's power we should surely believe that, in this, as in all else, His word is true. If Satan is a strong man, armed, and also has a palace, goods and spoils, then it is our wisdom to know more about it, for he is a liar and deceiver upon the one hand, and a murderer and destroyer upon the other. "Satan's spoils," what a character for sinners to be described by, and yet such are our Lord's own words, and He cannot lie.

X. His warning—no peace on earth by His first coming.

One would have thought it plain upon its face, but alas, men "know not, neither will they understand." At His birth, Herod and all Jerusalem is troubled, after it Bethlehem refuses to be comforted over "the slaughter of the innocents," a sword pierces Mary's soul, sorrow fills His disciples, the daughters of Jerusalem weep for Him, and His own soul was exceeding sorrowful even to death. In all this was no "peace on earth."

XI. His precaution—conditions of Peace.

Our Lord's word here was to the multitudes coming after Him, and were meant to stir their consciences as to what His true followers must have to face in a hostile world. The cost of true discipleship is in "bearing the cross" after Him, and the examples He gives are meant to impress the fact of "forsaking all" to be His disciples indeed.

XII.—His Transfer—PEACE in heaven.

Our Lord's last journey up to Jerusalem was near its end, when the disciples burst forth in joy and praise for all the display of Who He was which they had seen. They had hopes, we know, that were not then to be fulfilled, but none the less, their song was in the mind of heaven, and so instead of repeating the angels' word, as to the aspect of our Lord's mission, "peace on earth," they change it to that of the transfer of it, "peace in heaven." Jesus was there as King, and they could not "hold their peace," or the very stones would witness against them, in crying out their protest.

XIII. His lament—things of their peace.

He had spoken His Father's words and done His works, had called them to shelter beneath His wings, had sighed and groaned and wept over their condition, and now when all His grace seemed spent in vain upon them; He wept again at their final loss of the "things that belonged to their peace" because they "knew not the time of their visitation."

XIV. His benediction—assembly peace.

Israel, His own, "received Him not," hated Him without a cause." His own disciples "forsook Him and fled," and now after His cross of shame, His sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection, He is

seen still upon His old errand of love. He is both putting before Him His sheep and going before them, as He appears to Simon first, and the two going to Emmaus, but it was when they get together as mutual sharers of a common trust, announcing "The Lord is risen indeed," that He greets them as a company with "Peace be unto you." Here was the Lord of Peace, Himself, ready to give them peace by His presence, as well as by His finished work. How great our need of it! May we realize it more.

B. C. G.

DIVIDE THE CHILD

"And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. She is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment!" (1 Kings 3:25-28).

Beloved brethren, have we not a principle here that would be good for us to act upon in the present day? Men that are more determined than spiritual are willing to say like the false mother, "Divide the child."

For instance, trouble arises among the Lord's dear people, perhaps because of one of His servants. If he would get out of the way, the breach in the family would be healed, but instead of that, he stands on his dignity, and rather than yield, says "Divide the assembly." How sad is this true motherly affection or the true spirit of an evangelist, pastor and teacher? Nay, think of the travailing pains of the servants of God, who labored, and prayed, and wept, as they sowed the precious seed, for weeks or months! Think of their joy when a few weak ones were gathered outside the camp to bear His reproach, "not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord." Time goes on, God gives the increase as they walk in His fear.

But, alas, discord creeps in, and self-willed determined men to rise up to hear opposite sides, to the breaking of hearts, and separating of loved ones, yet they themselves, stand coldly by and say, "Divide the child."

The true mother, in true love says, "No, give it all to her, and in no wise divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. She is the mother thereof."

Can we read the lesson, beloved of God? I am sure we can, true affection would spare the child then, and it would do so still!

What a simple plan Solomon chose to find the true mother, but it proved effectual, and his wisdom is justified by "All Israel" when they heard it, and should not it have been so? They saw that "the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment."

Brethren, can we read this and run in the right way? "Divide the living child" or "in no wise slay it" still determines before the true Solomon, our blessed Saviour and Lord who the "True Mother" is.

A. H. Stewart.

DEPARTED IN GOD

Do we ever miss our dead so much as when a great joy comes to us, and we cannot share it with them? It is not so hard to bear sorrow alone; we can even say amidst our tears, "Well done of God, to halve the lot and give (them) all the sweetness!"

But when the finger of joy touches us, then we long—oh, how passionately!—to share the thrill with those to whom it would be all, or more than all, it is to us.

We are told that there is no such thing in Nature as unrelieved shadow; and certainly in the moral world there is no such thing as unshadowed light.

Not gone away, but gone up to God. A man's strength stands out at the first blow, but the second often lays him low. If we lose heart, we lose all.

Death and sorrow—those stern and silent, yet not untender ministers of God to us.

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