

THE JUBILEE YEAR*

The jubilee year! The jubilee year!
The bondman rejoices to hail thee near.
Sevenfold sabbath, and year of grace,
The burdened, the weary, the poor to bless!

'Tis the day of atonement! The utmost
bound

Of Israel's land hears the joyful sound
Of the silver trumpet, so loud and clear,
Proclaiming the gladsome Jubilee Year.

Fifty years' burdens of sorrow and wrong
Fall from their shoulders and homeward
they throng

To their fathers' possessions, their child-
hood's home;

Like doves to their windows, they come,
they come!

The fraud and the folly, the struggle and
strife

Of half a century's human life,
The usurer's riches, the poor man's cares,
Are all dissolved by this year of years!

The atonement is made, and the trumpet's
voice

Bids every sinner "Rejoice, rejoice!"
The Gospel proclaims an eternal release
And bids the debtor go home in peace.

O God, for grace not to set our love
On the earthly things, but the things
above!

For while the jubilee year draws nigh,
They lessen in value, they fade and die.

In a little while shall the firmament ring
With the triumphant that heralds earth's
patient King,

Who has sat so long by His Father's side
That the world may know how He loved
and died.

R. C. M.

THE LORD'S VOICE.

"The Lord's voice crieth unto the city,
and the man of wisdom shall see thy name:
hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it"
(Micah 6:9).

That God has been speaking in strange
and startling ways to many, in fact to all
of us, in both the fact and the long continu-
ance of this terrible world war, is beyond
all question. But now how much nearer
and louder it is sounding in our ears in this
terrible disaster at Halifax, which so sud-
denly destroyed the lives and homes of
well-nigh two thousand souls! What is
God speaking to us all about? We may
not be able in few words to present all
that we might be able to as to this matter,
but we would fain present a few matters
of prime importance that God not only de-
sires our hearing of, but He will press upon
our attention until He is both heard and
heeded by us.

First, He is speaking to all men, as sin-
ners, of the great questions of life and
death, of time and eternity. He asks us,
first of all, "What is your life? It is even
a vapour that endureth for a little and then
vanisheth away" (James 5). Then He is
reminding us of His "appointment to all
men once to die" (Heb. 9:27); and will it
be to us, "paying the debt of nature," or
dying as sinners in our sins, or being "ab-
sent from the body, present with the Lord,"
and "with Christ, far better"?

Then He is reminding us of "the judg-
ment." Will it be to us "the judgment to
come?" or have we the assurance of the
Judge Himself, that "we shall not come
into judgment, but are passed from death
unto life"? (John 5:24).

But God is also speaking to those who
are His "Children by faith in Christ
Jesus," and His word to them is this: Are
they living for Him Who died for them,
seeking first the Kingdom of God and His
righteousness, or are they turned aside
unto folly?

Then, God is also speaking to the nations
of men at large, first to remind them that
"all souls are His," and next, that He
"hath made of one blood all nations of men
that dwell upon the face of the earth," and
that no matter what the nation may be,
that no patriotism for it, however com-
mendable, weighs the weight of a feather
as to the salvation of their souls. Further,
He has "determined the times before ap-

pointed and the bounds of their habitation." He will judge all who break their treaties with their fellows, and who forget that national boundaries are set by God, and He will have nations own this fact, or suffer for their disregard of it.

Whatever blame there may be at one door or another in this terrible war or its counterpart in the Halifax munition disaster, God's voice is crying to the city, and His special message is:

"Hear ye the **ROD**, and **WHO** hath appointed it."

God grant that we may do so.

B. C. G.

SOME MEMORIALS OF SCRIPTURE*

In Israel's economy, as well as elsewhere, there were many such, and their record in Scripture is "for our learning." Their meaning may not, at first, be very plain to us, but as we read, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter but the honor of Kings to search it out," this should encourage us to not only read about them, but in our pursuit of heavenly wisdom "to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures." The promise of good success is sure: "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:4, 5).

Each Book of the Law (the five Books of Moses), have their distinct set of these, each perfect in itself, and yet linking on with or leading up to the others. In Numbers we have the subject matter of the Book in the opening words:

1. The Lord spake unto Moses,
2. In the wilderness,
3. After they were come out of Egypt (v. 1).

God's teaching for the pilgrim journey after redemption.

The first lesson is that we should each know our place in His great military camp and they are given thus:

- (1) Heads of thousands (4-16).
- (2) Warriors (1:17-46; 2:1-34).
"Able to go forth to war."
- (3) Levites (1:47-54; 3:5; 4:4; 17:49).
- (4) Priests (3:1-4; 10; 4:5-16).

Thus clearly and beautifully are presented four elements of Christian character—example, warfare, service and wor-

ship—for now all Christians are called of God to fulfill all these functions, as in contrast to their being distinct and apart in Judaism.

Next we find "the order of the camp," as to,

- (1) Lepers, those with issues, or defiled by the dead (5:1-4).
- (2) Trespassers against the Lord (5:5-10).
- (3) A suspected wife (5:11-31).

In connection with the latter, we find the first-named memorial of this book, of which we find five in all.

- (1) The jealousy-offering (5:15-26).
- (2) The silver trumpets (10:1-10).
- (3) The riband of blue (15:37-41).
- (4) The plates of the altar (16:36-40).
- (5) The rod that budded (17:10; 18-5).

(1) The jealousy offering.

This being found, just as the Lord's host were starting on their march through the desert, and not given in the book of the Offerings, Leviticus, strikes a keynote of great importance. It asks, are we true to Him whose name we bear? The subject is a sad one, a woman is under suspicion of unfaithfulness to her husband, and the "God of all grace" would not leave her so. He provides a remedy. Her husband must offer "the jealousy offering," and she must drink "the bitter water that causeth the curse." If innocent, no evil comes of it, but if guilty, terrible are the results. Thus God would in our memorial of the cross of His dear Son, "bring iniquity to remembrance," and exercise our souls as to our fidelity of heart to Him.

II. The Silver Trumpets.

This law following immediately upon "the cloud of the Lord," thus witnesses to that which the Holy Spirit ever witnesses to and also by means of God's Holy Word. The fact of two trumpets beside giving the thought of a true witness, gives that of a completed revelation. The old and new Testaments. The Old Testament being so largely the history of man's trial necessitated a new one, or God's remedy for man's ruin. Thus the trumpets are both of "a whole piece" and to be used for assemblies, for the march, for war, feast and fast days, and over their sacrifices, for "a memorial before their God" (Num. 10:10).

III. The Riband of Blue.

This peculiar ordinance as to Israel's garments, coming in between the stoning of the Sabbath-breaker and the consuming of Korah and his company, is strikingly in contrast to both. Clothing being for everyday use, to have on its borders a memorial fringe was plainly for a constant reminder. Its purpose is plainly given: "That ye may look on it and remember; do My commandments and be Holy unto your God." The sole basis of this privilege and responsibility is also as plainly given: "I brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God." They were redeemed by His own right hand, and were "in covenant with Him by sacrifice." Their riband of blue was to be their daily talisman—a memorial of Jehovah's grace and of their honored place before Him.

IV. The covering of the Altar.

Following both the earthquake and the fire that devoured Korah and his company, was the Lord's command for Eleazar, the priest, to make of their "censers, broad plates for a covering of the altar." This was to memorialize the fact of their judgment by God, that others might not trespass upon His rights, as these had done. These beaten brazen plates proclaimed loudly that sin must have its judgment, and that God and His sovereign rights could not be violated by His rebellious creature, man, and yet go unpunished by Him.

V. Aaron's rod that budded.

After the earthquake, fire and plague had made a public example of thousands and by the atonement made by Moses, the plague was stayed. Then came the great question of how God could go on with such a guilty people, and not "consume them as in a moment," as He had already threatened to do. The answer involved a new revelation from the Lord, which was of "the riches of His grace." Each head of the tribes of Israel was to be represented by a rod with his name inscribed upon it, and these to be laid up before the Lord. The Lord's decision was to be reached by the fact that the man's rod whom He chose would blossom, and thus God would make their murmurings cease. In the morning, Aaron's rod had "yielded almonds," and thus it was written large that "priestly

grace" was the Divinely appointed remedy. But at this very time, when the rod was again laid up as "a token against the rebels," the people burst out, saying: "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish." The Lord's answer is a further revelation to Aaron: "Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar, that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel" (Num. 18:5).

Thus the God who "bore them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself," showed Himself superior in His grace to all their failure and folly, and by means of them made known what is in His heart toward us, His people, in this later day, of His purposes of grace. B. C. G.

A STRANGE WISH*

"I wish it were me." These are the exact words of a dear woman, the mother of four children (all small), who was wasting away with that dread disease, consumption.

We had just been at a funeral service across the road from where she lived, where we tried to show the living that, apart from the Lord's coming, we must all die. We read the 5th chapter of Genesis, where we have a list of names, most of whom had lived hundreds of years, but with one exception all had this appendix to their names: "And he died."

"AND HE DIED." Only three short words, and some day, if the Lord tarries, they will be added to your name and mine: "And he died." But there are different ways of dying. We find in the Word of God, "Some die without mercy." (Heb. 10:28). "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy," and the Apostle adds, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done despite unto (insulted) the Spirit of grace?" "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Dear reader, do you despise the blood of God's dear Son, the only thing that can atone for your soul? Are you putting Him under your feet? You are, if trusting anything or anyone else than Christ and His

Blood, and if you go on as you are, some day you will "die without mercy."

Others die "in their sins." (John 8:24). "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." What an awful way to die! In your sins! and all you have to do to die that way is to "believe not," and where He is, you cannot come.

Believe, then, this very hour; don't let one thing hinder you from putting your whole trust in the Man of Calvary. If you do, His solemn indictment is, "Ye shall die in your sins," and if you die thus, you will be raised "in your sins," stand before God "in your sins," and go to the Lake of Fire, where there is "no rest day or night for ever and ever."

Others "died in faith." Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah; these Old Testament worthies all "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them" (and proved it in their lives down here) "desiring a heavenly country, and God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

Beautiful City of Light! Will you be there. You will, if you "die in faith," but on no other grounds.

Then like the sick woman we visited, you will be able to say, as God's City grows bright before your vision, looking at the coffin and the mourners following in the train, "I wish it were me to-day."

Bold infidelity, can you say that from your heart? Stand back, open your ears to the truth of the Gospel of Glory—"Death has lost its sting." For whom? Those whose sins are put away by the precious, precious blood of Calvary's Victim. "The sting of death is sin," and "Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

Blessed Saviour, it is enough! "Absent from the body" is present with Thyself, which is "far better." "To die is gain" for those who "die in faith." How will YOU die? "Without mercy," "in your sins," or "in faith?" "AND HE DIED."

—A. H. Stewart.

CHRIST'S DEATH FOR US

"The atoning, propitiatory, vicarious character of Christ's work, in the presence of God's judgment of and against sin, His righteous judgment, Christ's bearing my sins there, and consequently suffering, drinking the cup, cannot be too firmly held. All the finespun theories are only setting aside the truth. If Christ was doing atoning work for my sins, bearing them under the present judicial action of God's righteousness, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani" are the most precious words ever uttered. But if it was "personal state and pattern of devotedness" merely, or the like, then they are saying that the one Just Man was forsaken of God at the end, and His faith failed when fully tried (a mere blasphemy), and Stephen's death and many a poor saint's is much more perfect and beautiful. But faith knows that they were, in joy, because Christ could only utter them as bearing their sins. Then all is in its place—the just for the unjust, and they brought to God."

No truth is more plainly taught in the Word of God than this precious subject and the very heart of the Gospel "Christ died for our sins," the apostle boldly states as the Gospel which he declared, and which saved souls (1 Cor. 15). "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree" and "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," "Christ has suffered for us in the flesh," are the Apostle Peter's clear utterances, as one chosen of God to be a "witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 4:1; 5:1).

Our Lord's memorial feast of the fact that He had "come to minister and to give His life a ransom for many," also bears eloquent witness of having these things ever in mind, engraved on the tablets of our hearts, and stamped upon the actions of our lives. May we give it ever and more and more the first place in our testimony, for if not, it will soon become an untrue one.

B. C. G.

Home Friend, any address, 75c. year, containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 20c. year. Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada.

BROKEN THINGS*

But broken pitchers bearing light,
Yet Gideon's band triumphant sang,
And through the stillness of the camp
Their shouts of victory rang.

A shipwreck, and but broken spars,
All tossed upon an angry main;
Yet one of them enabled Paul
Melita's coast to gain.

A broken body on the Cross,
A wound whence blood and water flow,
That every fettered child of sin
Might full deliverance know.

How dear to God are broken things,
What power in His hand they gain;
Then trust Him with your shattered hopes,
And bodies racked with pain.

"ONE"—"ONCE"*

A poor woman lay tossing restlessly in her bed in one of the wards of a large London hospital. Suddenly she exclaimed, "There was never such affliction as mine. I am sure there was never such a racking pain before."

"Once," was uttered by a faint voice from the next bed.

There was silence for a moment, then in a still more impatient tone, the first speaker said,

"Nobody knows what I pass through; nobody ever suffered more pain!"

"One!" was whispered faintly from the next bed.

"I take it you mean yourself, poor soul, but——"

"Oh no, not myself; not me!" exclaimed the other, and her pale face flushed as if some wrong had been offered to One she loved.

Her restless companion gazed at her in surprise, and examined her face more closely. The cheeks were hollow and the lips parched, yet there was a rest and peace in the eyes, and the whole expression told of heavenly trust and calm.

"Oh, not myself; not me!" she again repeated.

"They cried, saying, 'Crucify Him,

Crucify Him" . . . and when they had come to a place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left . . . and the people stood beholding; and the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, "He saved others, let Him save Himself" . . . and the soldiers also mocked Him."

The voice ceased, and for several minutes not a word was spoken. Then the night-nurse brought some cool lemon drink to both sufferers.

"Thank you, nurse," said the last speaker. "In His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink."

"I see now, she is talking about Jesus Christ," said the other woman, again tossing about restlessly; "but," she added, impatiently. "talking about His sufferings cannot mend ours—at least, not mine."

"But I'm sure it lightens her's," said the nurse.

"I wonder how?" said the impatient woman.

"Hush!" and again the gentle voice took up the words—"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

A few days passed away, when, as the sun rose on a bright Sunday morning, the nurse noticed the lips of the patient moving, and, leaning over her, she caught the words, "Going home, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.'"

Her eyes closed; a moment more, and the ransomed soul was with its Saviour; the suffering saint was with her Lord, who had redeemed her with His own blood.

THE BROKEN CURRENT — A WORD
FOR GOD'S PEOPLE*

Going to a meeting in the West, the cars suddenly stopped, the lights as quickly went out, and we were all in darkness. A few lessons came before me as to the state, often, of the Lord's people. Why were we

in such a state? The current of electricity was broken, and so all power and lights were gone—no light, no power, no progress—all at a standstill!

How sad this is as applied to the Lord's people. In our case the power was there just the same, but could not be used because of the broken current; a power above and beneath, yet no connection, and hence no power. How often so with us! Why are the chariot wheels of our personal lives and of our assemblies not moving? Is it because there is no power? Surely not. Yet with us is it not often lacking? (See Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:17-23).

In the person of our risen, ascended, and glorified Head in heaven, set above all principality and power, is the whole power of an omnipotent God, and there for us. From that throne above He views His Church with what patience and tenderness, and each one of us also. He sees the declension, and none feels as Himself the lack of progress and of power, and why we have not given a clear, distinct light during the dark night of His absence; and has He not pointed it all out? (Rev. 2, 3, etc.) Yet all His warnings and admonitions seem to have little weight upon us.

Again, have we not the power here below? Yes, surely; for it was given His Church before she took one step in her journey (Luke 24:49; Eph. 3:14-21; 2 Pet. 1:3). His Holy Spirit is the power for devotedness, for service; yet with such a power on the throne, and here also, do we not often lack it? and why? Is it not because the current of communion between our souls and Him is lacking often? Little foxes destroy the tender vines, and the freshness, brightness, spiritual energy, and love of Christian life have given place to the energy of the flesh, so detrimental to spiritual growth, or else a sluggish, sleepy indifference. In either case, as to the honor of our Lord, the cars are stopped and the lights gone out—no progress such as Paul desired in Timothy (I. Tim. 4:15), R. V.).

Note the contrast between a child of God when out of communion (2 Cor. 12:20), and the apostle's desire for them (13:14). O beloved, God's remedy surely is found, as ever, in a return to Gilgal—the place of self-judgment—owning our grievous

sins in departing from Him, the lack of heart for His beloved Son and His claims upon us, lack of power, of progress in the ways of God.

The cry as ever from a soul at Gilgal is, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139: 23-24). Then with purpose of heart it turns afresh to Him. Here communion is restored, the current connected, things which distress and disturb, and do not glorify our Lord, shunned, coldness and formality judged in His presence. Now the soul fills his right place, the car again moves, power is manifest, progress is seen, the light shines, God is honored, His Son exalted, His Holy Spirit ungrieved, our joy full, and the soul cries out to others as of old, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Psa. 66:12-17).—A. E. B.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

- 1.—The Fact of the Cross (John 19:17-31).
- 2.—The Effect of the Cross (I. Cor. 1:17).
- 3.—The Preaching of the Cross (I. Cor. 1:18).
- 4.—The Offence of the Cross (Gal. 5:11).
- 5.—Persecution for the Cross (Gal. 6:12).
- 6.—Glorying in the Cross (Gal. 6:14).
- 7.—Reconciliation by the Cross (Eph. 2:16).
- 8.—The Death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8).
- 9.—Enemies of the Cross (Phil. 3:18).
- 10.—The Blood of the Cross (Col. 1:20).
- 11.—Nailed to His Cross (Coy. 2:14).
- 12.—The Shame of the Cross (Heb. 12:2).

The fact of the Cross of Christ has, at least, four distinct relations, as shown in the first Scripture given.

1. It was "HIS" Cross. Our Lord chose to take it. There He chose to lay down His life. "His decease He accomplished at Jerusalem," and of His life, He said, "No man taketh from Me, I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18).

2. GOD put Christ on the Cross. He delivered Him up for us all; He gave Him the commandment to lay down His life. Hence it was that Pilate, as the Roman Governor, "the minister of God," wrote His title, 'Jesus of Nazareth'—His personal Name—'the King of the Jews'—His offi-

cial Name. Our Lord Jesus suffered governmentally under the curse of the law, and sacrificially as the Lamb of God, the Holy Sin-Bearer, at the hands of God.

3. MEN put Christ on the Cross. "They crucified the Lord of Glory" and "killed the Prince of Life." Thus the whole world was involved in the foul deed—Jew and Gentile, Herod and Pontius Pilate stained their hands with His innocent Blood, and were accountable for His death. So Jesus died as a martyr at the hands of men.

4. The Cross of Jesus is the Christian Cross. By it we are saved from sin and Satan, and are separated to God. By it we conquer Satan, and by it will enter Heaven. It was our first confession that there Jesus died for us; it will be our last one, for by it we shall go up, saying, "Other refuge have we none."

We have a fine example of its power and attraction in the fact that "there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, and John, "His beloved disciple"—beautiful miniature of a Christian assembly, saved and separated ones, with the Lord Himself—but also as the Rejected One—as their centre of gathering, their bond of union.

"Oh, Cross of Christ! O glorious tree!
What place can be compared with thee,
Where God's own Son was crucified,
And for our sins a ransom died."

The other varied expressions all used by the one Apostle, Paul, should impress our hearts with the importance of all that relates to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, as to both our faith and doctrine.

2. The effect of the Cross. Unto us, says the Apostle, it is the power of God to save. Marvellous fact, the weakness of a dying man upon a Cross of shame, God's plan to save a world of sinners! This, verily, is "the weakness of God," which is stronger than men, and "the foolishness of God," wiser than men. But mark that this first mention of it is a warning note, "lest the Cross be made of none effect. What, then, does he call our attention to? He says:

"Christ sent him NOT to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," showing that Baptism is no part of the Gospel, while it is

the initiatory ordinance of Christianity, "NOT with wisdom of words." Human reasonings, plans of salvation, and ways to get to Heaven are all ruled out, for "the Cross of Christ," as God's plan, shuts out all others, and can brook no rival.

3. "The preaching of the Cross" is certainly the initial preaching, at least, for every true servant of Christ. But what does it mean? The Cross is the ultimatum of man's guilt, as Stephen charges the self-righteous Jews, saying: "Your fathers slew those that shewed before the coming of the Just One, of Whom ye have been the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). Yes, "the Cross" means the crucifixion of the Son of God at the hands of this world, of which all sinners form a part. Further, the Cross of Christ is the fullest expression of the love of God, as we read: "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). Finally, the Cross of Christ was the perfection of His obedience to God, and of His love to us (Phil. 2:8). Then let us preach the Cross. Why this, specially, do any ask? Because the Cross of Jesus not only means His love to sinners and His example to saints, but Jesus in the sinner's place—our Substitute.

4. "The offence of the Cross." To put God's even holy law, the rite of circumcision or baptism, good works, or aught else before souls as the ground of their salvation is to nullify the Cross, to make it of no effect, for either He died there to save us, or He did not. If He did, then let none dare to add to it. If He did not, then must we set out to save ourselves; but in that case, Saviour is not His name.

5. Persecution for the Cross." If it be, as the Apostle says, "to them that perish, foolishness," then it is plain that what the true believer knows as the power of God to his salvation, the world will persecute him for, and nothing awakens this more than an open, above-board confession of our simple faith in the Cross of Christ as the means of our salvation and the ground of our separation.

4. "Glorying in the Cross," our holy privilege and responsibility, as "standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" to unfurl the banner of the Cross, the emblem of that great Ransom,

which Jesus paid for our Redemption, and the great line of separation which He drew between us and the world.

7. "Reconciliation by the Cross." There our Lord both reconciled guilty sinners to an offended God, and Jews to Gentiles, "in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby." How plain, then, is the fact that Reconciliation is no fine-spun theory needing a philosopher to understand it, but a simple and blessed result of the Cross. This has been the display of God's love to the universe, the declaration of man's deepest guilt, the vindication of the throne of God, and the reconciliation of enemies to God and to each other. Blessed and wondrous results.

8. "The death of the Cross." Tracing the wondrous path of our holy Lord down from Heaven's high throne to the lowest spot man can be in, death under the holy judgment of God, the Apostle notes the limit of Christ's obedience—"unto death, even the death of the Cross," obedience to the extent of dying, and that in the lowest place of shame.

9. "Enemies of the Cross." Such the Apostle warned us of, and wept over, "those minding earthly things, enemies of the Cross of Christ." Peter, in rebuking our Lord for stating the necessity of His Cross, put himself in that place, and many more do likewise, to merit the same rebuke as he received.

10. "The Blood of the Cross." This witnesses that it was neither our Lord's life and ministry here, nor even His sufferings and actual death, but the nature of that death, as a sacrifice for sin, a substitute for sinners. From His pierced side flowed out blood and water—blood that expiated for sin to God, water that cleansed us from sin's defilement, representing to us "the water of the Word of God."

11. "Nailed it to His Cross." Yielding

Himself up to the death of the Cross, suffering on it as the Substitute for sinners, and enduring its shame, yet in view of its glorious results, He did another thing. Note it well—He took out of the way all that stood against us by Divine appointment of sin and death, of curse and judgment—"nailing" it to His Cross." See it there, and then rejoice in this Divine clearance!

12. "The Shame of the Cross." Yes, as the Prince of Martyrs, the Princely Leader of the Heroes of faith and its victory, our Lord Jesus endured the Cross and despised its shame. He knew all it meant, He felt it truly and deeply, as the iron entered into His holy soul, but turn back He did not, for "He gave his back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting." No, He "set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem," to accomplish His decess there, to glorify God, and to be glorified in death there. How well He did it, and how great has been His reward—"Set down at the right hand of the throne of God." All hail, then, to Him there—earth-rejected and Heaven-accepted—man-dishonored and God-exalted—Jesus, our Lord. Well may we sing, then:—

"The Cross! the Cross! oh, that's our gain,
Because on that the Lamb was slain;
'Twas there the Lord was crucified,
'Twas there for us the Saviour died.

B. C. G.

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WHY DO WE WORRY?

Why do we worry about the nest?

We only stay for a day,
Or a month, or a year, at the Lord's behest,
In this habitat of clay.

Why do we worry about the road,
With its hill or deep ravine?
In a dismal path or a heavy load,
We are helped by hands unseen.

Why do we worry about the years
That our feet have not yet trod?
Who labors with courage and trust, nor
fears,
Has fellowship with God.

The best will come in the great "to be,"
It is ours to serve and wait;
And the wonderful future we soon shall
see,
For death is but the gate.
—Selected.

A MODERN MIRACLE*

In May, 1917, a doctor in Hampshire lent a lady patient C. H. Macintosh's Notes on Exodus. A friend of hers—a clergyman—home from the Front on leave, called and found her reading the book. They read it together, and he became convinced that he did not really know God at all. Seeing his great interest in it, the lady let him take the book away with him, and he read it all the way in the train when he left her.

Later, he wrote to his friend from hospital, saying he had just been told that he had only a few days to live, and hoped that she would be able to read what he was writing at intervals, and with great difficulty. He thanked God for leading him to call on her that afternoon. He had, through the book, been brought to the true knowledge of God, and of the Gospel, and he had been able to tell many of his men of the Saviour he had found.

While acting as a stretcher-bearer, his fellow bearer was shot, and he succeeded in dragging his patient, a lad of nineteen, to a secluded spot, where he lay beside him, flat on his face on the ground.

Presently the boy, who was mortally wounded, said: "Oh, sir, I am going. Give

me a kiss." Raising his head, the clergyman bent over him, and while the boy put his arms round his neck, he whispered words of comfort into his ear. The boy said: "God bless you—tell mother I'm safe in the arms of Jesus."

At that moment, owing to his slightly raised position, a sniper saw and shot the clergyman in the back. Many hours afterwards he was found with the dead lad's arms locked so tightly round his neck that it took a long time to separate them. He asked that after his death the book might be sent to his mother.

The clergyman's only brother—a Colonel, who had been dismissed from the Life Guards through drink—wished to see the book that had made his brother so happy. To him also God used it for blessing, and he was definitely converted. His fiancée—a titled lady—says she could not have believed such a change in a person to be possible—it is "a modern miracle."

She was with him when he was wounded in the train that was bombed in Liverpool Street Station some weeks ago. He has since died. (Contributed.)

PAUL'S NINE PRAYERS IN ACTS*

I.—Conviction. "Who art Thou, Lord?"

Answer—"I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest, etc." (Acts 9:5, 22:8, 26:15).

II.—Conversion. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Answer—"Arise, and go into the city, etc." (Acts 9:6, 22:10).

III.—Consecration. "Behold, he prayeth."

Answer—"He hath seen a man named Ananias coming in. Ananias said: Brother Saul, receive thy sight" (Acts 9:11-18, 22:12-16).

IV.—Commission. "At Jerusalem, while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance."

Answer—"And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, get thee out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony," etc. "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

V.—Guidance. "As we went to prayer" (Acts 16:16).

Answer—"A certain damsel, demon-possessed, followed Paul and us many days. Paul and Silas stripped, beaten, imprisoned, and in the stocks."

VI.—Testimony. "Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God."

Answer—"The prisoners heard them. The keeper of the prison was awakened, converted, humanized, baptized with his household, rejoicing, believing, unselfish (Acts 16:25-34).

VII.—Commendation." He kneeled down and prayed with them all" (elders of Ephesus) (Acts 20:36).

Answer—The Epistle of the Ephesians.

VIII.—Resource." We kneeled down on the shore and prayed" (at Tyre), as to Paul's going to Jerusalem.

Answer—"We took ship and they returned home again" (Acts 21:5).

IX.—Recompense. "The father of Publius lay sick, to whom Paul entered in and prayed and laid his hands on him."

Answer—"And healed him. So when this was done, others also which had diseases in the island came and were healed, who also honored us with many honors, and when we departed they laded us with such things as were necessary" (Acts 28:8-10).

While these cannot, strictly speaking, be all called Paul's prayers, as four of them, at least, are recorded of him when he was yet named Saul, and the first two when he was a sinner in his sins, when prayer could not be characteristic of him, yet they are, each and all of them alike, related to the same remarkable person. His own testimony as to himself, moreover, was: "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:16). The true meaning is not expressed in this translation, for it should read: "Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on Him to life eternal."

Starting, then, with this thought, that in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, as the chief of sinners, we have a Divine outline of all other believers since, let us note the stages of it as connected with these nine prayers in Acts.

The first case is as distinct a case of the sovereignty of God's grace as that of his father Abraham, as witnessed by Stephen (Acts 7:2). "The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham, etc." In Paul's case he was both unhorsed and blinded by a light which was above the brightness of the sun at noonday, so that he was "three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9).

I.—Paul's conviction.

The sudden burst of glory from the face of Christ in Heaven was to halt His avowed enemy upon earth, and this was, as the Apostle explains, because he "did it igno-

rantly, in unbelief." The result was immediate, but permanent. Saul's startled cry was: "Who art Thou, Lord?" Ignorant he owned himself to be, and therefore his anguished enquiry, but unbelieving he was no longer. This we may rightly term the Prayer of Conviction, and pass hence to

II.—Paul's Conversion.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do." Saul's surrender is prompt and unqualified. He had, but a moment before, been awakened to the solemn fact that the Person Whose name and people he was pitted against on earth was alive and in the glory of God. That this One Who had thrown down so startlingly the challenge as to his attitude toward Him was no impostor, but while yet "despised and rejected of men," was now exalted by the right hand of God. In the first case, Saul did not know Who was speaking to Him from Heaven, with a human voice, nor what could be its meaning for Him. In the second one, bowing to the appalling fact that the speaker was the One Whom he had sworn enmity against, he threw up his hands and enquired the conditions of surrender. And how soon did he learn the fact that "Jesus Christ displayed the whole long-suffering toward him," and that "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant." He with Whom he was treating took no occasion from His superior position, nor from Saul's humbled one, to impose hard terms, but simply bade him "Arise and go into the city," where further orders would come to him. Promptly and unquestioningly he did so, being led by the hand, he, the great "leader of the Opposition." There in darkness, mentally, morally and physically, he awaits for three days the promised orders. All he yet knows is that Jesus, Whom he had persecuted, had met him, laid him low, and had promised to treat with him further. He had, as yet, heard no silver notes of the Gospel of peace; he could not know that by his confession of Jesus as Lord he was saved, and yet he later proves this fact, both as to himself and us (Romans 10). But was there no light, no break in the clouds, nothing for faith to cling to in this awful hour of darkness, when God was showing him what sin was in the light of Calvary's cross? There was, thank God,

and it lay in this brief but double statement: "**I am Jesus . . . it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**" The one statement might well arouse his fears as to the worst, for if his Challenger was also his foe, and was Jesus in glory, beyond His cross of shame, then woe betide him and all other rebels! But the later statement was as balm for his wounded soul: "It is hard for thee, etc." This Jesus Who had spoken to him, and of Whose existence he was fully assured, now let him know His character. "He had gone about doing good." He was as able and as willing still to do the same. He had compassion, and let him know that, rebel though he had been, He pitied him, and had met him to change his sad condition. This may be counted simply inference, but our Lord's words of compassion, we know, must have had an object, and we believe they did not fail of it.

III.—Paul's Consecration.

"Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). There in the midnight gloom of his soul we know of no other thing that Saul did or could do. Jesus, Who had been his Challenger, and from what we have seen, in some measure his Comforter, yet kept in hiding until Saul had "the sentence of death in himself" by those three days sightless and fasting. Now was "the joy that cometh in the morning." He had seen a man in a vision coming in to restore his sight, but still he was without it. He sat in darkness and had no light, when lo, the sound of a footfall, and next of a human voice, and the first word that greets his ear is "**Brother.**" This would assure him, at least, of the friendly nature of his caller.

IV.—Paul's Commission.

This, as he himself states it in his address on the stairs at Jerusalem (Acts 21), was as distinct as that of his conversion. "The Lord said to him: **Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles.**" Ananias had already intimated to him that his sphere of service would be a wider one than that of his own nation, saying: "Thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." But not until Paul himself narrates it could we know the exact sphere of it. Yet we have his separation with Barnabas to work among

the Gentiles (Acts 13:21). Also its result that God "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). Also that they declared its result, "the conversion of the Gentiles" (15:3). Further still, that at the council at Jerusalem they "declared what **miracles and wonders** God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (15:12), and finally Paul narrates that James, Cephas and John gave him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that they should go to the heathen, etc. (Gal. 2:9). This puts beyond all question that Paul's parish was not Jerusalem, but "regions beyond."

V.—Paul's Guidance.

At the first definite launching forth into spheres beyond those already entered in Judea and Samaria, Paul's being led in it is no mere ethereal matter, and he expresses himself far more humbly than many who have it, we fear, far less. First, their way was blocked in one direction, for we read: "They were **forbidden** of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia." Next, as "they essayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit **suffered them not.**" But **where** and **when** no light is given. As to "awaiting orders" at Troas, Paul has a vision, and sees a man of Macedonia pleading for help. They set out at once for Philippi, a chief city and colony, but only after "many days" of much prayer did they find "the man of Macedonia." They abode certain days, went out of the city to a prayer resort, had one, a woman, convert, and then seemingly a second, when Paul discovers the hand of the enemy, and casts out the demon that advertised them upon the streets, with the result that he and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, and then at last they get near the man of Macedonia.

VI.—Paul's Testimony.

Unable to witness against Satan as they had done, or give forth the Gospel as they later did, the Apostles "prayed and sang praises to God." They could not act as preachers, but they did as **priests**, and not only God gave audience, but "the **prisoners** heard them." The keeper of the prison, to whom they had a special message from God, however, was still fast asleep. God interposes and awakes him by an earthquake. At the same event the prison was shaken, the doors opened, and the prisoners

liberated. The jailer, in his terror about to kill himself, hears first: "Do thyself no harm," and next, when he anxiously asks, "What must I do to be saved?" hears further: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The man of Macedonia, at last, is found, for he was both convicted and converted; he was humanized and baptized with his household; he was made hospitable and considerate; he was, in fact, "filled with joy and peace in believing." Paul's Gospel is still the Gospel of our day—let us see that we fully preach it.

VII.—Paul's Commendation.

The Apostle's sun was almost setting, and his "journeys off" almost ended. He was hasting to reach Jerusalem for a final visit at Pentecost. He reaches Miletus, the port of Ephesus, and sends for their elders to meet him there. He goes over the past with them, he forecasts the future, he puts them in charge in the present. Then he kneeled down and prayed with them all. It may seem but a trifle to note in the midst of great and important events, but both here and on the seashore the Holy Spirit notes that he and the brethren at Tyre kneeled down to pray. Then the elders wept sore at their great loss. What did Paul leave them? Not his staff or cloak, or his son Timothy, but "God and the word of His grace," able to build them up and sanctify them; yes, fill all the gap until the Lord should come.

VIII.—Paul and his company's Resource.

Taking passage in one ship, they reach Patara, thence they go by another to Phenicia, landing at Tyre. Here they found disciples, which implies they looked for them, tarried seven days, or over a Lord's Day. These plain folk "said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." But neither here by this plain word from the disciples, nor by

Agabus' word of prophecy at Caesarea could Paul be dissuaded from his purpose. His intense love for his brethren overbore all else, and in result took him to Rome in chains. But how tender is the word narrated. "They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed." This was their final resource, their best court of appeal. Would God yet hinder Paul from his purpose?

IX.—Paul's Recompense.

A prisoner in chains, an old man with oft infirmities, one of a shipwrecked company in the rain and cold, he did what he could, and kept up the fire; in result, first to be considered a murderer and then a God. Publius, the governor, entertained them courteously three days, in all 276 souls. He deserved credit for it. Whether Caesar knighted or rewarded him we know not, but we know what Paul did. Hearing that Publius' father lay sick, he entered in and prayed, and healed him. He carried about with him the power of Jesus' Name; he used it; it bore present fruit in healing for the sick man, and necessary things for the distressed company. Heaven may reveal yet more. Meanwhile, may we remember, "Paul prayed."

B. C. G.



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"WORSHIP" IN THE SCRIPTURES*

The first mention of worship in Scripture is sufficient to establish the fact that God made man not only, according to his original charter, to

- (1) Be fruitful and multiply,
 - (2) Replenish the earth and subdue it,
 - (3) Have dominion over earth and air and sea,
- but to worship God.

The second view of man gives an added charter in relation to his home," as placed in the garden which God had made:

- (1) To dress it and to keep it (Gen. 2:15),
- (2) To eat freely of every tree of the garden (16 v.),
- (3) Not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (17 v.),
- (4) To name all the beasts and fowls of his kingdom (19 and 20 v.).

This fair scene being rudely broken in upon by Satan's wiles and man's sin, we learn a further fact, that man's first business was:—

- (1) To hear and heed God's voice (3:1, 3, 8, 10, 11).
- (2) To obey. God's commandments (3:11).

And when this had been turned away from, God's decree was for Eve (1) to bring forth children in sorrow; (2) to be in subjection to her husband; Adam (1) to battle with thorns and thistles; (2) eat the herb of the field; (3) to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow; (4) to return unto dust at death.

But just here, when man was fallen, guilty and lost, a side light is given us of a higher plane on which God had placed man than even that of

- (1) Sovereignty over all creation,
- (2) Happy employment in his Paradise in Eden,
- (3) The enjoyment of its great benefits,
- (4) Education in wisdom by God's teaching,

Even the highest bliss of any creature, however exalted, to

1. **WORSHIP GOD, HIS MAKER, a DIVINELY GIVEN INSTINCT.** That such was a very definite part of the Divine

programme is plain from the fact that Cain and not Abel was the first worshipper. That is, that worship was a divinely given instinct in the human soul which had survived the fall. True, its first exercise in Cain denotes that it was already perverted by the great adversary, not, first of all, openly from the true object of worship, the Creator-God, but from acceptable worship to Him, worship in the full recognition of His sovereign rights, and also of the moral relations of His creatures to Him. This, Cain failed to recognize, for while in bringing his offering he owned the rights of his Creator, yet in bringing the offering which he did he thoroughly disowned, on his own side, the breach which sin had made, and on God's side, that as man was guilty and fallen, the moral necessity of His nature made Him man's **Judge**. Cain's best act, as it would seem, to worship his Creator, thus became only a further act of rebellion, even to defy the curse which God had pronounced on creation, to set aside His revelation, to ignore his need as a sinner, and to set up his own will as supreme, instead of that of God, his Maker. Solemn enough this was to turn the highest act which a creature can engage in into the very lowest, as expressing his high treason against Heaven's rule, and his contempt of God's cant, as, later on, his refusal of God's "ministry of reconciliation," and of his brother's example and testimony, until finally his very worship culminated in the murder of his innocent and righteous brother, and in the most impious defiance of God and His claims and of His gracious pleadings.

2. **Worship based upon acceptable SACRIFICE.** Worship, then, is first seen in the light of Abel's accepted sacrifice and acceptable worship to be based upon atonement, on the shedding of the blood of a spotless sacrifice. The Scripture record is majestic in its simplicity. It simply narrates: "Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof"—two things. The first he got by one, an offerer's act—he chose the firstling from his flock; the second he got by another, a priestly act—he killed his sacrifice, shed its blood,

flayed its carcase, and thus obtained "the fat thereof." The Divine comment upon this simple, yet double, act, given in the narrative of Moses, is that he "**did well**," and on this basis God instructs Cain as to how he might do the same, and by putting it on record, extends the instruction to us also. The New Testament comment, Heb. 11:4: "By faith, Abel offered unto God a **more excellent sacrifice than Cain**." By this (1) he obtained witness that he was righteous; (2) he being dead, yet **speaketh**. This **double** result of true and Scriptural worship places it on the highest possible plane, viz.: In it, God witnesses to us of His delight in His Son and in His people, and in it also we bear witness for Him, both in life and in death.

The next recorded act of worship is still more briefly given: "Then began man to call upon the Name of the Lord." What this involved we are not told, nor whether it was always, or even generally, associated with a sacrifice, but that it was often so is readily seen in Elijah's doing so in I. Kings 18:24, and David's word in Ps. 116:17 confirms this: "I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord." In other Scriptures it is connected with faith in Him, and paying vows to Him, but at least worship is distinctly one phase of it (Jonah 2:9, Rom. 10:14, etc.).

But in the next case, of Noah, there is very clear knowledge as to worship. His first recorded acts on leaving the ark for the new earth were that he

(1) Built an altar—a means of approach to God;

(2) Offered burnt-offerings—expressing worship to Him.

The Lord promptly answers Him with delight, as we read:

(1) "He smelled a sweet savour;

(2) Said in His heart, I will not again curse, etc.;

(3) He blessed Noah and his sons;

(4) He renewed to them His charge, "Be fruitful," etc.;

(5) He established His covenant of mercy;

(6) He gave them His token, "the bow in the cloud";

(7) He both cursed Canaan and blessed Shem on this basis.

While Noah's first human instinct of self-preservation would be to have conserved his "stock-in-trade" by offering to God but **one** beast or fowl out of it, his divinely-given faith did far more, for after building his altar, he "took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl." That is, his "liberal heart devised liberal things," and he actually exceeded all limits of the low later, by giving, not a tenth, but a **seventh**, of his property to the Lord, and this not only liberally, but intelligently, for his offerings were of clean beasts and fowls.

Noah, as a worshipper, then, added to that of Abel, in his offering of the first and best, even the firstlings of his flock, for it presents the Divine of faith. His offering shewed the prodigality of faith, as later, in Mary's case, "the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment" upon our Lord, that stirred selfish hearts to cry, "What waste!" But God, here as then, defends His servant by the record: "He smelled a sweet savour," and "I will no more smite," and "do set my bow in the cloud," which latter is jointly for our eyes, to assure our hearts, and for His to remember by worship according to Noah that reached a high water line.

3. Abraham's worship based on a REVELATION. We do not read of this at his call in Ur, nor in his stay at Haran, while his servant, we read, worshipped at the latter (23:52), but after his entrance into Canaan, on his reaching Sichem, the place of the shoulder, or the yoke, or of obedience, where we read of him—"There builded he an altar unto the Lord, Who appeared unto him" (12:7). This seems almost a needless comment, at the end of the verse, when the same statement was made at the beginning. But that cannot be, when "every word of God is pure," and "the Scripture cannot be broken," so we should learn its significance. Abram worships Him here, not simply as the God of sovereign grace, Who appeared unto him in Chaldea, as Stephen so strikingly affirms in Acts 7:1, nor yet as the God of restoring grace, Who "removed him" from Charran by death, as Stephen also states,

but he worships Him as the God of compensating grace. Who appears unto him at the first-named spot of his sojourn "in the land of promise." This, of course, does not hint that we may not worship at the moment of conversion, nor at any occasion of our restoration, but directly associates it with two things, God's fuller revelation based upon Abraham's obedience." This our Lord Jesus taught us long after, in John 15, where He links our keeping His words and commandments, and so abiding in His love, with our joy being full, and bearing much fruit. We surely all know well that we do not first serve Him in order to get Him to love us, but from the enjoyment of His love. Still, there is also the reflex action of the love of His approval, which sets its seal on our obedience to Him.

4. Worship connected with a MOUNTAIN.

"Abram removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the Name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:8).

This record suggests another feature to our subject, viz., that worship, while first of all individual, or between the soul and God, must not remain so, but have the wider relation, of the house of God, or fellowship with others in this holy and happy exercise. First, Abram removed from Sichem and Moreh, which is a plain between two mountains, and where the law was read to all Israel (Deut. 11:29-32, 27:4-13, Josh. 8:30-35). This was the place of covenant-relationship with Jehovah, or of personal privilege and responsibility, but important as this part of the chosen land of promise was, Abram removes from it to a mountain. This spot also, as the former plain, was between two others—Bethel and Hai—and these places, while not then existing, figured later largely in Israel's history, and further are intended to in our own. The one, Bethel, all agree means "the house of God," the sphere of His interests, the other means a "heap of ruins." Whatever its significance may be, we know it was the place of Israel's first defeat, in Canaan, and later, when Achan was put away, of their complete victory. Bethel, on the other hand,

was first where God appeared in grace to exiled Jacob, which by this fact he named "Bethel," and vowed he would return to serve God there. This stamps it, then, as a place of God's sovereign mercy, of His covenant of grace, and of worship, however feeble and imperfect. But why the naming prospectively of these spots Bethel and Ai, and what are their significance for us? Bethel, as God's house, shews our relation to God in a collective way, as many Scriptures later unfold, such as "Ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16, Eph. 2:21, Heb. 3:6, and 1 Pet. 2:5). How many, alas, who are truly His own seem to ignore this fact, by the unhappy associations in which they are found, with the world, and which, with zeal, they also defend. This turns us to the other name, "Ai," which, as meaning "a heap of ruins," suggests that one viewpoint of God's worshippers is the world, and the other is the house of God. If we turn from the world, as having, in Christ, a portion better than it, we, by that very fact, turn to the sphere of God's interests, the place where His honor dwelleth, His house. Thus Moses refused the court of Egypt, even when providently placed there, and chose to cast in his lot with the people of God.

When Abram, by his defection to Egypt, denied his link with Sarai, his wife, and thus fell from grace, he had to come back to this very spot, of his tent and altar, "between Bethel and Hai," where it is again noted he "called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 13:4).

5. Worship based upon VICTORY (Gen. 14:17-20). Abram was a conqueror, and with his feeble band of trained servants did more than five kings and their armies were able to do in overcoming the plundering hordes of four great powers. His war was of God, and his warring was in dependence upon Him, and it was true then, as now, that "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). But when victorious, he must learn how to maintain his victories, by true worship. As he returns, two kings of opposite characters meet him. The first-named is the king of Sodom, but he remains silent until Abram met the other,

the king of Salem, who ministers to him bread and wine and blessed him, and then we read: "Abram gave him tithes of all." Who taught Abram to accept this gracious service of this kingly priest, who was greater than himself, and to offer to him this tribute of worship, but God? And by that same teaching, when the first-named king, of Sodom, offers him the goods he had taken in spoil, he refuses it, and lets him know he had already vowed this to his God. But are we right to count "tithes" as worship? We are, plainly, for the apostle calls such "sacrifices well pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18, Heb. 13:16).

How great an increase of worship would there be if, as the memorial of victories over the world, and of gaining its spoil, in communion with our God, we, too, "gave tithes of all," and offered the devoted things to Him. Some, alas, on the plea of all being His, give Him far less than tithes (a tenth of all), and one chief reason is that they secularize their money instead of consecrate it in true worship. Thus it curses instead of blesses them. Abram wisely got the matter off his hands by paying tithes to Melchizedec, thus owning God's claims, and refused from the unnamed king of Sodom "from a thread even to a shoelatchet." He would not call ought which he possessed "his own."

6. Worship connected with TRIAL. Other scenes in Abram's fruitful life may furnish examples of his worship, as his devoted regard for the holy sacrifices God bade him offer (Gen. 15:9-11); his prostration before God on hearing afresh God's covenant (17:17); his "drawing near to Jehovah" (18:23-33); or his "calling upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God," in Beersheba. But one that we can have no question about is given in Chap. 22, as he himself says: "If the lad will go yonder and worship." Many may incline to use this word, as including all prayer, service or praise to God, but we now use it to specialize that overflow of the soul, which God often in His Word places in distinction from, if not in contrast to, any or all of these. This event in Abraham's life is one that God specially notes, for He first calls it "tempting Abraham," putting him to the test, and at the end He says, "Now I know that thou fearest God," and rewards by a seventh revelation to him, saying, "Because thou hast obeyed My voice"

(v. 1, 12, 18).

Wherein, then, was it what Abraham called it, worship? First, it was the offering of a subject, with bleeding heart. God knew and intended the latter, by emphasizing "Thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest," while he records the former in the words: "Abraham rose up early." After three days of testing whether impulse or principle governed him, "the place is still afar off." Then, after Abraham's noble word to his young men, and Isaac breaks the silence of their mountain climb by his searching enquiry, "Where is the lamb?" Abraham's reply fully attested that his worship had already begun. His heart rested in his God. He proclaimed His faithfulness, his faith rose up to Him, not in an agonizing trust in Him, but in a positive delight in the fact that God would carry out His purposes with all honour to Himself. He looks upon the whole transaction as God's plan, and it could not fail in any part of it. No argument is used to convince his beloved and trusting Isaac, as no doubt was entertained in his own breast. No, God filled the vision of his faith, and hence he was very soon to be rewarded by a fuller unfolding of it, "in seeing Messiah's day," and being made glad. Happy Abraham! But there is more, after "they went, both of them together." They came to the place of revelation, and Abraham proceeds to change it to that of sacrifice, as "he built the altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the wood." All this was entering into the reality of God's requirement. He could not ask more of Abraham, though He did of Himself. He could not ask less, and fully prove Abraham's fidelity. One more act completed Abraham's obedience, as he "stretched forth his hand to slay his son." There God intervenes, and reveals Himself in delighted appreciation of the sacrifice Abraham had made, and shows to his adoring heart the ram behind him, held fast by his own horns for the very occasion. Where Abraham worshipped, in any special way, we are not told, but in his prompt "Here I am" (three times) indicates he was no sentimental dreamer (v. 1, 7, 11), and in his "Yonder and worship" and "God will provide" (twice) (v. 8 and 14), we can clearly trace it, first, midst, and last.

B. C. G.

THE REDEMPTION FROM VANITY*

The great wheel of the world goes round,
And nothing is at a stay;
The generations come and pass,
As shadows move upon the grass,
More permanent than they.

A transient ill, a fleeting good,
A hope that is attained and gone—
On all, the penalty alike,
Of passing with the hours that strike,
As the great world moveth on.

And the flowers that cluster over it
Are crushed and buried beneath;
For life sports with its strength above,
And we dare to smile, and we dare to love,
But ever below is death.

And we cry, O God, but our joys are sweet;
And why doth the wheel go round?
And why must that which is high be low?
And how canst Thou have ordained it so?
And where—this throbbing movement
thro',
Oh, where can rest be found?

But yet, though the wheel be high, look up,
For a Form, and a Human Form,
Sitteth in peace above it still,
And guideth it with a perfect will,
Through brightness and through storm.

A Form, a Human Form, is there,
Whom the wheel, with spirit instinct,
obeys,
The chariot wheel of destiny—
For a purpose fixed and firm has He,
And the end shall be only praise.

For it bringeth low all human pride,
And humbleth into dust the Dust,
And thou seest not the other side,
For there we see not, but we trust,
Where the wheel revolveth into day,
And the cycle of time comes to its stay.

The Dead and Risen, He knoweth it all,
And therefore His face is bright and still
With the joy to which He alone can guide
The souls for whom He has stooped and
died
In the might of His perfect will.

And the wheel of the world is His chariot-
wheel,

For His triumph it moveth on;
And we catch from His glorious face to-day
The peace of its promise all the way,
Till the goal of His rest be won.

F. W. G.

PAUL'S EIGHT PRAYERS IN
"ROMANS."*

I.—"Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you, for I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (Rom. 1: 10-12).

II.—"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

III.—"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5).

IV.—"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13).

V.—"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me: that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jesus alone may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (15:30-33).

VI.—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (16-20).

VII.—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (16-24).

VIII.—"Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Romans 16:25-27).

These varied prayers of the beloved Apostle cover a wide range of requests, on behalf of himself and others, and the ways in which other Scriptures record some of their answers is worthy of note, for our

own stimulation to increased prayer and encouragement in the same.

The first prayer (Romans 1:10) had in it a double desire, both for himself and for the saints to whom he wrote. They are as follows:—

1. For "a prosperous journey to them";
2. To be "comforted together" with them.

And on their side his desire was:—

1. To "impart to them some spiritual gift,"
2. That "they might be established."

How beautifully unselfish and humble is the expression of his faith and longing for their welfare, while he "thanks his God, through Jesus Christ for them all that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world" (ch. 1:8). While this was the delight of his heart, he yet longed for them to receive "some spiritual gift," and be "established" or "confirmed in the faith." If the dear Apostle then saw that need to be theirs, how great is it in this present time! What a dearth is there of even the very primary knowledge which this epistle, Romans, treats of—the believer's position in righteousness before God, and how much greater lack is there of entering into the now revealed mystery he alludes to in his final prayer" (ch. 16:26).

But turning now to the answer to this first prayer. How far can we trace what we would call "a prosperous journey to the saints at Rome? Harking back, we read Paul "purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, saying: "After I have been there I must also see Rome" (Acts 29:21). He first "stayed in Asia for a season," then "came into Greece and abode three months." Then, to avoid the Jews, who were lying in wait for him, he "purposed to return through Macedonia." Seven companions preceded him to Troas, where he came in five days and abode seven days. Then Paul, going afoot, was taken in by his brethren at Assos, and they came to Mitylene, tarried at Trogyllium, and next day came to Miletus. There, as Paul hastened to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, to save time, he sent for the elders of Ephesus. His meeting and part-

ing with them at Miletus is at once one of the most instructive and pathetic portions of Scripture. Therein we get a bird's-eye view of the whole range of Scripture truth, and the most tender spiritual relations between him and his sorrowing brethren, who, with him, realized that "seeing Rome" would mean "seeing his face no more" (Acts 20:17-38). Getting away, Paul's company came to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, whence they sailed into Syria. Leaving Tyre, they came to Ptolemais for "one day," and Caesarea for "many days." Then, accompanied by "certain disciples of Caesarea, and one, Mnason, of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom they should lodge," they finally reached Jerusalem.

Here we must digress to first trace part of the answer to Paul's fifth prayer, in "Romans," as here given us. The requests were that

1. He "should be delivered in Judea";
2. That "his service be accepted of the saints";
3. That he "might come unto the Romans "with joy";
4. That "he should with them be refreshed."

The first two requests relate to his prior visit and service to Jerusalem, and cover one of the most striking and eventful periods of the Apostle's life. In fact, it was as the result of this visit that he realized the answer to his prayer as to the saints at Rome, though in a very different way from what he might have expected. And it certainly was not such as we would incline to count "a prosperous journey" any more than these first events seemed to be "deliverance from the Jews." In this case he fell into their hands; in the other he went a prisoner, and was shipwrecked by the way.

At the very outset of this final journey to Jerusalem, the prelude, as Paul intended, to "seeing Rome also," we have recorded: "The Jews laid wait for him" (ch. 20:3). But was it not at least part of God's answer that Paul should learn of and avoid this "lying in wait"? Also that Paul, to avoid it, turns back on his tracks "through Macedonia." Then, how

full of comfort it must have been to have this volunteer bodyguard from Berea, Thessalonica, Derbe and Asia, seven in all (Acts 20:4). Then the fact of the Jews' murderous plan to waylay him may also have resulted in his visits to Philippi, Troas, Assos, Trogyllium and Miletus, which might not otherwise have been paid. At the latter, however, Paul lets out the fact that this fifth prayer might not be answered, as he hoped, for he says: "And now, behold, I go **bound in the Spirit** unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that **bonds and afflictions** abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might **finish my course with joy**," etc. (verses 22-24).

In view of this fact of the Holy Spirit's witness to him, he further says: "I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see **my face no more**" (v. 25). The great pressure on his spirit as to "bonds and afflictions" convinced him of this, and yet he was not moved by all these forebodings, desiring only "to finish his course with joy." So in moving on more light came, both as to his present path and future prospects.

After passing three places, without incidents, they tarried seven days at Tyre, where the disciples "said to Paul, through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem," and all that is recorded besides is that "they accomplished those days," and went on their way. But here, too, a halt was called, as we read: "We prayed, and took leave one of another, and we took ship." Whether this prayer had in it the same petition as this fifth one in Romans, we are not told, but as all true prayer is the expressed burden of the heart, we are safe to assume that it was so.

Next they came to Ptolemais, of which the scant record is, they "saluted the brethren, and abode one day," and doubtless the burden of their hearts found some expression there. Then they came to Caesarea, their last recorded halt, which was for "many days," the reason of which

we are not told, but this indefinite term, "many days," seems to indicate uncertainty as to moving on. There we read only of the hospitable home of Philip, who entertained Paul's company of nine—Paul, his seven of a bodyguard, and Luke, his chronicler, who kept out of sight in the record. Here Paul would have been reasonably safe; he was in Caesarea, or Caesar's town, where the Romans, rather than the "wicked Jews," had most sway, and Paul had not only Philip and the brethren of Caesarea to vouch for him, but also his eight companions, all from outside of Judea. Then, while abiding in the home of Philip, too, whose four daughters prophesied, we read of no further light coming to Paul and his company, either directly or through these virgins, but as they tarried, there "came down a prophet from Judea, named Agabus." His only mission there, moreover, seems to have been to bring Paul's company God's message, and he "took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said: Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:11). The prophet gave no clue as to where this infliction would be realized, nor did he exceed what Paul already knew, that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him. But the effect of this prediction was, as Luke narrates, that "both we, and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." His answer was heroic: "I am ready not to be bound only, but also die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." We can truly admire his undaunted spirit, and also the burning zeal for his brethren that led him to undertake this final effort to reach them with the Gospel. But there was another side to it, and this the Holy Spirit has given in the clearest way. The fact that He witnessed to Paul "of bonds and afflictions" awaiting him would not, of course, prove his mission to be mistaken. But the brethren at Tyre had also said to him "through the Spirit" that he should not go up. Agabus had emphasized it by his message about the guide. But Paul himself puts it beyond all question in his

confession when arrested. He stated: "I saw Him saying unto me, 'Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.'" Also, when he pressed his suit with the Lord still further, "He said unto me, **Depart**, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." We are not, then, Paul's accusers in stating that his "marching orders" were plain, but that he went not by them. His going up to Jerusalem, however, did not put him really into the hands of the Jews, but of the Gentiles, just as in the case of his adorable Lord, Whom they "delivered unto the Gentiles and crucified Him (not by their own wicked hands, but) by the hands of the lawless."

On his reaching Jerusalem, it is noteworthy the care that James and the elders took to avoid conflict with the Jewish leaders. They got Paul to join four others in paying a vow, and "purifying himself with them to enter the temple." Then seven days later they were to bring their offering, and the time was almost up, when the Jews laid hands on Paul, falsely accusing him, and crying: "This is the man . . . and as they went about to kill him, the chief captain, learning of the uproar, ran at once and rescued him from the violence of the people." Not only was this done, but he was granted to make his defence upon the stairs to the surging mob. They listen to him until he narrates how the Lord had told him not to be there, but "go to the Gentiles," and then they disrobe for action, and "threw dust, and cried: 'Away with him.'"

Let us here link together two things:—

1. God's revelation, or His Word;
2. The prayer of faith.

As to the first, in Acts 9 God said as to Paul: "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Later, Paul had said to the blaspheming Jews at Antioch: "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us" (Acts 13:46-47). Then they had rehearsed at Antioch how God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (14:27). Also at Phenice and Samaria

they had caused great joy unto all the brethren" by the same (15:3). Further, at Jerusalem "all the multitude kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (15:12). Finally the council at Jerusalem wrote to the Gentiles: "It seemed good unto us to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15-26). This all confirms what Paul later states as to his mission and his sphere.

But let us trace how Paul's prayer was answered as to the Jews and his brethren, as follows:—

1. His rescue by the chief captain, when "they left beating of Paul" (21:32).
2. His being "borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people" (21:26).
3. His being granted to make "his defence unto the people" (21:40).
4. His beckoning with his hand, producing "a great silence" (21:40).
5. His speaking in Hebrew, resulting in still "more silence" (22:2).
6. His receiving audience up to his mention of the Gentiles" (22:22).
7. His exemption from scourging by a simple question of the centurion (22:25).
8. His being loosed to witness in the council of the High Priest (22:30).
9. His second rescue from the council instead of the mob (23:10).
10. His gracious message from the Lord that night: "Be of good cheer" (23:11).
11. His slater's son revealing the Jews' conspiracy to kill him (23:12-22).
12. The chief captain's third rescue of him, escorting him to Caesarea (23:23-26).
13. His defence before Felix, resulting in his liberty and privileges (24:23).
14. His reasoning before Felix and Drusilla, making "Felix tremble" (24:25).
15. His being "kept at Caesarea by Festus" against the Jews' desire (25:4).
16. His appeal to Caesar granted by Festus against the Jews (25:9-12).
17. His defence before Agrippa, so that kings and governors heard of Christ (25:23; 26:32).
18. His acquittal by the chief captain, Felix, Festus and Agrippa (23:29, 26:32).

As to the first petition for deliverance from the unbelieving Jews, we are safe to conclude that herein "God provided His way of escape that he might be able to bear it."

That his second petition was granted and his ministry acceptable to his brethren we conclude also, for we read:—

1. "They received us gladly" (21:17).
2. "James and all the elders met him" (18).
3. "They glorified the Lord" (20 v.).
4. They shewed him great consideration (20-25).

The further answers as to his prosperous journey to Rome, his reaching them with joy, and their mutual refreshment, Acts 27 and 28 furnish us with, as we shall see further.

WHAT ARE THOSE WOUNDS?

Never, throughout eternity shall we forget, the cross and its shame, our everlasting song shall be:

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

The story is told of a titled English lady, who never appeared out of her own room, without wearing gloves. She had an only child, who had never seen those hands gloved. One day however, he unexpectedly came into her bedroom, and was horrified to see his mother's hands scarred and disfigured. He exclaimed "Oh! what horrid hands." The mother drew the child to her, saying, "Now we are alone, and you are old enough to understand, I will tell you what caused those scars." She then told the following story:

"When you were quite a baby, you were in the nursery, in the turret, cared for by a nurse. A fire started there, and the nurse terrified, fled for safety, leaving you to certain death. You know the strong ivy branches clinging to the walls, up that I climbed, and reached the small window through which I managed to enter, and taking you up, I swung you in a coverlet over my shoulders and began to descend. The extra weight was almost too much, and the ivy began to give way. Mercifully, however, I reached the ground in safety, but the flesh was torn from my hands and badly burned, but **YOU WERE SAVED.**"

Taking those poor scarred hands, he kissed them over and over again, to him they were no longer ugly, he begged as a favor that she would never cover them, for he wanted to be constantly reminded of her self sacrifice. At what infinite cost, the Lord Jesus has redeemed us, exposed to the eternal judgment on account of our sins, He in His deep love, laid aside His glory, and died the Just One for us the unjust ones. Can we ever forget the price He paid for our redemption? **NEVER.**

What a moment that was for the sorrowing disciples, when after the night of weeping, the Lord Jesus appeared in their midst, saying "peace unto you." Luke 24-36. Terrified and affrighted, He calmed their

fears and shewed them His hands and His side, blest pledge of accomplished redemption.

"Oh, teach us Lord Thy searchless love to know,
Thou who hast died.

Before our feeble faith Lord Jesus shew,
Thy hands and side

That our glad hearts, responsive unto Thine
May wake with all the power of love divine."

Surely this was the reason for the institution of the SUPPER, that the people of God might be constantly reminded, of His undying love.

J. W. H. N.

BIRTHDAYS IN SCRIPTURE.*

The only passages in the sacred Word speaking of birthdays are but three, and all relating to kings—Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who honored his by the release of a prisoner, and Herod's, who dishonored his by the murder of God's faithful servant, John the Baptist, in the discharge of an unholy vow.

I.—"Pharaoh made a feast unto all his servants" (Gen. 40:20).

II.—"When Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them" (Matt. 14:6).

III.—"Herod, on his birthday, made a supper unto his lords," etc. (Mark 6:21).

But while the actual term is confined to these three passages, we find also—

- 1.—"The day wherein I was born" (Job 3:3).
- 2.—"The day of one's birth" (Eccles. 7:').
- 3.—"The day wherein I was born" (Jer. 20:14).
- 4.—"In the day thou wast born" (Ezek. 16:4).
- 5.—"In the day that thou wast born" (Ezek. 1:5).
- 6.—"I will set her as in the day that she (Israel) was born" (Hos. 2:3).
- 7.—"Unto you is born this day a Saviour" (Luke 2:11).

The first two cases were made an occasion of feasting, the next three of sorrow, the next of loving service, the next of humiliation, and the final one of good tidings of great joy. They thus cover a large range of experience in human lives, of weal and woe, of hopes and fears, and oft of seeking "under the sun" what alone can be found above it in Christ our Lord.

I.—Pharaoh's birthday was honored by a double event, viz. :—

- 1.—He made A FEAST unto all his servants.
- 2.—He lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker, among his servants (Gen. 40:20).

The first was a general invitation to all to enjoy his bounty—a feast of grace. In the second, he “lifted up the head,” i.e., encouraged by his liberation of them, both the butler and the baker, whom he had imprisoned, we presume, under suspicion. But while the feast was for all alike, without regard to worthiness or disfavor, the sequel to it was quite the opposite. All but two returned, as far as we are told, to their various places in Pharaoh’s house, and of the two, whose heads were “lifted up,” one was restored to his high position again, and the other, alas, was “hanged on a tree,” as Joseph had predicted of them. The fact of their mutual liberation may have misled both of them as to the truth of his interpretation of their dreams. The butler might have reasoned that this act meant no more for him than for his fellow, but in the end how great was the contrast! The baker, in turn, may have reasoned that as Pharaoh had brought them both out of prison the issue for each would be the same, and so dismiss his fears! Thus we may learn that the King’s feast and the King’s reward are two entirely different things. And further, that there are servants and servants; those who are in that position by virtue of their profession, and also those who serve from the love of their hearts, and because the love of Christ constrains them. Pharaoh thus illustrates the prerogatives of God’s throne:—

- 1.—His “feast” manifested Royal grace.
- 2.—His “lifting up” manifested Supreme power.
- 3.—His “restoration” of one manifested Faithful reward.
- 4.—His “hanging” of the other manifested Righteous judgment.

II.—Herod’s birthday, celebrated as it was, contained no element of either grace or righteousness. He sent no messenger to the prison until the close of the feast, and then not to liberate a prisoner, in the royal prerogative of mercy, but to fulfill a diabolical purpose, and silence a faithful witness of God. Mark’s account of it intimates that Herod’s supper was not for the poor and needy, nor for “all his servants,”

but for “his lords, high captains and chief estates of Galilee.” In this was no expression of either grace or righteousness. Next, he was pleased at the dancing of a wanton girl, who carried in her bosom a wicked secret, which, when occasion served, she disclosed to the undoing of the King. Few, but awfully solemn, were the downward steps of this man’s career.

- 1.—He married his brother’s wife unlawfully—lustful.
- 2.—He heeded not John’s faithful warning—independent.
- 3.—He would have put him to death—vindictiveness.
- 4.—He feared the people, and not God—cowardly.
- 5.—He laid hold on John, bound and imprisoned him—heartless.
- 6.—He made a feast for his lords and captains—proud.
- 7.—He was pleased with a wanton dancer—trifling.
- 8.—He gave her a rash oath instead of rebuke—boastful.
- 9.—He was sorry, but not repentant—evanescent.
- 10.—He “would not reject her,” even though wicked—indecision.
- 11.—He sent and beheaded John—sacrilege.
- 12.—He was haunted by John’s memory—remorse.

But even Herod had his day of opportunity, for John had pleaded with him, but in vain, for we read that

- 1.—“He feared John, knowing he was a just man.”
- 2.—“He observed him.”
- 3.—“He did many things.”
- 4.—“He heard him gladly.”

How solemn is this brief record of how far a man may go in relation to God’s things, and yet die in his sins. To be aroused, to pay heed to a faithful witness, to do works, and hear the words of a faithful servant may still stop short of “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” And as there is salvation in none other, alas, it is missed forever. Herod we only once hear of again, but as the same wretched trifier.

- 1.—When he saw Jesus he was exceeding glad (Luke 23:8).
- 2.—He hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him.
- 3.—He questioned with Him in many words.
- 4.—He set Him at nought and mocked Him.
- 5.—He arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe.

6.—He sent Him again to Pilate.

7.—He made friends with Pilate, but was gathered against God and His Son (Acts 4:27).

1 and 3.—The passages in Job and Jeremiah describe their mourning over both the fact and day of their birth, because the hand of the Lord had afflicted them, so that they wished that they had never been born. In Job's case, however, this was but "the weeping that endured for a night," and "joy came in the morning," as we read: "The Lord also accepted Job. The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends, also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:10). This their birthday is hardly to be relied upon, as we are not good judges in our own case, and inasmuch as God placed us in this world, and in the power of His might, we should also believe it to have been equally so in the wisdom of His mind and the love of His heart. The Psalmist so instructs us in the words: "Thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O my God. How great is the sum of them! If I should count them they are more in number than the sand; when I awake I am still with Thee" (Ps. 139:13-18). The infinite wisdom, power and omniscience of God are here strikingly set forth, and it is fitting indeed for a birthday to be celebrated with a meditation such as this—a soul-feast instead of a "provision for the flesh." The occasion for praise to God is not the general one of His wonderful works in creation, His tender mercies in providence, or His righteous ways in government, nor even "the riches of His grace" in redemption, but one we are, alas, too prone to forget—

That He made us so wonderfully.

2.—That His skill is marvellous in His works.

3.—That He saw our substance ere we were born.

4.—That He recorded our members in His Book.

5.—That His thoughts are precious to the soul.

6.—That these thoughts are great and innumerable.

7.—That His presence is with us, sleeping or waking.

The wisdom of the ancient sages was: "Know thyself"; ours, thank God, goes beyond it—we rise in worship from the work of the workman, and anticipate the song of heaven: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

3.—The wise man, in his reminiscent dirge (Ecclesiastes 7:1), decides "the day of one's death" as better than that of birth, and one may wonder in what sense this is to be taken. Birth means our entrance into this world, and attached to it are all the joys of this life, its prospects and possibilities, but while hopes may about in view of this, how often are they little realized, how transient their endurance! Hence the wise king, who had pronounced his own verdict as being a fool, turned from birth to death, because this, whatever be its sadness, gloom, weakness or suffering, is the portal to an eternal home for all the household of faith, and so in this review of his past follies he turns from himself to God Who faileth not. His mention of it is brief, but sufficient to indicate that faith had cast anchor there. He had previously applied his heart to "know the wickedness of folly," and reached a good result in charging us to "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and also: "Fear God and keep His commandments." The first he once had known the good of; the other he was now reaching by a long and tortuous course of folly, for Solomon had once loved the Lord, and now was saying, after fierce and wild follies: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." What brought it about? He first narrates his wisdom and his folly, and then over against it puts what God gives to men of sore travail in His wise government, and of wis-

dom, knowledge and joy in His grace. He tells us of

- 1.—The hand of God (Ecc. 2:24);
- 2.—The work of God (3:11, 7:13, 8:17, 11:5);
- 3.—The gift of God (3:13, 5:19);
- 4.—The house of God (5:1);
- 5.—The home of God (5:2);
- 6.—The fear of God (5:7, 7:18, 8:12, 12:13);
- 7.—The oath of God (8:2).

That God's gifts to men are varied, but all-wise—

- 1.—Sore travail (1:13, 2:26);
- 2.—Wisdom, and knowledge, and joy (2:26);
- 3.—Enjoyment of our labor (3:13);
- 4.—All the days of our life (5:18, 8:15, 9:9);
- 5.—Riches and wealth and honor (5:19);
- 6.—Power to eat and rejoice (5:19);
- 7.—The spirit of man to him (12:7).

That God made

- 1.—Everything beautiful in His time (3:11);
- 2.—Man upright (7:29).

That God hath

- 1.—Set the world in man's heart (3:11);
- 2.—No pleasure in fools (5:4);
- 3.—Set prosperity against adversity (7:14).

That God

- 1.—Requireth that which is past (3:15);
- 2.—Answereth man in the joy of His heart (5:20).
- 3.—Withholdeth power to eat (6:2);
- 4.—Accepteth man's works (9:7);
- 5.—Shall bring every work unto judgment (12:14).

His conclusion, then, is that the best thing is what he had but too little sought, to "Fear God and keep His commandments" (ch. 12:13).

4-5.—The day of Jerusalem's birth, God reminds her, was a day of need; nothing had been done for her that babes required.

- 1.—She needed care, cleansing, salting, swaddling (Ezek. 16:4).
- 2.—None pitied, served, or had compassion on her (v. 5).
- 3.—She was cast out in the open field to die (v. 5).
- 4.—Jehovah passed by, saw her pollution, and said Live (v. 6).
- 5.—He looked on in love, and took her for His own (v. 8).
- 6.—He washed, anointed, clothed and decked her (9-12).

Very touching is this portrayal of Jehovah's grace and compassion, and sad indeed was the sequel to it, when Jerusalem "trusted in her own beauty," and played Him false.

6.—Hosea's impassioned message from God to Israel was: "Plead with your mother, plead—

- 1.—Lest I strip her naked;
- 2.—Set her as in the day that she was born;
- 3.—Make her as a wilderness;
- 4.—Set her like a dry land;
- 5.—Slay her with thirst (ch. 1:2-3).

But when her folly is exposed, and her bitter lesson learned, He says:—

- 1.—Behold I will allure her;
- 2.—And bring her unto the wilderness;
- 3.—And speak comfortably unto her;
- 4.—And I will give her her vineyards from thence;
- 5.—And the valley of Achor for a dowry of hope;
- 6.—And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth;
- 7.—And thou shalt call me Istir, my husband (2:14-16).

The first part has been fulfilled to the very letter, as all nations have looked upon Israel's shame, and soon the happy issue will be realized, when Jehovah makes with her a new covenant, and forgives her sin, and writes His laws in her heart and mind.

The last mention is that of our adorable Lord and Saviour, as announced by the herald angel to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and this birthday eclipses all others in interest and importance. But even in the great joy of it there can be seen the shadow of His cross. "A Saviour" was indeed occasion for great joy, but it is added, "which is Christ, the Lord." He was announced to be this on the event of His baptism, when He was anointed of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22), but it was after His crucifixion and death, His resurrection and exaltation, that we read: "God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). May we, then, learn to know Him by faith, not on the cross nor in the grave, but "at the right hand of God," and rejoice in the blessed assurance that "we are complete in Him." B. C. G.

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THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD*

I bow me to Thy will, O God!
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I'd seek
To please Thee more and more.

Thy will the end, the blessed rule
Of Jesus' toils and tears;
Thy will the passion of His heart,
Those three and thirty years.

And He hath breathed into my soul
A special love to Thee,
A love—to lose my will in Thine,
And by that loss be free.

I love to see Thee bring to nought
The plans of wily men;
When simple hearts outwit the wise,
O Thou art loveliest then!

The headstrong world, it presses hard
Upon the church full oft;
But then how easily Thou turn'st
The hard ways into soft.

I love to kiss each print where Christ
Did set His pilgrim feet;
Nor can I fear that blessed path,
Whose traces are so sweet.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.

Nor can I sanction e'en one doubt;
With Thee for strength and stay
There is no risk, for, come what will,
Thou always hast Thy way.

I have no cares, O blessed Lord!
For all my cares are Thine;
I live in triumph, too, for Thou
Hast made Thy triumphs mine.

And when it seems no chance nor change
From grief can set me free,
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,
And, patient, waits on Thee.

Man's weakness, waiting upon God,
Its end can never miss,
For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this.

Lead on, lead on, triumphantly,
O blessed Lord! lead on;
Faith's pilgrim sons behind Thee seek
The road that Thou hast gone.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will!

GOD'S WAYS OF VICTORY.

Abijah, King of Judah, had a short reign, but three years, the record being given us in 1 Kings 15:1-8, and 2 Chron. 13. "His mother, Maachah, the daughter of Absalom," who later on was "removed by Asa from being Queen, because she had made an idol in a grove." Thus his "start in life" was not very promising, and in his brief reign he shewed "the yellow streak" in that he "walked in all the sins of his father, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God" (1 Kings 15:3).

Nevertheless, in the record given of him in 2 Chron. 13 we have two notable things—(1) his striking address to Jeroboam and his army of 800,000, which concluded with saying: "God Himself is with us for our Captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper" (2 Chron. 13:12). Nor were these merely proud and vain-glorious words, for there were at least in Judah faithful priests and Levites ministering unto the Lord, and waiting on their business, so that they kept Jehovah's charge. Jeroboam, however, paid no heed to Abijah's appeal, but brought an ambushment behind Judah, so that "when they looked back the battle was before and behind, and

they cried unto the Lord and the priests sounded with the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout," and as they did so, "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah." The Divine comment on this victory is: "God delivered them into their hand. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the God of their fathers." "Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah, and the Lord struck him and he died" (2 Chron. 13:16-20).

Thus in this war-chapter, "written for our admonition," in its 18 verses we have nine giving Abijah's appeal to his unprovoked foe, and nine also giving God's deliverance for Judah and her King (though imperfect before God), and His judgment of Israel because they "had forsaken Him." In these searching times, when the thoughts of many hearts are revealed, these words are worth pondering, for no mention is made of superior forces, greater valor, or ought else of that nature. On the contrary, the only mention in that line is that both armies had "valiant men of war, chosen men, and mighty men of valor."

What is recorded, then, to help us form a true judgment of the case? On Jeroboam's side, that he would not hear nor heed a fair and honorable appeal, and let God settle the controversy, but at once pushed the war against his brother, now counted as his foe. On Judah's side, that they made their final appeal to God, their former one being cast aside, for

- (1) They "cried unto the Lord"—appealed to the mercy of the Lord;
- (2) "Sounded with the trumpets"—obeyed the word of the Lord (Num. 10:9).
- (3) "Gave a shout"—confided in the arm of the Lord.

And mark, with what results!—

- (1) "God smote Jeroboam," etc. (15 v.).
- (2) God delivered them into their hand (16 v.).
- (3) The Lord struck Jeroboam, and he died (20 v.).

Many, doubtless, on both sides in this great world-war would be glad to have God as their chief ally, and some, at least, are,

as Joshua of old, anxiously asking Him: "Art Thou for us or for our adversaries?" But one and all of us must learn that He first comes, neither as our Ally or as our Enemy, but as a Commander. He "tries the reins and the hearts of the children of men," and where He finds in them that true repentance that sides with Him against themselves, first of all, He then reveals to them "the path of victory."

Let us, then, lay it to heart that if unworthy Abijah and Judah prevailed, it was "because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers." This is neither boasting in our fathers, nor in ourselves, but in "God, Who abideth the faithful."

B. C. G.

"THE BUSH BURNED WITH FIRE."

Finding in a Salvation Army "War Cry" lately an article with the above title, we read it with deep interest, as it is a much-loved subject with us, believing, as we do, that the Old Testament histories, while, first of all, a *bona fide* record of facts, are also, as the Apostle Paul assures us, "an allegory," and "happened unto them for types" (Gal. 4:24, 1 Cor. 10:11). Our pleasure, however, was soon changed to pain, in finding that while the writer sought to impress the fact that God spoke to men often in everyday circumstances, yet, when he came to apply this truth, he went far wide of the truth, and we looked in vain through the entire paper for any simple and unmixed presentation of "the Gospel which saves men." Let none mistake us. We do not say that the Salvation Army do not preach this Gospel; we believe some do; but it impressed on us the fact that to keep the Gospel itself we must have a solid, Scriptural basis of sound doctrine, just as to make "good tea" in result we must have "good tea" as our starting point.

The Salvation Army writer says that "the bush is a fallen human being," and that "this holy fire of His Spirit has saturated that bush over thirty-five hundred years. This fiery Godly Spirit within, and protected by this 'wall of fire' about us. The body of sin will be destroyed and burned up with all its roots." Satan may try many times to put the fire out with

winds of temptation, etc., but if we keep humble and obedient before God, and remain separate from the world, God will not withdraw His Holy Spirit from our hearts, (War Cry, April 6, 1918).

To say the least, this is a strange "jumble of ideas," and in our estimate contains neither law, Gospel, nor sound doctrine. That the bush represents "a fallen human being" is not true, for while every human being is "the offspring of God" by creation, yet in none does He dwell, but by redemption, and none possess but saved human beings, while all men are purchased by our Lord's ransom price, or blood of atonement. Our Lord's words as to the Holy Spirit are plain as day: "The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, etc." (John 14:17).

Next, as explaining how the bush was not burnt, he says: "The Holy fire of His Spirit has saturated it over 3,500 years." All proof is lacking, because there is none, and herein lies a witness of the great need of asking ourselves and others: "How readest thou?" and "Understandest Thou what thou readest?" The popular misapplication of the Lord's baptism "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," as both being true of Christians, is a very culpable error. The added words of John Baptist ought to make it plain that the first applies to "His wheat," and equally so that "the fire," or His judgment, to the chaff. The mere similarity of expression in "cloven tongues like as of fire" has doubtless misled some, but if the subject is carefully looked at, the simple conclusion must be that Christ's baptism by the Holy Spirit is now of all true believers, and that His baptism by fire is at His coming, when "He shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

But a further and almost serious evil is that "this fiery Godly Spirit within," and "the wall of fire about us," i.e., "fallen human beings," the body of sin, will be destroyed and burned up, etc. These statements, all honest experience of either saints or sinners, as well as the teaching of

the Scriptures, utterly disprove. From a long, and often too close, acquaintance with those who profess to have reached this perfect state, we avow that it makes them neither holy nor upright, and certainly not humble. Its basis is a mere human estimate of sin, as being overt transgressions of the moral law, and leads to an unholy palliation of sin, and often utter disregard for the Word of God and its authority over us. Some such openly excuse lust and unholy passions in themselves by charging them also upon our holy Lord Himself. Others defiantly refuse the plainest statements of Scripture, because they "think otherwise," and with all that we have met—and they are not few—they seem able to do the most inconsistent things, without any trouble of conscience, and yet "profess holiness," which does not teach them to "live soberly, righteously and Godly." Most of such also as to teaching deny "the doctrines of grace," the "truth of eternal life," of "the two natures" in a believer, and much more, as the Scripture place of baptism and the Lord's Supper, etc.

The closing error above stated, as to keeping humble so that "God will not withdraw His Holy Spirit," many more hold, but our Lord's words: "He shall abide with you for ever" (John 14:16), and "Sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30), should settle the question, beyond dispute, that if it is by grace we are saved, then it is "not of works." We append a brief outline, as we view it, of the same subject, that others may judge.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" Ex. 3:2). There are in this brief account four striking things:—

1. The Great Sight—The angel, a fire, a bush.

2. Moses arrested by it—He looked, and "behold the bush aflame, but not consumed."

3. Moses' Conclusion—He said: "I will turn aside and see why it is."

4. The Lord's Reward—"When the Lord saw that he turned aside, he called to him."

Here was a miracle indeed! This call

from God to Moses was peculiar in every view of it. It halted Moses, changed his whole course, made him first a worshipper, then a prophet; trained him in obedience to God, and then commissioned him to deliver his people out of bondage.

The features of it are simple, but striking:—

1. "The angel of the Lord"—not an angel, one of "the innumerable company of angels," ministering to men as His servants, but "THE angel"—God's own representative, "the angel of His presence," for the sequel changes the word from the angel to "the LORD," Who says: "I am the God of thy father," etc. And Moses recognized this fact, for he "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." God, then, is the prime factor in this desert scene, while the background is the end of a desert, the base of a mountain, a shepherd and his sheep, a burning bush, and next, an anxious enquirer, and then God calling unto him.

2. "A Flame of Fire"—Such was the manner in which God chose to reveal Himself, and what He then took up He has not since laid down. No, for in the very epistle that invites us to "Draw near," it says: "We are come to God, the Judge of all," and "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 10:24, 12:23-29). So also in the earliest announcement of our Lord Jesus by His faithful herald, John the Baptist, we read: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12). And our Lord Himself announced: "Everyone shall be salted with fire" (Mark 9:49); "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12:49).

3. "A Bush"—a desert bush, only a mere bush, not tree. God chose "a bush," a bush in an out-of-the-way place, a bush in a desert, an old, dry bush, a thorn-bush, and finally, a burning bush, to set up His throne in, there at "the mountain of God." A bush is often counted a useless thing, a mere cumberer of the ground, but God has dignified a bush by passing by all the lofty trees of the forest to take up His abode therein. God's presence both illuminated and preserved it. Without His presence a proud cedar would have been consumed,

while with it, even a "bush was not consumed."

4. "Moses looked." His eyes were given him for that very purpose. But he did not stop there; his mind was impressed by what he saw—"a bush burning," yet "not consumed." Next, he purposed something, and said: "I will now turn aside." He yielded to the demand of the hour, to "search out what he knew not." His eyes affected his heart, and his heart led his feet, and soon his whole "spirit, soul and body" captivated, all else in the world was lost to view, as he made this his supreme business at that time.

"This great sight" was "the bush not consumed—not burnt." Ah, this was verily a wonder, and might it not be a sign as well? Moses was eager to learn the "why and wherefore" of it, and promptly "turned aside to see." The Lord then saw, and to Him it was truly as His own chosen sign, "a fire in a bush." When "He saw" what Moses did, and that he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," then God revealed Himself, further, in grace: "Come now, I will send thee." God's presence preserved, not destroyed, this bush. Yet none must dare to even approach it. The purpose of this bush was not for shelter, as when Hagar cast her thirsty lad beneath one, but to arrest Moses' attention when it was aflame.

Finally, Moses learns obedience, to halt where he stood, and to bare his feet. And then he hears Jehovah's voice: "I am the God of thy father, etc." The first effect was "reverence and godly fear." But God continues His revelation: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people, and am come down to deliver them," etc. (ch. 2:7-8), and while Moses, though arrested by God, and then attracted to Him, has yet to be subdued by Him, yet in the end God triumphed in His grace, and proved to Moses and His poor afflicted people the full truth of the desert bush, which "burned with fire," and yet "was not consumed." God has spoken many times since then, and in various ways, and with more or less limited revelations of Himself, but at "the meeting of the ages" He spoke out all His heart in the person of His dear Son. May we, then, turn aside from all that would hold our feet to see "this great sight."

B. C. G.

EVERY MAN'S LIFE A PLAN OF GOD.

Every human soul has a complete and perfect plan cherished for it in the heart of God—a divine biography marked out, which it enters into life to live. This life, rightfully unfolded, will be a complete and beautiful whole; an experience led on by God, and unfolded by the secret nurture of the word; a drama cast in the mold of a perfect art, with no part wanting; a divine study for the man himself and for others; a study that shall forever unfold, in wondrous beauty, the love and faithfulness of God; great in its conception, great in the divine skill by which it is shaped; above all, great in the momentous and glorious issues it prepares. What a thought is this for every human soul to cherish! What dignity does it add to life! What support does it bring to the trials of life! What instigation does it add to send us on in everything that constitutes our excellence! We live in the divine thought. We fill a place in the everlasting plan of God's intelligence. We never sink below His care, never drop out of His counsel.

THE IRON DID SWIM*

(2 Kings 6:9)

The axe had seemed hopelessly lost, and as it was borrowed, the honor of the prophetic band was likely to be imperilled, and so the name of their God to be compromised. Contrary to all expectations, the iron was made to mount from the depth of the stream and to swim; for things that are impossible with man are possible with God. I knew a man in Christ but a few years ago who was called to undertake a work far exceeding his strength. It appeared so difficult as to involve absurdity in the bare idea of attempting it. Yet he was called thereto, and his faith with the occasion; God honored his faith, unlooked-for aid was sent, and the iron did swim. Another of the Lord's family was in grievous financial straits; he was able to meet all claims, and much more, if he could have realized a certain portion of his estate, but he was overtaken with a sudden pressure. He sought for friends in vain, but faith

led him to the unfailing Helper, and lo, the calamity averted, his footsteps were enlarged, and the iron did swim. A third had a sorrowful case of depravity to deal with. He had taught, reproved, warned, invited and interceded, but all in vain. Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon; the stubborn spirit would not relent. Then came an agony of prayer, and before long a blessed answer was sent from heaven. The hard heart was broken and the iron did swim.

Beloved reader, what is thy desperate case? What heavy matter hast Thou in hand at this time? Bring it hither. The God of the prophets lives, and lives to help His saints. He will not suffer them to want any good thing. Believe thou in the Lord of Hosts! Approach Him pleading the name of Jesus, and the iron shall swim; thou, too, shall see the finger of God working for His people. According to thy faith be it unto thee, and yet again the iron shall swim.

C. H. S.

LEAN HARD*

If you love me, "LEAN HARD"—Miss Fiske, who has labored so long and successfully amongst the Persian women, writes thus: "I was weary and longed for rest, and, with no support, it seemed to me that I could not sit there till the close of the service, nor could I hope for rest even when that was over, for I must meet the women readers of the village, and encourage them in reading their Testaments. I thought how I would love to be with you; but God took the thought from me very soon, for, finding that there was some one directly behind me, I looked, and there was one of the sisters, who had seated herself so that I might lean upon her. I objected, but she drew me back to the firm support she could give, saying, "If you love me, you will lean hard." Did I not then lean hard? And then there came the Master's own voice, "If you love Me, you will lean hard"; and I leaned on Him, too, and felt that He had sent the poor woman to give me a better sermon than I might have heard even with you. I was rested long

before the services were finished; and I afterwards had a long hour with the women readers, and closed with prayer. A little after sunset we left, to ride six miles to our home. I was surprised to find that I was not at all weary that night, nor in the morning, and I have rested ever since, remembering the sweet words, "If you love me, lean hard."

Softly and gently these words were breathed,

To the loved one, thus first addressed,
As she sat on the ground in a far-off land,
Whilst her weary-worn frame craved rest.

The Persian offers her firm, strong form
As a living prop and stay,
But the pressure so light shows that she
who leans
Fears lest she too heavily weigh.

Love wants the whole burden upon herself
cast,
And deems it a deep joy to bear;
"If indeed, then, you love me, lean hard,
O! lean hard,"
Is her tender importunate prayer.

And the Holy Comforter echoed the words
In the depths of the fainting one's soul;
And she felt that her Saviour's love re-
quired
All her cares she should on Him roll.

My Saviour, these words bring a lesson
from Thee;
For, alas! I as yet but half trust;
I know not what 'tis to take hold of
strength;
Thus often fall prone in the dust.

Yet He who has borne the dread load of
my sins
Will surely my weaknesses bear;
He who takes up the isles as a very small
thing
Cannot sink 'neath the load of my care.

He bids me to lean my soul wholly on Him,
For without Him I tremble and fall;
And with deep, thankful joy I obey, and
respond
To His loving, compassionate call.

In quiet repose, like a babe on the breast,
Would I rest, gracious Saviour, on Thee:
I am weakness itself, but Thou, Thou art
my strength,—
Thine arms everlasting clasp me.

Oh! teach me at all times on Thee to lean
hard,
And show thus how truly I love;
Keep me close to Thyself, ever bound to
Thy side,
Till I lean on Thy bosom above.

F. E. W.

RESTORED BY A TEXT OF SCRIPTURE*

Many years ago, when this great congregation met in the Surrey Music Hall, and the terrible accident occurred (through a false alarm of fire), when many persons were either killed or injured in the panic, I did by best to hold the people together till I heard that some were dead, and then I broke down like a man stunned, and for a night I had little reason left. I felt so broken in heart that I thought I should never be able to face a congregation again; and I went down to a friend's house, a few miles away, to be very quiet and still. I was walking around his garden—and I will remember the spot, and even the time—when this passage came to me: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour," and this thought came to me at once: "You are only a soldier in the Great King's army, and you may die in a ditch, but it does not matter what becomes of you as long as your King is exalted. He is glorious. God hath exalted Him!" And so I just thought: "He is exalted, what matters it about me?" and in a moment my reason was perfectly restored. I was as clear as possible. I went into the house, had family prayer, and came back to preach to my congregation—restored by having looked to Jesus and having seen that He was glorious.

C. H. Spurgeon.

A FEAST FOR HIS SON.

Matt. 22:1-14, Rev. 19:1-8. We have in this first portion the Lord's answer to the chief priests and Pharisees, in a parable

of judgment upon the Jews, and of grace flowing out to the Gentiles. There are three little words of three letters each in the second verse, which are the keynote to the chapter—

"FOR HIS SON."

It is significant that neither here, nor in Matt. 25, have we any mention of the Bride, though in each there is a marriage, and God can give no greater thought of true happiness on earth than a true marriage, with mutual love and attraction. God is here seen as a King, and first the Gospel is for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Between the judgment of the great whore, Babylon, and the battle of Armageddon, we have the marriage of the Lamb, that which completes His happiness. In Rev. 19: "His wife hath made herself ready." Here we have the marriage feast, and "All things are ready."

I. The King had already bidden to the marriage, so none were taken unawares. No reasons are given, but they "would not come." One once asked a servant of the Lord: "But don't you believe in the freedom of the human will?" "Yes," he replied, "and man will be damned for it." "They would not come" is the record here; their will was not to come. "Many are called, but few chosen." God had one Son, but He has chosen to have "many sons" with this one in glory.

II. Other servants are sent and further arguments used, but how do they treat it? They "made light of it," and turn again to their varied pursuits in disdain of it.

III. But they go yet further, and next "spitefully intreat the servants." Man's worthiness for salvation consists in receiving God's invitation. With the wedding garment on, every guest looked alike, and everyone looked as he ought to look. What is this wedding garment? Isaiah 61 tells us of "the garments of salvation" and of the "robe of righteousness." That righteousness is "unto all," and so every poor sinner may have it alike, and now. Why did not this man have on the wedding garment? He thought his own was good enough, and despised both the bounty and command of the King. He was speechless then, but such are not speechless now.

The King provides all for the feast, and then carries out His purposes to have it furnished with guests in order to enjoy His grace.

H. A. G.

DOUBTING GOD'S WORD.—2 Pet. 1.*

"Simon Peter"—both his name and surname are confirmed in Acts 15:7, 14, both used; Peter "historically," Simon familiarly. One writes: "It was the duty of all churches to take time to consider, before they received any book as the writing of an apostle. It was their duty to doubt" (Bp. Christ. Wordsworth).

It is never a duty, even for the simplest Christian, to doubt Scripture, but only to believe; and if so, what about the duty for all churches, or even for any church, to doubt? Really, it was suicidal, and an utter dishonor to God, who inspired the Scriptures, and a shameless failure on the church's part. One of the haughtiest sins of Popery is to set up the claim of the church to decide what is Scripture. Whether they vest this prerogative in the church, in the oecumenical council, or in the Pope makes no difference. In every form the bringing in of any authority but God's is treason against His glory. So far as man, whatever his position, privileges, powers or responsibilities, from having the duty of judging God's Word, it is what judges man. For man to doubt God's Word, or to sit in judgment to pronounce it His or not, is an overthrow of all righteousness and of all grace; one might add of all decency. It is at the peril of any soul, and peculiarly inconsistent with the Christian or the church, to question what He has written. The Lord has decided for the intrinsic authority of His own words, to say nothing of His unvarying reverence for all Scripture as the full and final sentence of God's mind. "He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My sayings hath him that judgeth him, the word which I spoke, that shall judge him in the last day. For I spoke not for Myself, but the Father that sent Me, Himself hath given Me commandment what I should say and what I should speak; and I know that His commandment is life eternal. What, there-

fore, I speak, as the Father hath said to Me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50).

The Holy Spirit is no less precise in affirming the same principle in Heb. 4:12-13: "For the Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." What words could more directly refuse the monstrous assumption of the church in pretending to accredit Scripture, or the still more unseemly assertion of its duty to doubt? W. Kelly.

A CONCLUSIVE PEACE*

Can there be such a thing as a conclusive peace? Yes, but not between nation and nation. There may be a truce, or an armistice; there may, and will be, a millenium of enforced submission to supreme Divine Power, but withal the war-like and war-loving instinct remains ready to break out as opportunity offers. Not until the new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness has its fixed and settled abode, are established can there possibly be a peace that is conclusive amongst men.

Between God and man such a peace is not only possible, but it has been established—a peace far more important in all its bearings than one which, by the very nature of things, can only be temporary. Peace with God is made, we read in Colossians 1, by "the blood of the cross," and is the portion of the believer; for "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). That is fixed and sure and immutable.

"That which can shake the cross
May shake the peace it gave,
Which tells me Jesus never died,
And never left the grave."

But the cross is, thank God, the foundation of the new creation, and the death and resurrection of our Lord are the pillars of the Gospel. The peace which flows from this is absolutely conclusive and wholly incapable of the smallest disturbance. Sin

—the cause of the awful enmity between God and man—has been fully dealt with, judged, and put away, and Christ in resurrection is in Himself the pledge of its removal from the eye of God. In fact, "He is our peace" and our righteousness.

And so the Gospel proclaims a precious and a conclusive peace for all who, under the distress of sin, turn to God in simple faith. This ends definitely and divinely their guilty warfare. Thank God for the Gospel! But, nation with nation, why should a conclusive peace be impossible? Why not form a brotherhood of nations which will extend all the kindness of a loving family to its different members? Why not bring about what is called a "democratic peace," where all nations, and all men, should be on a common level with common interests, like partners in a large firm?

Well, but something more is needed? There exists, as we know, a something in "brothers" that produces, strange to say, many a family feud, and often exceedingly bitter; and a democracy, unless it could extirpate this same something from its bosom, be it self, personal interest, envy, pride, or what not, affords not the least solid ground of hope for a "conclusive peace." Sin is ineradicable. A so-called peace may settle down on an exhausted and war-weary world, and nations may flatter themselves that the hatchet is buried, and the sword become a ploughshare. It would be as delusive a peace as would be the safety of a burning house when the flames had been extinguished, but the rafters and beams were left to smoulder.

The flames of war may be hidden, but they smoulder in every bosom.

Mark—"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. 5:3). Take serious note of the "when" and "then." When they—a Brotherhood or a Democracy—shall say "Peace," just then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and they shall not escape! A solemn future for a war-weary world; but so has God declared that it shall be.

The only peace that is conclusive is that made at Calvary; and to the enjoyment of it, here and now and for ever, all who accept it by faith in Christ are divinely welcome.

J. W. S.

"KNOWING HIM."

"That I may know Him."—Phil. 3:10.

"I seem to know more of the Lord Jesus Christ than of any personal friend I have on earth."—McCheyne.

Lord, let me talk with Thee of all I do,
All that I care for, all I wish for, too.
Lord, let me prove Thy sympathy, Thy
power,

Thy loving oversight from hour to hour.
When I need counsel, let me ask of Thee,
Whatever my perplexity may be,
It cannot be too small for me to bring
To One who marks the sparrow's drooping
wing,

Nor too terrestrial, since Thou hast said
The very hairs are numbered on our head.
'Tis through such loopholes that the foe
takes aim,
And sparks unheeded burst into a flame.

Do money troubles press? Thou canst
resolve
The doubts and dangers such concerns in-
volve.

Are those I love the cause of anxious care?
Thou canst unbind all burdens they may
bear.

Before the mysteries of Thy Word and will
Thy voice can gently bid my heart be still,
Since all that now is hard to understand
Thou wilt unravel in yon heavenly land.

Or do I mourn the sore besetting sin—
The tempter's wiles which mar the peace
within?

Present Thyself, Lord, as our Great High
Priest,

By whom confessing we go forth released.
Do weakness, weariness, disease invade
This earthly house which Thou Thyself
hast made?

Thou only, Lord, canst touch the hidden
spring

Of mischief, and attune the jarring string.

Would I be taught what Thou wouldst have
me give,

The needs of those less favored to relieve?
Thou canst so guide my hand that I shall be
A liberal, cheerful giver, Lord, like Thee.

Of my life's mission do I stand in doubt?—
Thou knowest! Thou canst clearly point
it out.

Whither I go, do Thou, Thyself, decide,
And choose the friends and servants at my
side.

The books I read would I submit to Thee;
Let them refresh, instruct and solace me.
I would converse with Thee from day to
day,

With heart intent on what Thou hast to
say,
And through my pilgrim walk, whate'er
befall,

Consult with Thee, O Lord, about it all.
Since Thou art willing thus to condescend
To be my intimate, familiar Friend,
O let me to the great occasion rise,
And count Thy friendship life's most
glorious prize. A. H. H. C.

"THE BLOOD" IN EXODUS*

At first sight this "Book of Redemp-
tion" is not full of "the doctrine of the
Blood," but this is only because all who
count the Blood of Atonement "a most
holy thing" must needs first learn their
deep need of it. The first mention of
"Blood" also in Exodus is not, as atoning
for sin, or as the basis of Redemption, but
as the ground of Divine judgment. When
the Lord gave to Moses the two signs of
his commission to Israel, "that they might
believe," He added also a third, as an alter-
native.

I.—Blood as the Sign of Judgment.

"If they will not believe, thou shalt take of
the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry
land, and the water which thou takest out of the
river shall become blood upon the dry land" (Ex.
4:9).

The first sign was that of deliverance
from Satan's power and of the rod of power
in the Shepherd's hand. The second was
of the evil within us, man's nature alien-
ated from God, and God's cure for him
being in repentance or self-judgment. The
third sign, only to be used when the other
two failed of their designed end—water
turned to blood—meant life become death,
the water of Egypt's river, the Nile, the

life of Egypt, poured out upon the dry land, and becoming blood upon it. How solemn the picture, that that which God counts so precious, the life of man, in the blood, and above all, the precious Blood of His beloved Son, can prove a curse instead of a blessing. So it was with Abel's blood, crying out for God's vengeance, so with all innocent blood shed on the earth to all time, and more fully so with "the precious blood of Christ." The great question for all men, then, as sinners is: What place do they give the Blood? or do they receive its value in "the Gospel of our salvation," or turn that joyful message into "a savour of death to death" to their eternal condemnation?

II.—Blood as the Sign of Separation.

"And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at her husband's feet, and said: Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So He let him go, then she said: A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision" (Ex. 4:24-26).

Strange event as this may seem, it is full of meaning and appeal to us. For the Old Testament gave to Abram "the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised," etc. (Rom. 4:11). In the New Testament, that water Baptism holds the same place is plain from their blending in Col. 2:11-12. Neither ordinance made men either Jews or Christians, but simply put the stamp of the present dispensation upon those who were professedly such. Being but God's sign-posts, they could not take the place of what they pointed to, and vital faith was neither made nor unmade by either their use or disuse. They were simply signs, but signs of great realities—Israel's separation to God by His call, and by sacrifice, ours also through the same call, and the work of His dear Son on our behalf. Moses had already exercised faith on his own behalf, in both choosing and refusing, while in Egypt, as Heb. 11 witnesses. But while in the land of Midian he had neglected God's covenant of circumcision, and now God's call to him came, to go unto Pharaoh, saying: Let my son go, and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Ex.

4:23). Then it is that we find these mysterious words as to the Lord seeking to kill him. What had Moses done of such gravity as to call for such stern measures as these? He had broken God's covenant to Abram, which reads: "He that is born in thy house . . . must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:13). Moses, as the sequel indicates, had neglected this command of God; he had, perhaps, for peace sake, regarded his wife's feelings more than Jehovah's claims, and while "in the land of the stranger" his sin is passed over. But now that Moses is chosen as God's ambassador to the rebel King of Egypt, he must not be, himself, one, and so God forces a settlement, as we have read. Let these striking words weigh with us all, that even though God distinguishes between the lesser and "weightier matters of the law," yet He cannot wink at His own dishonor, in what we may throw slight upon, for "he that despiseth, despiseth not men, but God" as to all "that is written" of Him.

III.—The sign of Redemption in the Blood."

"Take of the Blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it (the Passover Lamb), and the Blood shall be for a token," etc. (Ex. 12:7-13).

The "Blood" is a prime feature of the Paschal Feast, for apart from it no Israelite could either enjoy the feast in safety or have what provided it—the Lamb. It is noted six times in this Paschal chapter, and in several connections—(1) It was "the Blood of the Lamb," and so, in order to take the Blood, as God enjoined, the Lamb must be a slain lamb. (2) When taken, it must next be put where God ordained, above and around them, on the lintel and sideposts of their doors. (3) It was to be on their first as a token to them; (4) also a token to God, of the death of the foreordained lamb. (5) It must be applied with hyssop, and from the basin where it was sacredly preserved. (6) The Lord, seeing the blood as sprinkled, and not merely shed, would pass over the door and stay the hand of the destroyer from smiting them. The Blood alone was their

shelter, and while inside there were the roasted lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread, yet none of these divided the honor of the Blood as being God's token of judgment past, of sin atoned for, of mercy free, and of redemption, or God's "Difference" put between the Egyptians and Israel—His line of demarcation between the world and His chosen people (Ex. 11:7).

IV.—The sign of avenging in the Blood.

"If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution; if he shall have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (Ex. 22:2-3).

The equity of "Moses' law" may not be always apparent at a glance, but inasmuch as it was God's law as well, we may assure ourselves that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." A thief caught in house-breaking, while the death penalty was not ordained of God for this, yet if "he was smitten that he die," no further blood must be shed to avenge it. "If the sun be risen upon him," then shall blood be shed, for evil in the full light of day has increased gravity, and his act was not merely theft, but open defiance of all sound law and order, which is treason.

V.—The sign of God's claims in the Blood.

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread" (Ex. 23:18, 34:25).

The important thing here to note is that the sacrifice is not called either the sinner's, for salvation, nor the saint's, for restoration, but Jehovah's for legislation. In this the Lord, as it were, asks: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" The sacrifice was offered to Him, devoted to Him. It became thus an "accursed thing" if wrongly used, because it was devoted to the Lord, sacred for His use alone. This being so, God tells us plainly what He will and will not have us associate what He denotes, "The Blood of My sacrifice." How well to remember, then, that the blood which saves us also separates us, as that which is ours, as given us of God, and also God's, as both provided by Him and dedicated to Him. In Lev. 2:13 God's command was: "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Here, in contrast to this, He forbade the

offering of "leavened bread," as in the Passover he enjoined that all leaven should be put out of their houses. Why this, if leaven be the symbol of the Gospel, or the Kingdom of God, working until the conversion of the world is brought about? This would be ill-fitted indeed, but the fact of our Lord's warnings as to leaven of various kinds shows that it is the symbol of evil, and not of good. Further, the Holy Spirit's injunction to "Keep the feast, not with leaven, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:11) also shows plainly what meaning He would have us take from it. It presented that His people must not associate with the Blood, which purchased their Redemption, insincere lives or conduct that is inconsistent with the truth.

VI.—The sign of God's covenant with Israel.

"Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said: All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. . . . And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said: Behold the Blood of the Covenant," etc. (Ex. 24:3-8).

This solemn ratifying of the covenant given of God by Moses to Israel we rightly call "the Law." Scripture elsewhere calls it "the whole law," which is important, inasmuch as many divide the law into parts, binding and non-binding, which is quite futile. What was blood sprinkled was three things:

1. The ALTAR, which was "four-square."
2. The PEOPLE, "many thousands of Israel."

3. The BOOK—"the ten words," with "the statutes and judgments" also.

Just as the Apostle Paul testified "to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law," so was it here.

The altar being sprinkled both shut out all rival altars, and became God's exclusive way of approach to Him. The people being sprinkled indicated that the covenant was with all Israel, that from the least to the greatest He was their God, and they were His people. And the Book being

sprinkled indicated that both the "ten words" on the tables of stone and as well the statutes and judgments given in their hearing, and later recorded in this book, were His law for them. He called it their life and their righteousness (Deut. 6:25, 32:47), but also said. "Cursed is every one that continued not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them." In all this the Blood witnessed to the Gospel of Atonement.

VII.—The sign of Priestly Consecration in it.

"This is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock and put it upon the horns of the altar, with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar; it is a sin offering" (Ex. 29:1-14).

The fact that such an animal should be ordained of God for a sin offering shews that sin is not a mere misfortune, but a creature's rebellion, treason against high Heaven, and we cannot be in holy, priestly nearness to God unless this is first met by a sacrifice that atones for it before God. The Blood put on the horns of the altar was an open declaration of its value, and poured at the bottom of the altar and gone out of sight, that offered to God, it was the standing ground of those who ministered there. But there was more than the bullock of sin offering in consecrating a priest to God. Two rams were taken; one slain, and its blood sprinkled round about the altar, the other killed also, and its blood applied to the right ear and hand and foot of the priest-to-be, and then blood and oil sprinkled on both their persons and their garments. We cannot believe that all this was mere imposing ceremony, but rather God impressing upon His people then as now that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood," and neither God's holy altar, nor those who served at it, could be, in the least, an exception to His universal rule. As to the altar, blood was put on it, and at the bottom and round about it; as to themselves, their entire persons and garments must be identified with the Blood also. God's Holy Priests were thus to be strongly impressed with the Great Blood Doctrine of the Sanctuary.

VIII.—The sign of Atonement in the Blood.

"And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it (the golden altar) once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the Lord" (Ex. 30:10).

This presents one phase of that primary and profound truth of God's sacred Book—Atonement. Aaron, the High Priest, made it at the golden altar, yearly, with blood, and that of a sin-offering. How, in every part of it, this speaks of the sacrifice and priesthood of our Lord Jesus, of atonement, not as reconciliation for us, but expiation for sin to God. All the theories of it being accomplished in His life—of it being made with Blood, and of any pardon for sin being apart from it, are here forestalled, and met by the simple grandeur of the truth itself, presented here. The points in it are simple and striking—

1. "Aaron shall make it"—"Jesus only."
2. "Upon the horns of the altar"—it was for God.
3. "Once in a year" once and for evermore.
4. "With the Blood"—life sacrificed.
5. Sin-offerings—sin's judgment and pardon.
6. "Throughout your generations" unto all and upon all.
7. "Most holy unto the Lord"—altar sanctifies the gift.

What our Lord was toward God gave all its value to His sacrificial work for us and our sins. Well may our hearts who know a little the blessedness of faith's agreement with God that the Blood which has redeemed us to Him is "Precious Blood," delight in all that He has to say to us about it. From first to last in our Christian course we have to do with it, whether as sinners in our sins and as "saints in Christ Jesus," whether here below or in the courts of the Lord above, "the Blood" is the central figure, and if God makes us so much of it, well may we.

B.C.G.

Home Friend, any address, 75c. year, containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 20c. year. Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada.

THE SET OF THE SAIL*

"All these things are against me" (Gen. 42:36).

"Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20).

"We know that all things work together for good to them who love God; to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

I said to one who had sailed the sea
The wind from the West blew fresh and
free,

While past the rocks at the harbor's mouth
The ships went North and the ships went
South,

And some sailed out on an unknown quest,
And some sailed in to the harbor's rest;
Yet ever the wind blew out of the West.

I said to one who had sailed the sea
That this was a marvel unto me;
For how can the ships go safely forth,
Some to the South and some to the North,
Far out to sea on their golden quest,
Or into the harbor's calm and rest,
And ever the wind blow out of the West?

The sailor smiled as he answered me,
"Go where you will when you're on the sea,
Though head winds baffle and flaws delay,
You can keep the course by night and day,
Drive with the breeze or against the gale;
It will not matter what winds prevail,
For all depends on the set of the sail."

Voyager soul on the sea of life,
O'er waves of sorrow and sin and strife,
When fogs bewilder and foes betray,
Steer straight on your course from day to
day;

Though unseen currents run deep and swift
Where rocks are hidden and sandbars shift,
All helpless and aimless, you need not drift.

O, set your sail to the heavenly gale,
And then, no matter what winds prevail,
No reef shall wreck you, no calm delay;
No mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay;
Though far you wander and long you roam

Through salt sea-spray and o'er white sea-
foam,

No wind that can blow but shall speed you
home.

A. J. Flint.

A MESSAGE FOR TO-DAY*

"It is well for us to remember that everything in the future is appointed. Nothing shall happen to us which God has not foreseen. No unexpected event shall destroy His plans; no emergency shall transpire for which He has not provided; no peril shall occur against which He has not guarded. There shall come no remarkable event which shall take Him by surprise. He seeth the end from the beginning, and the things that are not, as though they were. To God's eye there is no past and no future. We may derive no small comfort from this fact; for, suppose one goes to sea under the most skilful captain; that captain cannot possibly know what may occur during the voyage, and with the greatest foresight he can never promise an absolutely safe passage. There may be dangers which he has never yet encountered. But when you come into the Ship of Providence, He who is at the helm is the Master of every wind that shall blow, and of every wave that shall break its force upon that ship; and He foresees as well the events that shall happen at the harbor for which we make, as those that happen at the port from which we start.

How safe are we, then, when embarked in the good Ship of Providence, with such a Captain, who has fore-arranged and fore-ordained all things from the beginning even unto the end. And, furthermore, how much it becomes us to put implicit confidence in His guidance! It should always be remembered in connection with this subject that we are no believers in fate—seeing that fate is a different doctrine altogether from predestination. Fate says the thing is, and must be: so it is decreed. But the true doctrine is—God has appointed this and that, not because it must be, but because it is best that it should be... Fate is blind, but the destiny of Scrip-

ture is full of eyes. Fate is stern and adamant and has no tears for human sorrow: but the arrangements of Providence are kind and good. The greatest good for the greatest number, and the glory of God above all, are the ends that are therein subserved. All the appointments of His providence, especially towards His people, are ruled in mercy, in tenderness, in love, and in wisdom, and all are conductive to their highest interest and their greatest happiness. Oh! but this is a blessed truth: Oh! it is sweet to be able to say, "From this day forth, whatever happeneth to me, I am content. Though I am altogether unaware what it shall be, I am not sorry that I am unaware of it: for this one thing I know, there shall happen nothing but what God permits: I shall not be left to the demon's power: I shall not be cast away like an orphan: I shall not be beyond my Father's eye and my Father's hand.—Spurgeon.

THE REFINING POWER OF SUFFERING.

When Mrs. Pitkin went to Denver the one thing that she dreaded was going to see her old friend, Evelyn Gilmore, who had been confined to her bed for two years. She remembered her as a very capable woman, intolerant of the weaknesses of others—one who had been cut down quickly and without warning from a life of activity. She expected tears and remarks on the hardness and unkindness of fate in general, but the meeting was quite different from that.

Evelyn held out her hands with a sunny smile, and then motioned her visitor to a comfortable chair by the bedside. "How glad I am to see you!" she cried. "Isn't it a blessing we have our friends. Now tell me everything about yourself—what you did not tell in your letters."

The little clock on the dressing table ticked away an hour before Mrs. Pitkin realized that she had not been able to ask a question concerning her friends' illness. After several ineffectual attempts, she finally managed to say, constrainedly:

"I was so sorry to hear of your affliction, Evelyn. You were always so capable.

I cannot understand why such a thing should be put upon you.

Mrs. Gilmore turned quickly and smiled in a way that her visitor never forgot. "Do you know I felt that way at first," she said, "but now I know the reason."

Mrs. Pitkin looked startled.

"You see, it was like this: In those first dark days I rebelled. I could see no reason for my affliction. I had always tried to do the right thing. Why should a just God afflict me in this way. When my friends called I talked about myself and my troubles and railed at fate in general. A year passed, and still the little god Self held sway. One by one my friends ceased to come. I sat alone and stared at the four walls of my bedroom. Oh, the emptiness of those dreary days!

"Then one day, in my reading, I came across these words: 'Suffering always has a meaning; those who find it gain more than they suffer.' At first I laughed in mockery, but the words remained to haunt me, and, lying one night in the intimate darkness, I turned the searchlight on my soul. 'Suffering always has a meaning.' What did it hold for me?

"I did not know then, but now I have found out. Suffering has taught me patience, tolerance, forgetfulness of self, a proper sense of values. It has made me a different woman. I have learned all those things, and now the strange part about this is that my doctor tells me I am to get well. Some day I shall look back upon the two years spent in bed as years not wasted, for they have taught me lessons I might never have learned in any other way. 'Suffering always has a meaning; those who find it gain more than they suffer.'"

PATIENCE IN AFFLICTION.

Calling on a dear sister in great suffering through rheumatism of a very severe character, so that her hands were distorted almost beyond any use of them, she welcomed us with a bright smile and said: "I was thinking of you and wondering if you would come to see me." Sitting beside her, we read a portion in Luke 6,

clearly and slowly, making brief comments upon it, and she replied: "Yes, and He's told us to rejoice most of all because our names are written in heaven. How good it is to know that, and He's told us so, when we believe on Him, and that's the blessed assurance. I'm often wondering what He's left me here for, when I'm so weak and crippled, and can do so little. I think it must be to teach me patience, and show how He can comfort and hold us up." Then she continued: "I've my favorite chapters I show to them that come in, and my little papers, the Home Friend and others, I give them too. Last time Mr. H. spent all an afternoon with me, and a sister was in, hearing him read, and explain it all, and now she is gone on before us, and she was resting in the Saviour, too." Finally, she told us of a portion she would like to have read at her funeral if she should be taken—Rev. 21, about "the golden city of God, and there being no more sin or suffering or death there."

Reader, such is the portion of those who "through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God," and are able through God's grace to both "glory in tribulation also," and to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," which hope is not an uncertainty, but "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that within the veil." Is this hope yours? B. C. G.

APPROACHING JUDGMENTS*

(Written in 1853)

Judgments, approaching judgments! Why, when did there seem less occasion for fear? When was the air so calm, the horizon so clear, the prospect so enchanting? Dear reader, it is not by appearances we have to judge, but by the Word of God. And know you not what that Word records in the history of the past, as well as what it foretells of the history of the future? The antediluvians thought Noah mad to predict a deluge and prepare an ark. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark"—and what then? "The flood came and destroyed them all." So was it, too, with the cities of the plain: "They did eat,

they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." And nature seemed to smile on their pursuits. The sun rose as usual on the morning of their overthrow. Scripture notes this: "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar." What ensued? "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." "But what is all that to us?" you perhaps enquire. Let our Lord Himself reply: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed" (Luke 18:30). Ah, yes, peace and plenty, order and tranquillity, the advance of science, and the growth of intelligence, are no signs that judgment is far off! "When they shall have peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." And while it is quite true that they who only regard appearances on earth may suppose that everything bespeaks the continuance of peace and prosperity, there are those who know that God's Word is "settled forever in heaven," and who will, through His grace, listen to what that word proclaims, of approaching judgment, desolation and woe. Then, besides, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, they to whom the knowledge of these things has been confided must, to deliver their own souls, lift up their voices and cry aloud and spare not.

"SAYING, PEACE AND SAFETY."

(Written in 1865)

"Scarcely had the congratulations of the multitude who crowded the World's Great Exhibition in 1851 passed between them—a long reign of universal peace being the almost universal anticipation—when the first murmurs of war with Russia began to be heard. Its history of blood is too deeply written on many a bereaved heart to need further allusion to it here; but the rejoicings at its close were quickly followed by the outburst in the East of that dreadful rebellion which for a time so threatened the whole fabric of British rule

in India. Then came the war of liberation in Italy; and now, as these words are being penned, the Northern and Southern States of the gigantic American Union are waging deadly strife with one another; while from every quarter of the globe tidings are heard of restlessness, discontent and fear. "Wars and rumors of wars" have truly, almost ever since our first edition was printed, justified our warnings, notwithstanding the hopeful appearance of everything at the moment when they were written" (W. Trotter in "Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects, \$1.25).

"THE JUDGE STANDETH AT THE DOOR"

(Written in 1918)

The outlook of men, apart from that Revelation which God has given of the future of this world, whether in the sense of this age as preceding our Lord's second coming, or of the earth, on which we live, can only, at best, be the shrewd guesses of human wisdom, in a sphere where man's best wit is but nil. God's record as to the past is that while "the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," yet "the world, by wisdom, knew not God" (Rom. 1:20, 1 Cor. 1:21).

His record as to the present is that because in this day of grace He is "long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," scoffers say: "Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." The "reason why" of this is found in the blindness of their hearts, as we read: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that the world that then was (in Noah's day), being overflowed with water, perished."

And as to the future, the Divine testimony in the prophetic Word is no less plain: "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, restored unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:4-7). Many, alas, will not believe this solemn testimony, nor heed this "light that shineth in a dark place," yet there it remains as a prime witness against men for the day of judgment: "But

the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-15). May we, then, neither be deluded by men's fair visions of universal peace, nor fail to warn them of judgment to come, as well as beseech them by the grace and truth that has come, to flee for refuge to our blessed Lord and Saviour. The closing word to ourselves is: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory, both now and forever.—Amen."

May our God, "whose compassions fail not," grant us to give due heed to all His warnings, and also to "obtain mercy to be faithful," in passing them to others, so that, being forewarned, we may prove to be forearmed as well.

B. C. G.

"FAR BETTER"*

The air is full of farewells to the dying
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel for her children, crying,

Will not be comforted.

Our dear ones—not here.

The lights are out in the mansion of clay;
The curtains are drawn, for the dweller's
away,

On Christ's other side.

"Death hides, but it cannot divide;
Thou art but on Christ's other side;
Thou art with Christ, and Christ with me,
And thus united still are we,"

Serving Him, though asleep as to earth.
Doubt not, but in the world above
There must be other offices of love,
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is promised that His servants there
Shall serve Him still.

LEAVE IT WITH HIM*

"Consider the lilies, how they grow."—
Luke 12:27.

Yes, leave it with Him,
The lilies all do,
And they grow—
And they grow in the dew—
Yes, they grow,
They grow in the darkness,
All hid in the night;
They grow in the sunshine,
Revealed by the light;
Still they grow.

They ask not your planting,
They need not your care,
As they grow.
Dropped down in the valley,
The field, anywhere—
There they grow.
They grow in their beauty,
Arrayed in pure white,
They grow, clothed in glory,
By Heaven's own light,
Sweetly grow.

The grasses are clothed
And the ravens are fed
From His store;
But you, who are loved,
And guarded and led,
How much more
Will He clothe you, and feed you,
And give you His care?
Then leave it with Him;
He has everywhere
Ample store.

Yes, leave it with Him,
'Tis more dear to His heart,
You well know,
Than the lilies that bloom,
Or the flowers that start
'Neath the snow.
What you need, if you ask it in prayer,
You can leave it with Him,
For you are His care,
You, you know.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD*
(Chas. H. Spurgeon.)

Once when I was in the vestry, an Irish-
man came to see me. Pat began by mak-

ing a low bow, and saying, "Now your
Riverence, I have come to ax you a ques-
tion."

"Oh!" said I, "Pat, I am not a River-
ence; it is not a title I care for; but what is
your question, and how is it you have not
been to your priest about it?"

He said, "I have been to him, but I don't
like his answer."

"Well, what is your question?"

Said he: "God is just, and if God be just
He must punish my sins. I deserve to be
punished. If He is a just God, He ought
to punish men; yet you say God is merci-
ful, and will forgive sins. I cannot see
how that is right; He has no right to do
that. He ought to be just, and punish
those who deserve it. Tell me how God
can be just, and yet be merciful?"

"That is through the Blood of Christ."

"Yes," said he, "that is what my priest
said; you are very much alike there. But
he said a good deal besides, that I did not
understand; and that short answer does
not satisfy me. I want to know how it is
that the Blood of Jesus Christ enables God
to be just, and yet to be merciful."

Then I saw what he wanted to know, and
explained the plan of salvation thus:

"Now, Pat, suppose you had been killing
a man, and the judge had said, 'That Irish-
man must be hanged!'"

He said quickly, "And I should have
richly deserved to be hanged."

"But, Pat, suppose I was very fond of
you, can you see any way by which I could
save you from being hanged?"

"No, sir, I cannot."

"Then, suppose I went to the Queen, and
said, 'Please your Majesty, I am very fond
of this Irishman. I think the judge was
quite right saying that he must be hanged,
but let me be hanged instead, and you will
then carry out the law.' Now the Queen
could not agree to my proposal; but sup-
pose she could—and God can, for He has
power greater than all kings and queens—
and suppose the Queen should have me
hanged instead of you, do you think the
policeman would take you up afterwards?"

He at once said: "No, I should think
not; they would not meddle with me; but if

they did, I should say, 'What are you doing? Did not that gentleman condescend to be hung for me! Let me alone; shure, you don't want to hang two people for the same thing, do ye?'"

I replied to the Irishman: "Ah, my friend, you have hit it; that is the way whereby we are saved! God must punish sin. Christ said, 'My Father, punish Me instead of the sinner,' and His Father did. God laid on His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the whole burden of our sins, and all their punishment and chastisement, and now that Christ is punished instead of us, God would not be just if He were to punish any sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. If thou believest in Jesus Christ, the well-beloved and only-begotten Son of God, thou art saved, and thou mayest go on thy way rejoicing."

"Faith," said the man, clapping his hands, "that's the Gospel. Pat is safe now; with all his sins about him, he'll trust in the Man who died for him, and so he shall be saved."

THE DREAM EMBASSY*

Coming out of the grass, I met a band of solemn-looking men, with a curious old-world look in their faces. Wonder of wonders, they were a "dream embassy," said they; had travelled a long way, and were afoot, on a kind of missionary journey from one great chief to another, his friend and faithful ally of years. A "dream embassy," mark you, God having spoken to their chief in a great dream; and the solemnity of it all had so sunk into the monarch's soul that he sent off these missionaries of his dream to warn his dear friend, a brother king, of the ways of God with man. So serious a thing is this dream-telling that they have coined a special verb—"Lotolwela: to expound a dream." Not in the temper of mere expediency did I listen to their sacred story, the negro tête-a-tête with the Infinite, men on the march for many miles, their theme, **God! God! God!** Picture me there, a dazed missionary, listening to those dream-tellers, listening and wondering, listening and wondering, as with uplifted hands they point skywards, and paint it all so vividly.

Telling me of the stately goings of God in their far-away marsh; how that He challenged their king as to his dignity; how that the king responded with his long array of titles; and how that the more he vaunted before God, the less did his strength become. Yet again and again did God so ask him who he was, and just so often did their king make this foolish boast of dignity—only to find his strength oozing out of his body. But just as in painting light is brought out by shade, so this king learned the secret of power from this very secret of weakness. For finally God said He would "make an end," and this word "end" was the beginning of bliss. Said the monarch: "King? No king am I but a worthless slave. All kingship is Thine, and all power!" Then it was that the wondrous tide of power flowed back into his body; the weakling is now a giant; the abject a strong man made strong out of weakness. Mere dream though it was, it has solemnly crystallized into dogma, and here am I, a missionary, stumbling across these other "dream" missionaries in the grass. In our zeal for God's written record we are too apt to treat all this as a weird and doubtless business—mere misty dream. Forgetful of the fact that God's own book it is that declares: "In a dream . . . He opens the ears of men" (Job 33). Forgetful, likewise, that if England does not get these divine dreams, it is because England, a land full of Bibles, does not need them. Forgetful, finally, that God may speak to those to whom He does not write.

In Lubaland, one old man, "the Snuff-maker" by name, beats the whole land at length of hair, and this because he has bound himself with an oath never, nevermore to get his hair trimmed. He dreamed a dream, but the dream played him false; and, as the head is the dreamer, and not the heart, he doomed his head to the endless rebuff of nevermore visiting the barber. A great punishment, indeed, but so, too, had that dream been a great, a gorgeous vision of royalty and riches. Vividly in his sleep old Mr. Snuff-maker saw himself acclaimed king of the country—loud rang the cheers as he ascended the dream

throne, and then—then broke a grey, chilly dawn to undeceive and drag him down to dirt and poverty, "a fading away inheritance" he calls it. But the stout old soul could not go back from that which had gone forth from his lips. So the days grow long, and the hair grows longer, but onward he must go on his unchanging way. What an opening for me to bring out my Gospel wares, and offer this old dream-duped man "an inheritance that fadeth not away"! His riches came in a dream, and went the way they came.

D. Crawford.

THREE STRANDS IN THE LADDER*

Commander Francis H. H. Goodhart sacrificed his life to save the crew of a British submarine, fast in the mud in 38 feet of water. It was in the first week of May, 1918, that it was found in this perilous plight. When the air supply of the imprisoned men was about exhausted, Goodhart entered the conning tower, giving instructions that he was to be blown upward, in hope of reaching the surface and bringing aid to the imperilled crew. As he entered the tower with the senior officer, a small tin cylinder containing instructions to rescuers was fastened to his belt, and the commander's last words were: "If I don't get up the cylinder will."

Air at high pressure had been forced into the conning tower, and the lid was opened. Taking a deep breath, the commander was shot upward, but struck a portion of the superstructure, and was killed. The senior officer, who had intended remaining in the submarine, was forced from the tower by the air pressure, and reached the surface safely. The remainder of the crew was rescued soon afterward. Their sufferings were thus described by one of them:

When the first night of imprisonment passed, and it appeared from our watches that a new day had come with no sign of release, some of the company threatened to chuck hope. But others of us put on as bright a face as we could, and gave such cheer as a waterless and breadless situation would allow. Of course, too, we had to remember that our air supply was run-

ning out. Speak of dropping sovereigns down a well! Every tick of my watch I knew was a lost sovereign, so far as air was concerned. Then a great thing happened. Two heroes came forward and offered to risk all in an attempt to win to the surface. All honor to them! How they did it, and at what a cost, may be told later on (given above), but the thing was done, and the outer world was thus made aware of our terrible plight. That much we realized when we knew of the presence of

DIVERS ABOUT OUR CRAFT!

What a relief! We had been located, practical measures were being taken to save us, and that splendid prospect made us take in a draught of new life. Artificial light was fast failing, but hope was burning brightly, so what did it matter?

Our ordeal, as it turned out, was but a young thing as yet, however. We had still a long way to go. The day dragged through, and when we entered on the silence and uncertainty of the night we were a forlorn enough lot. The nerve of the toughest of us was wearing thin. But we gradually learned that

THE GREAT WORK OF RESCUE WAS WELL IN HAND.

The constant tapping of the divers outside was a cheering sound, and brought hope to those of us who in the steadily increasing stife of the atmosphere were now breathing hard to live. But rescue was delayed, and in the early hours of the following day most of us wrote our last farewell to our loved ones, and some of us made our wills. Then, as if by a miracle,

THREE STRONG STRANDS IN THE LADDER OF ESCAPE

came to us from above. Exactly in what manner I cannot tell you. We got air, water, food—in only the smallest quantities, but just enough to stir us into new life—a Godsend as welcome as it was unexpected. And we had not to wait long for the opening of our prison door. It verges on the miraculous. When we scrambled into freedom we were a dazed and shaken lot of men, but I warrant you our hearts were full of gratitude to God for sowing mercies."

It was left to others to give fuller details of the impression caused by the unexpected arrival of the "three strands in the life ladder." The first was AIR—life-giving air, forced into the stifling compartment from above. The boon came just in time; the prisoners had had about 50 hours of captivity, their last light was burning dimly, and the atmosphere of their prison house was vile. More than one had lost consciousness, but the effect of the tiny air-current was instantaneous. The senseless men stirred, as if in troubled sleep, and opened their eyes, breathing hard, while those who had stood to the ordeal with all their senses about them, felt instantly the glorious effect of the air draught.

The second strand was WATER—fresh, cold water—also forced down by the splendid salvage party. The quantity was very small, only a sip to each, but oh, the refreshment of it! "We were parched in lip and mouth and throat, and never was a drop of water more welcome," said one of them.

The third strand was FOOD, pellets of compressed food. The salvage party had accomplished almost the impossible. Shelter was awaiting them, and they despatched hurried messages to loved ones at home, to relieve hearts nearly broken by suspense. A while later a grateful little company heard read by one of them the metrical version of the 124th Psalm. It needed no preacher to interpret to them its beauty and significance, for they had been there, and they knew:

Had not the Lord been on our side,
 May Israel now say;
 Had not the Lord been on our side,
 When men rose us to slay,
 They had us swallow'd quick, when as
 Their wrath 'gainst us did flame:
 Waters had covered us, our soul
 Had sunk beneath the stream.
 Then had the waters, swelling high,
 Over our soul made way.
 Bless'd be the Lord, who to their teeth
 Us gave not for a prey.
 Our soul's escaped, as a bird
 Out of the fowler's snare;
 The snare asunder broken is,
 And we escaped are.
 Our sure and all-sufficient help

Is in JEHOVAH'S name;
 His nam? Who did the heav'n create
 And Who the earth did frame.

These "three strands in the ladder" are worth considering in relation to eternal things, for they are plain features of "God's great salvation."

AIR is our Lord's own illustration of the Holy Spirit, in His notable word to Nicodemus in John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The Spirit of God, third Person in the Holy Trinity, as illustrated by the wind, alone can produce in any human being that great moral change which our Lord says must be, in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. The Holy Ghost is the sole power of conviction and conversion to God, of new birth and eternal life.

2. WATER is as distinctly the figurative means of our new life as the Holy Spirit is the power. That it is a figure, which Nicodemus should have well known, our Lord reminds him. This He confirms to His disciples later: "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (John 13:3); "The washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:26); "Born again . . . by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. . . And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23-25). Reader, has this Divine air and water reached your soul yet, bringing you eternal life? If so, you next need

3. FOOD, as that which renews strength and builds up the soul. So the Apostle Paul charges his son Timothy: "Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6).

Take home to your heart, then, we pray you, this statement of the Psalm: "Our sure and all-sufficient help is in JEHOVAH'S name." There may you find now and for eternity the "three strands in the ladder" of escape from the dark, deep prison house of your sins into the light and life and liberty of the children of God. May it be so, by His grace, who "willeth not the death of the sinner, but that all should come to Him and live."

B. C. G.

THE CLOSING YEAR*

O Thou that sealeth up the past,
The days slip from us and the years
Grow silent with their hopes and fears ;
'Tis Thine to keep all things at last.

We have not done the things we would,
A blotted page we render back ;
And yet, whate'er our work may lack,
Thy work goes on, and Thou art good.

We know what blessings had their birth
In Thy great purpose, and we see
What evil customs touched by Thee
Are crumbling ruins in the earth.

And as the silent seasons pass
Along their well-appointed way,
Nor any hand is raised to stay
The falling sands, the emptying glass.

I own Thy promise, for I find
In all Thy dealings evermore
Thou teachest that the things before
Are better than the things behind.

A nobler lot awaits the soul
Than that of dying star or sun ;
Our lives do not in circles run,
But ever onward to a goal.

Thou, Opener of the years to be,
Let me not lose in woe or weal
The touch of that strong hand I feel
Upholding and directing me.

S. B. Cole.

"THEY DWELT WITH THE KING FOR
HIS WORK" (1 Chron. 4:23)*

In order to the carrying out of his work "they DWELT with the King." In New Testament language, they "abode with him," and this reminds us of the fruitfulness of this communion with Christ is the secret. We do need in these hurrying days to beware of the spasmodic and interrupted communion. It is a danger which every one of us runs, and which is ever present. We are to be men and women of two worlds—on the one hand, constantly

in touch with the world's sin and need and sorrow ; on the other hand, constantly in touch with the mind of God and with the glory of heaven.

There is a wonderful little creature—the water spider—whose activity is a parable of this life of service. It comes to the surface, surrounds itself with a tiny globule of air, and then descends to the ooze at the bottom of the pool in which it lives, and thrives on the air it has brought from the top. When it is exhausted, it comes up again to the surface to obtain a fresh supply, and so its life is maintained and its functions fulfilled. Now that is just what every true Christian worker has to do : we have to carry about our own atmosphere. And this is only possible by "dwelling with the King."

Some years ago staying in the house of a dear servant of God, I said to his wife how proud she must be of his influence and devoted service to God. Tears rose to her eyes, as she replied, "I am very thankful, but I would gladly sacrifice some of his fame if only I could see more of him, myself—he lives in a portmanteau." Do we not all need to overhaul our lives in this respect? Do we not all need to see that more important even than engagement in His service is unbroken intercourse with the King Himself? For if we dwell with Him, it will mean increasing knowledge and increasing love, which will instinctively express itself in our lives, and there will then be more unity among us, for we shall all be at one with each other, when we are individually one with the King. Some of the servants find it difficult to live together, because they do not live enough with the King.

I was recently much struck in reading that familiar incident in the early life of Samuel, when on that night of nights, God spoke to him and gave him an outlook on the future, which changed his whole life. After God had talked to him, disclosing His sovereign purposes concerning His people we read that "Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord." What a trivial service that

seemed after such a night of vision ; he just performed his daily office as before. Now we, perhaps, would have said, "this wonderful experience qualifies me to go out and preach to the people. The duty of opening the doors and all such manual service is all very well for some people, but for me there are now grander and more important things !" But he did not. For trivial though his work seemed, it was all a part, if only a small one, in the worship and service of God. So do not be discouraged if your work is of similar order. What does it matter if it is His work? and if, because it is His, you do it in a great way? Remember that sometimes earth's failures are heaven's success. And remember, most of all, that done for His approval, you can afford to disregard every other consideration. For us the end of the day, when the King comes to take reckoning with His servants, it shall be our eternal reward that He is well pleased. (Sel.).

The moment the soul becomes occupied with some experience or attainment it has ceased to be occupied with Christ, and that is a great loss.

PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.*

(Read Psalm 46).

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

This surely contains "much in little," and it is all the more of value, because it is not merely what God is, but what He is for us—our refuge, strength and help. Then there is special emphasis on the last word, help, and in God's holy and sober Book, in which are no vain words, it affords much encouragement to know that God, as our help, is a present help, and even more, a very present help, and that, too, just when help is needed, in trouble. This trinity of blessings we need to take due notice of—what God is, and what He is as ours, and when it applies to us.

1. Our Refuge—a strong and sure retreat from trouble.

2. Our Strength—a sure remedy for our weakness in it.

3. A very present Help, ensuring victory over it.

"Therefore will not we fear" is faith's appreciation of what God is for us, and is based on that alone. He alone is needed on our side in the face of all the enemy's mighty hosts. And what are these?

"Though the earth be removed;

"Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

"Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled;

"Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah" (vv. 2-3).

The solid earth may be convulsed, the mountains be carried away, and the waters roar defiance at us, yet is there good ground in what God is for us to warrant the bold challenge of faith:

"WE WILL NOT FEAR."

And with this dismissal of our personal fears, we are next turned to that sphere of God's interests, "the place where His honour dwelleth," to look at what He has provided for its blessing and safety.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High" (v. 4).

Beauty, verdure and fruitfulness make glad the city of God, and holiness and security is there, as well as happiness and joy.

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (v. 5).

Herein is "full assurance of faith," what God is, and where He dwells. His presence ensures our safety, and when the attacks of the enemy come, His help is not only pledged as sure, but available promptly, at the dawn of day, right early.

"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted."

"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (vv. 6-7).

That He is Jehovah of Hosts bids defiance to all the hosts of the enemy, that He is the God of Jacob ensures grace to us, who partake so much of Jacob's character. Such is faith's happy retreat, and herein is true rest of heart. Now alone can we further learn His mind and will. The Lord's call to us is:

"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth" (v. 8).

Strange language this, we may deem, but it is part of the education of our souls, and a step further in Divine things than

even to know that God protects and helps us. "The works of the Lord," at times, are "desolations in the earth." "This is a hard saying," many will say, but it is all the more a needful one, for "every word of God is pure," and "therefore" are we to love it. It is not "honey," certainly, to be invited to "come and behold desolations," which God has caused. It is "salt," however, and "salt is good," so let us "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." God, the very God whose nature is Love, and whose tender mercies are over all His works, hath "made desolations in the earth." Surprise us it may, but increase our faith it must, if it is accepted simply because "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And herein, too, is great comfort, for if evil is appointed by God as His remedy for other evils, we can "hope in God" while the storm lasts, and praise Him when it is over. But as one has well said: There is much more than a pruning knife in a bunch of grapes, even mother earth and air and rain and sunshine." So, next, we have a most striking contrast:

"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire" (v. 9).

He brings in universal peace, He brings it in to last, and He brings it in by victory. His peace may be long delayed, in order that men may know their need of it, that they may first be filled with the fruit of their own ways, and that they may learn also that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men," and that "He cannot give His glory to another." Yet "when He giveth quietness, who, then can make trouble?"

Now the closing word of exhortation:

"Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth" (v. 10).

"Be still!" how hard a lesson for the human heart to learn. Some examples of how God teaches it to us are salutary for us to consider.

Its first use is as to the inhabitants of Canaan: "By the greatness of Thine arm they shall be still as a stone" (Ex. 15:16). God's victory would be so complete that none would rise up to deny His rights over

them. The next example is in Ps. 4:4: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah"—the result of true exercise of heart and heeding God's ways with us. What it is connected with, the fear of the Lord, is seen in the next passage: "The earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment," etc. (Ps. 76:8-9). Again, the same effect as to the sea is seen in the words: "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves and the tumult of the people" (Ps. 65:7), and again: "Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them" (Ps. 89:9). "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Ps. 107:29). When the blessing of this for God's intelligent creatures is noted: "Their strength is to sit still" instead of turning to Egypt for help. Finally, the question is both asked and answered: "Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there, for the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink for because we have sinned against the Lord. We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble" (Is. 8:14-15).

How this good state can be brought about is seen in two cases, at least, in Scripture—one, where "Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said: Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). And while the people soon turned again to folly, yet it witnesses the effect of a courageous and simple testimony of the truth to souls. Again, in Nehemiah's day the Levites stilled all the people, saying: "Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved" (Neh. 8:11). This event was when the reading of God's law had led the people to repentance and sorrow, and God, seeing this, bade them dry their tears and rejoice in the sense of His triumphant grace. He, as a Sovereign, had the royal right to proclaim a holy day and change their fast into His feast, for "a broken and a contrite spirit He will not despise."

Having thus considered trouble of all kinds, and God's ever-available remedy for it, in Himself, the chapter closes with re-

peating the seventh verse:

"The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (v. 11).

Here Almighty power and infinite resources combine with the wondrous patience and grace of "the Mighty God of Jacob," and we need no more than this, ever.

B. C. G.

YEARNINGS AFTER HOME*

"I long to see home," says the sailor, when the ship rocks to and fro from the violence of the storm. "I am going home," thinks the shopman when he bars his heavy doors, and closes his windows at night, tired with the labors of the day. "I must hurry home," says the mother whose heart is on her baby in the cradle. "Oh, how I long to get home!" says the schoolboy, disconsolate over the hopeless task. "Don't stop me ; I am going home," says the bright-eyed girl, skipping along the footpath. And "almost home," says the dying Christian. "I shall soon be home, and then no more sorrow nor sighing forever. Almost home!" With these joyous and triumphant words upon his lips, he passes away from earth's conflicts to the rest of immortality, and is "for ever with the Lord."

"Soon I will be home again" have thought and felt and said how many thousands of our dear soldier and sailor boys, and how truly our hearts desire it for them, both in time and for eternity! "Home!" how sweet the thought, and how many and varied the feelings that the sweet word awakens in the human heart! Sometimes they may run on the lower level of "good eats and fun," and again on the renewing of the old links of social friendship and home-ties, and yet again in that which only grows better as it goes, the holy delights of the Lord for His people.

But He who has mentioned in His sacred Word the children's joy in His future Kingdom, that "the boys and girls shall play in the street of Jerusalem," does not despise either the joys or sorrows of any of His creatures. "He fills our hearts with food and gladness," says the great apostle of the Gentiles in witnessing to how good God is toward even those who

are ignorant of His ways, and often desire not the knowledge of them.

But here is an expression of home-longing that it does one good to read, from a soldier-boy:

"The Lord has left me thus far, and I am confident that He will take care of me. I want to serve Him, and pray that He will spare me for His work. Remember me to the meeting folks. I read 2 Timothy 2 that father referred to, and it is fine. Oh, how I long to get back and enjoy the fellowship that we have in Christ Jesus.—S."

Good things are here, to consider—the Lord and his care, His work and His people, His word and His blessings! Many are going or will be going home presently, and we wish all might have as their chief joys these good things, which have Heaven's stamp upon them.

B. C. G.

THE BODY, THE HOME OF THE SOUL*

When his age was 80 years, John Quincy Adams was met by an old friend, who, taking his trembling hand, said: "Good morning! and how is John Quincy Adams to-day?"

"Thank you!" the ex-President replied. "John Quincy Adams, himself, is quite well, sir. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon."

A short time after he had a paralytic stroke, and his last words were: "This is the last of earth; I am content."

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