

NEEDED TRUTH

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If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed : and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free

(John 8. 31, 32).

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JOTTINGS

The last days of any epoch or dispensation are marked by declension and departure from principles of truth which, in earlier times, were held dear by those to whom such principles came at the first. There can be little doubt, from the reading of Genesis 4, 5 and 6, that the two streams of men springing from Cain and Seth did not co-mingle until we come to chapter 6. Then came that serious time of departure from God of which Eliphaz spoke to Job :—

*“ Will thou keep the old way
Which wicked men have trodden ?
Who were snatched away before their time,
Whose foundation was poured out as a stream :
Who said unto God, Depart from us ;
And, What can the Almighty do for us ?
Yet He filled their houses with good things : ”*

(Job. 22. 15-18).

The wickedness of men and the judgement of God were remembered long years after the Flood of Noah.

How did this come about ? The answer is, through the attractions of the flesh.

“ The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all that they chose ” (Genesis 6. 2).

This intermarriage brought its own reward. There is no need to admit that the sons of God were fallen angels, demons, or unclean spirits, or whatever else they have been thought to be. Had they been fallen angels they would not have been sons of God at all, they would have been the angels of the devil. Moreover, angels do not marry (Matthew 22. 30), nor have they such a body, sexed and suited to the procreation of a race of beings by intercourse with women. Who were the sons of God ? They were men of the Seth line who forsook the path their fathers had trodden and descended to the moral level of the Cainites. In the wickedness which ensued the voice of the Spirit in the consciences of men was hushed to silence, and the LORD in His grief said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever” (verse 3). Then in due time came the flood ; after which the LORD again began with men.

The period after the Flood ended no better. Men were bent on shutting God out of His own world, and yet in their wickedness and in the pride of their self-efforts they would invade heaven. Thus Babel and its tower came into existence. The invasion of the heavens is still in men’s minds. First outer space is to be conquered, then the Moon, but when they reach there, if ever, the far distant places and orbs of heaven will still glitter in the proud minds of men as some things yet to be conquered. Alas, the easy way to heaven is rejected, the way which the Creator and Redeemer indicated, when He said “I am the way . . . no one cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

God left rebellious mankind to wander about the earth, divided by different languages into different races, and chose and called Abraham, revealing Himself to him as the God of glory, and later, as the covenant *El Shaddai*, God Almighty. This man with his seed, through Isaac, became the main line along which the word of God to men ran. After various experiences, most of which were in the land of promise, the land of Canaan, the brothers of Joseph in their wickedness and jealousy sold Joseph into Egypt. Things had been going seriously wrong in Jacob’s family. Fornication and murder had taken place. Here in the chosen race the flesh raised its ugly head. Thus it was—

*“ He called for a famine upon the land ;
He broke the whole staff of bread.
He sent a man before them ;
Joseph was sold for a servant ”* (Psalm 105. 16, 17).

God puts the calling for a famine before the sending of Joseph to Egypt to save his brethren with a great deliverance (Genesis 45. 7). But how does the story of Genesis end ? It ends with Joseph the great deliverer “in a coffin in Egypt,” and his brethren in Egypt away from the land of promise. The reward of wrong doing and departure is often exceedingly bitter.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

When we reach Exodus 1, in God's dealings with the sons of Israel they were in a deplorable state. Many had sunk far down in the ways and idolatries of the Egyptians, but there were a few in whose hearts the light of truth and hope still burned, amongst whom were Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses. In later times Moses sang of his father's God by the Red sea, after the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh and his hosts.

*" This is my God, and I will praise Him ;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him "* (Exodus 15. 2).

After their years of Egypt's night, a new day burst over Israel. Hopes that had smouldered in the hearts of some, and in others had died out altogether, burst into flame and the song of triumph rolled along the shores of the Red sea. How could this people who had seen so much in so small a space of time ever doubt their God from henceforth ? But, alas, the heart of man is fickle, and the sandy wastes of Sinai soon rubbed out the impressions made by the LORD's mighty wonders. Though they saw the still added wonders of Marah's sweetened waters, the manna, the water from the smitten rock, the blazing Sinai, and heard the Voice of God as no people on earth had ever heard it, yet when they came to Kadesh-barnea their faith fled before the melancholy tale of the ten spies, who told of the giants of Hebron and of the great fenced cities of Canaan. The sequel to all this was that all that numbered generation of the twelve tribes which came out of Egypt with Moses perished in the wilderness, save Joshua and Caleb, the faithful spies. That epoch had a grievous ending. But as with the earth, the one year dies, the verdant vegetation also dies, yet another year is born and new life springs again to take the place of the old ; so is it with men, and so it was with Israel. A new generation arose to cross the Jordan with the aged Joshua and Caleb. Again hopes ran high. The smiling cornfields lay before Israel as they viewed the land. It was the beginning of the barley harvest, the first harvest of the year, and they began to eat of the old corn of the land of Canaan. What a land of riches was theirs in prospect—houses and corn fields, olive yards and vineyards ; it was all theirs for the taking, and their God was with them ! Would they ever doubt God again ? The story of the past is retold when Joshua and the elders who outlived him passed away. They plunged into the dark scenes and tragedies of the book of Judges. The angel of the LORD came from Gilgal to Bochim ; from Gilgal, the place where they rolled away the reproach of Egypt (Joshua 5. 2-9) to be a circumcised nation to keep the passover and to go forward with and for the LORD ; they had travelled from Gilgal to Bochim, the place of the weepers. The angel travelled that way too, to tell them the LORD's judgement because of their sin, that He would not drive out the inhabitants of the land before them, and they would be thorns in their sides, and their gods would be a snare unto them (Judges 2. 1-4). The times of the Judges contained many dark days for Israel ; there were many widows and fatherless children. The story of the tribe of Dan at the end of Judges makes sad reading ; crushed out of their possession because of their faithlessness to stand with Samson their deliverer, they migrated to the north, and on the way took Mical's graven image and priest and established idolatry in the tribe all the time they were in the land.

Samuel was the last of the judges. He anointed both Saul and David ; the former was a complete failure ; the latter a great success. When David reached the end of his remarkable life of service, he handed over the pattern of the house of God with all the wealth he had gathered to Solomon his son, with many exhortations to complete the work which he himself hoped to have done. The Solomonian reign bid fair to leave Israel in a position of permanent glory. But alas, Solomon, who transgressed the law about a king multiplying wives (Deuteronomy 17. 17), was led away by his strange wives into idolatry at the end of his days, and because of this Israel was rent in two in the time of his son Rehoboam. Thus ended the unity of Israel, and the cause was sin and folly

J.M.

EDITORIAL.

As one views the present "trend" of things in the world one cannot be otherwise than disturbed in mind as one sees the sure and certain demoralisation which is manifest in things religious, moral, and political. In the political realm, though the scene is seething with strife, great nations, like so many wild beasts, seem only to be held back from attacking each other by the fear of the awful, diabolical weapons which they would use upon each other, when once the dogs of war were unleashed. Session after session the councillors of nations sit in U.N.O. talking alternately of war and peace, yet peace seems far out of reach of the most astute minds among them.

We ask the question, Why is it so? The answer is without doubt contained in the words of Paul when he laid the charge of sin against mankind, when he quoted from Isaiah 59. 7, 8:

*"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace have they not known:
There is no fear of God before their eyes"* (Romans 3. 15-18).

Man is a sinner, therefore he sins, and this world of human beings is in the state that men make it. Said the psalmist of old,

*"I am for peace:
But when I speak, they are for war"* (Psalm 120. 7).

So it was then, some thousands of years ago, and so it is still.

What is the cure for the world's ills? The answer is Christ, and there is no other. But what did they do to Him when He came meek and lowly to Jerusalem, riding upon an ass? They killed the Prince of Life and Peace (Acts 3. 14, 15; Isaiah 9. 6). Some may think that the actors in the scene of Calvary were little better than maniacs to have acted as they did, when they murdered the Messiah, but let such ask themselves the question, How would the world react to the coming of Christ, if He came again as the meek and lowly One? Is there more of a place for Him now in men's hearts than then? The honest answer must be, that there is even less place for the Lord in the world now, and in the affairs of men, than there was then.

Will men ever reach peace among themselves by treaty and covenant? Never! It has been tried and tried and tried, and, like a festering wound over which the skin has grown, which bursts out again, the miasma of human deceit and corruption erupts again and yet again. The Scriptures reveal that this state of things will become worse and worse. Amongst Paul's last words are these, "Evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3. 13). Is this not so?

As to things moral in this country, and in the world generally, the descent in the last few decades has been steep and swift. Many years ago, one frequently raised a warning voice in the open air as to the effect of the Cinema on the lives of people, on mothers who dragged their children to the "Pictures," and on young people who

were given the necessary pence to pay the entrance fee to the matinee performance. In some cases, perchance, the parents sought this means of getting the children out of their way. Now these children have grown up, and many have families who follow on in the way their parents were taught. The effect of the cinema on the lives of people, in the matter of thefts, robberies and murders, and in the matter of sex, is resulting in many, in ever increasing numbers, descending lower than the beasts. What is the cure for all this? The answer is the same as in things political: Christ! Only by receiving Him will any be saved eternally and by walking with Him, apart from this wicked world, and from the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Christ and the world are diametrically opposed. In addition to the Cinema comes Television. Television is invading the homes of people. It will act like a noxious gas destroying Christian life in the home. It is simply the Cinema in miniature. Some who would not go to the Cinema may, nevertheless, introduce the Cinema into the home, in Television. Christ and Television cannot jointly reign in the same hearts and homes. Let Christians beware what they allow to themselves. J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST

The Psalmist said, "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup" (Psalm 16. 5), and those who know the Lord in truth have a rich inheritance and a full and overflowing cup. It is good to meditate upon the glories of the One whom we have come to know and love, or who has wrought for us such a mighty deliverance from the power of sin and Satan, and upon whom the future fulfilment of those precious and exceeding great promises given to us depends. Our hearts will rejoice, our faith will be strengthened, our love will wax warm toward our great Redeemer as we muse upon His glories and excellencies.

Twice in the Scriptures we are told that God is "the God of glory" (Acts 7. 2; Psalm 29. 3), and we may think of His inherent glory, and His manifested glory. The Psalmist could say, "O LORD my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104. 1, 2); and Paul wrote of Him as "dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 6. 16). "Shew me, I pray Thee, Thy glory," said Moses, and God answered—

"Thou canst not see My face: for man shall not see Me and live . . . It shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with Mine hand until I have passed by: and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back: but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33. 18-23).

It will be seen that man's vision of the glory of God, and his knowledge and apprehension of the Divine Being, are very limited indeed. Man cannot for one moment sustain the ineffable original glory of the Infinite.

*"Holy and Infinite, viewless, eternal,
Veiled in the glory that none can sustain,
None comprehendeth Thy Being supernal,
Nor can the heaven of heavens contain."*

THE EFFULGENCE OF HIS GLORY

While it is true that man is limited in his apprehension and knowledge of God, there is One who not only knows the Father fully and completely, but who is capable of bearing the absolute fulness of the glory of Deity. This is none other than the Son, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, Himself uncreated, possessing the underived, unbestowed glory of Deity (Hebrews 1. 1, 2). "Who being" denotes the unchanging fact of His eternal Being; He never became, He always was and ever remains, "the effulgence of His glory." He is the revealer of God, the radiation and outshining of the character, nature, and Being of the Infinite. "Being (originally) in the form of God," in the essence of His nature, for only One who is God can contain in Himself, and manifest the glory of Deity in its fulness, "the effulgence of His glory, the very image of His substance," it is evident therefore that the process of divine revelation and manifestation is through the Son.

Prior to any created being or thing external to the Godhead existing, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, existed in the glory of their original Being in perfect unity and bliss, finding in each other perfect satisfaction according to the desires of their own nature in infinite plenitude, Trinity in perfect equality and unity, One God. Even then, the Father could behold in the Son His own perfect image, and through the Son the Father's glory radiated, the outshining, "the effulgence of His glory, the very image of His substance."

THE LORD, AND KING OF GLORY (1 Corinthians 2. 8 ; Psalm 24).

Of created things it is said, "because of Thy will they were, and were created" (Revelation 4. 11). Creation is the result of the exercise of the Divine will, and the first of all created beings are the heavenly hosts, who already existed when the foundations of the earth were laid.

*"When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38. 4-7).*

Colossians 1. 16 tells us that "in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him." "Without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1. 3). His treasures of wisdom and knowledge are displayed in the works of

His hands, revealing infinite knowledge and omnipotence. The marvellous designs of Creation's works are truly past tracing out.

*"O LORD, how manifold are Thy works!
In wisdom hast Thou made them all:
The earth is full of Thy riches"* (Psalm 104. 24).

The devout believer may see somewhat of the glories of Christ in the works of creation, and admire His handiwork with adoring wonder, for,

*"The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament sheweth His handiwork"*
(Psalm 19. 1).

David was led to exclaim, when he considered the heavens, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him?" The everlasting power and divinity of the Creator are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, and it was the Creator incarnate who "made purification of sins" (Hebrews 1. 3). Isaiah "saw His glory; and he spake of Him" (John 12. 41). He said, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and "mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6. 1-5).

Among the vast host of heavenly inhabitants, the seraphim are seen standing above Him with wing-covered faces and feet, as though unworthy (even in their sinless state) to look upon the majestic glory of the enthroned King, or to walk before Him with the dignity required of such transcendent greatness. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (R.V.M. the fulness of the whole earth is His glory).

Here we see the glories of His throne linked with the glories of His Creatorship, and we know He will yet take full possession of all created things on the basis of His mighty redemptive work, and the authority and power of His throne. (Hebrews 2. 7, 8; 1 Corinthians 15. 27, 28; Revelation 12. 10). He is "the LORD of hosts," the Lord and King of glory, who "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven," amidst the innumerable hosts of angels.

He rules and reigns amidst those sinless, holy beings in heaven as their Lord and King. "Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24. 10). He is an everlasting King, possessing Lordship over all He has made, and the inhabitants of heaven are called to—

*"Bless the LORD, ye angels of His:
Ye mighty in strength that fulfil His word,
Hearkening unto the voice of His word.
Bless the LORD, all ye His hosts"* (Psalm 103. 20, 21).

Amazing grace, that He should be made a little lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, yet, having triumphed gloriously over every foe, He has been "made higher than the heavens," exalted "Far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1. 21)! He now

possesses an acquired Lordship by reason of His redemptive work, in that He has bought the field and all therein (Matthew 13. 44). "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2. 36). He has Lordship over all that has been purchased at Calvary, and that Lordship will yet be universally acknowledged. Even though men may now despise and reject Him, the day will come when it will be true—

"That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"
(Philippians 2. 10, 11).

"He is now on the right hand of God, . . . angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3. 22); "Who is the Head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2. 10). The vast hosts of the angelic throng in heaven are subject to the Man of Calvary, our Lord and our Redeemer. Of them it is written—

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1. 14).

What we owe to the ministry of angels under the authority of our exalted Lord we but little realize.

*"Swiftly they fly at His command,
To guard His own of every land,
To keep the heirs of glory."*

Many scriptures speak of the ministry of angels, both to the Lord and to men, which are worthy of our meditation.

Who has not been entranced with the scene depicted in Revelation 5? Those heavenly beings and myriads of angels say "with a great voice," "Worthy art Thou," "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing" . . . "And the four living creatures said, Amen."

*"Amen, Amen, it rolls along,
Re-echoing from the throne again;
Be ours to mingle with the throng
In that eternal, loud Amen."*

Thus, like a vast panorama we may view the inherent and manifested glories of Christ from eternal ages past, "The effulgence of His glory" and the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, His glory amidst angelic legions, the Lord and King of glory; then on to eternal ages future we will briefly trace "the sufferings of the Christ and the glories that should follow them."

"AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY"

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

Thus "we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus," as Man, a Sharer in blood and flesh, the Word incarnate. We have before remarked that man could not

bear the glory of God's original Being, but that glory is veiled in perfect human flesh, in Christ. It is the same glorious Person, the eternal Word through whom all things were created and are upheld, the Word which was "*with God*" (showing distinction) and who "*was God*" (showing unity) eternally. It was He who became flesh, "*Immanuel,*" God with us, full of grace and truth.

The glory they beheld was "as of the Only Begotten from the Father." God has spoken unto us in His Son. His is a glory unique, unseen, and unknown before among men. God the Son was before them in actual living manifestation, the Only-Begotten, the perfect representation and living embodiment of the Father, revealing the attitude, character, and the heart's desires of the Father toward men, that through the Son the Father may be made known, and that men may know the Father with the object of His being able to dwell among them. (See John 17).

The Son pitched His tent or tabernacled among those who accepted Him and kept God's word, and it was they whose hearts were enlightened by divine revelation, who saw His glory. To others there was no beauty that they should desire Him. He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9).

"No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). Here are limitless depths and inexhaustible riches of grace and truth, and "Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace," the waves of the mighty ocean of the plenitude of God's blessing upon the souls of men, according to the riches of His grace. Here truly is our satisfying portion for time and eternity. Oh that with enlightened eyes and hearts we may the more intently gaze upon the glories and excellencies of Him "who is the Image of the invisible God" !

True, there were hidden beauties and excellencies which could only be seen and known by the Father in fulness, which gave God such pleasure and delight that "the heaven was opened, . . . and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3. 21, 22). "He hath declared Him," He has told out, and revealed God who is invisible to men, not in the awful majesty of His unapproachable glory, but in human form, in love and grace. The perfect humanity of Christ is indeed proof that God had come down to speak to and dwell among men. No perfect human being had ever lived on earth since Adam, and here was One who had a prior knowledge and existence, who knew whence He came, the purpose for which He lived and must die, and whither He was going after His work here was completed. With calm majestic mien, He trod the pathway of suffering to the cross. His every thought, emotion and desire were in perfect unison with the will of His Father, and withal manifesting to men the inward feelings, the sympathy and love of God to the perishing sons of men. He lived, walked, talked, and acted as God would do as a man, for

indeed He was no other than God with us, "He who was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3. 16). "We beheld His glory" said John, and that glory uniquely belonged to One who was the Only Begotten from the Father.

It was a glory no other could possess, and which could never be manifested by any other. He was the Prince and Head of a perfect humanity, and in resurrection glory He will yet be seen as "the Firstborn among many brethren," by reason of the fact that their Redeemer became a partaker of blood and flesh, and they have become co-sharers in His triumph. We can never of course be sharers of that unique glory which is His as the Only Begotten Son.

He glorified His Father in life—"I glorified Thee on the earth" (John 17. 4), and in view of the hour of His death He asks that the Father may "glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee" (John 17. 1).

Before Him lay the dread ordeal of the Cross. Unknown suffering, agony and shame were to be borne by Him in the loneliness and darkness of Calvary, in that dreadful conflict with the powers of darkness, yet He could say, "He is near that justifieth Me" (Isaiah 50. 8).

God glorified His Son in His crosswork; He showed His appreciation of that work, upholding the reputation and honour of His Son, and God's favourable opinion is true glory. In that work the Son glorified the Father, vindicating God's righteousness, thereby laying the sure foundation whereby God could come out in grace to men, and fulfil His eternal counsels and purposes. In this the Father will be glorified. "The gospel of the glory of Christ" is the divine means of illuminating men's hearts, "who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4. 4, 6).

Well might we who have been delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love be found "giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1. 12, 13). It is God's purpose to conform every believer to the image of His Son in a day to come.

"Whom He foreordained, them He also called . . . justified . . . and . . . glorified" (Romans 8. 30).

GOD'S PRESENT PURPOSE

While the believer is once for all secure in Christ on the ground of sovereign grace, yet God has a present purpose to fulfil here on earth in those who have been redeemed. It was this which burdened the heart of the Lord Jesus in the night of His betrayal, and in the light of His soon departure out of this world by way of the cross, He prayed,

*"I pray . . . for those whom Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine :
And all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine :
And I am glorified in them."*

"Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name . . . that they may be one."

"I pray . . . that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."

"Sanctify them in the truth ; Thy word is truth."

*"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me
through their word ; that they may all be one " (John 17).*

Herein is envisaged a visible unity of all disciples on earth, perfected into one, or one thing, by sanctification in the truth. "That the world may know," "that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."

Here is contemplated one united Testimony of all believers set apart in the truth. Alas, that believers should be self-pleasers and self-choosers in the sects of so-called Christendom, while these words from the heart of Christ remain on the page of Holy Writ.

Then He says,

*"And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them ;
that they may be one, even as We are one " (verse 22).*

This may be best illustrated from the shadows of the past. When God desired to dwell among His people Israel, He said,

"And let them make Me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them " (Exodus 25. 8).

This was to be a sanctified, or set-apart, place wherein He would dwell in the midst of His people, but it had to be built according to the pattern which He Himself gave in minute detail, and from which Moses was not to deviate in the smallest degree. "Thus did Moses : according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he " (see Hebrews 8. 5 ; Exodus 40. 16).

"And the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle " (Exodus 40. 34).

The glory of God rested upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim, upon the ark containing the unbroken law. God can only dwell where His will is done, and there His glory is revealed.

God's glory rested in and upon His Son who was the perfect Fulfiller of God's law. "Believe the works ; that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father " ; "It is My Father that glorifieth Me " (John 10. 38 ; 8. 54). Of whom God also said—

"This is My beloved Son ; in whom I am well pleased " (Matthew 3. 16).

Divine approval was thus expressed, for in Him God's name was glorified, and the Son was glorified, in a living witness to God's truth.

He was about to leave this world, and in His absence the disciples were to become God's witness-bearers as they were perfected into one in visible unity and testimony. The glory of the Divine presence was passed on to those who were found together on the day of Pentecost in obedience to His will. God's approval of them was seen in the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, filling them all, as the glory of the LORD had filled the tabernacle.

Thus we see a habitation of God in the Spirit, firstly in the church of God in Jerusalem, and later in the unity of all churches of God in one thing, forming one temple, one house, keeping "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"For we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6. 16).

This people, sanctified in the truth, are God's spiritual house in this dispensation, "the pillar and ground of the truth" in which His will is done, and godliness is the characteristic feature which should be manifested, according to the perfect pattern as seen in Him who is "the Mystery of godliness." There is therefore to be the indwelling glory, and there is to be the manifested glory. In regard to the Lord Himself, there was (1) the divine glory (John 1. 14), (2) the glory which He had with God (John 17. 5) and (3) the glory given to Him by God, of which He said, "the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them" (John 17. 22). The Psalmist could say—

*"LORD I love the habitation of Thy house,
The place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Psalm 26. 8).*

How true, as we think of the temple of His body, and also what should be true of all those who form part of God's holy habitation today! according as it is written,

"In His temple everything saith, Glory" (Psalm 29. 9).

F. McCORMICK.

ETERNAL SECURITY

(Continued from page 188 of 1957 Volume).

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

Hebrews 10. 26, 31

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins."

Again the context must decide what is meant. This sin can only be committed by those who have acquired a knowledge of the truth. This, therefore, cannot be true of all believers in Christ. It is not the knowledge of sins forgiven, of Christ as Saviour, that is here mentioned, but the knowledge of the truth as to God's house and its obligations upon those in it. These persons had entered into the solemn obligations of the covenant, being sanctified by the blood of that covenant to do that which is therein embraced, according to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

A saint in God's house today (the house of God is not the Body of Christ) has great privileges, and equal responsibilities, and to accept and own the Son of God, not only as Saviour, but as Son over God's house, and then to disown and flout His authority is a sin of the greatest magnitude; he "hath trodden underfoot the Son of God." It is a denial of the authority of God's Son over God's

house to whom men should be in subjection, the setting up of the human will against His will in spite of the fact that men had been set apart or sanctified by the blood of the covenant as part of a sanctified people (Hebrews 13. 12). The blood of the covenant answers to what is seen in Exodus 24, not that of the passover in Exodus 12. Upon Israel's professed willingness to do what God had spoken, the covenant was ratified with blood, which was sprinkled upon the book of the covenant, upon the people, and upon the altar; thus they became God's people, and He became their God in covenant relationship. They were bound by the sacredness of the blood of the covenant to recognize and obey the divine authority of God's word in the book of the covenant. In Hebrews 10 it says that not only is the Son of God trodden under foot, but also the blood of the covenant has been counted an unholy (or common) thing. All restraint has been cast aside, and such persons become a law to themselves, and the Spirit of grace is insulted. This has been done wilfully with a high hand, presumptuously, and for such sin of rebellion there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins.

We repeat that the sin here is the sin of one who has the knowledge of the truth as to God's house, and this sin is destructive of all that God has designed for collective testimony and worship, the basis of which is subjection to divine authority in the house of God; consequently, "The Lord shall judge *His people*."

It will be observed that this has to do with the conditional side of the covenant, and does not invalidate the unconditional side, which is,

"*And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*"
(Hebrews 10. 17)

This scripture rightly understood emphasizes the importance and gravity of being numbered with God's called-out and called-together people. It has nothing to do with whether persons will be lost or saved; that is finally settled when the sinner puts faith in Christ, and nothing he may do can nullify God's promise or take from him the gift he has received.

Galatians 5. 4

"Ye are severed from Christ, . . . ye are fallen from grace." Again, the meaning of these words must be determined by the context of the passage. It is clear that those to whom the letter was written were "all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (3. 26). They had received the Spirit of God by faith (3. 2). They had been set free from their sins and the law (5. 1), and were exhorted to stand fast, and "be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." False teachers were troubling them, and some were desiring to put themselves again under law (5. 10; 4. 21), through circumcision. Paul says to such, that if they do so, they are debtors to do the whole law. The new life in Christ is not to be lived under the bondage of the law,

but in freedom of the Spirit. They were to "walk by the Spirit" (5. 16). They were running well in their obedience to the truth, but were being hindered by this wrong teaching, and if they substituted the law, with its ritual, in their lives instead of obedience to Christ day by day, they would be severed from Christ. It is impossible to live in the bondage of the law and the freedom of Christ at the same time. They were "fallen away from grace," not from their position in Christ as new creatures, but from their position of freedom to live and walk and work as led by the word and by the Spirit (6. 15, 16). There can be no severance from eternal life in Christ. "Ye are all one man in Christ Jesus," and we can never fall away from the grace in which we stand in Christ (Ephesians 2. 4-8). The application of Galatians 5 has to do with present walk and a right attitude to false teachers. This is borne out in verse 10 :

"I have confidence to youward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded."

1 Corinthians 9. 27

"But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage : lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." The apostle in this passage is bringing before us the race set before those who would seek an incorruptible crown, and in order to win that race and obtain the crown, self-discipline is necessary. He must contend with himself before contending in the race, and so he says "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage."

The prize is not the gift of eternal life as some erroneously think, which may be won or lost according to success or failure in the race. Life is not won, but imparted to the dead sinner through faith in Christ. Unless we have life first we cannot run at all in this race. All in this race are already eternally saved, and are seen striving for a crown, not for life. Consequently, if there is failure, and the runner is rejected or disapproved, he is not the loser of the eternal life he possesses, but of the crown he is striving after. Unless we practise self-discipline, and run according to the rules of the course, there is the sad possibility of being rejected as a prizewinner. It is foolish to think that all who failed to win a prize in any race would lose their lives, but they would lose their crown or reward by being rejected by the judge.

It is delightful to read that this runner, Paul, fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith, and could truly say :

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day, and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing"

(2 Timothy 4. 7, 8)

Is it possible for a believer to be lost again ? This can never be ! If so, the gospel message would be false, a sham, and the work of Christ on the cross would be rendered void, or proved to be imperfect

or insufficient to effect that which it claims to do, and God's promise of eternal life to the believer would be nullified. Christ has obtained "eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9. 12), and is the "Author of eternal salvation," and through Him God promises eternal life to the believer. Are God's words fact or fiction? Who would dare to challenge the God of truth? Who would dare to doubt their eternal salvation which is based upon the verity of Christ's work and God's word? Eternal life is not something to be conferred or confirmed on the basis of our steadfastness or faithfulness to the end; it becomes the present possession of believers the moment they put faith in Christ. It is spoken of in Scripture as a fact of actual experience, as the following examples show:—

"By grace have ye been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2. 8).

"For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord"

(Ephesians 5. 8).

"Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth"

(1 Peter 1. 23)

"Who delivered . . . and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1. 13).

"In whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1. 13).

Examples could be multiplied to show that the salvation of the sinner is a completed thing, so that such may say, "Beloved, now are we children of God." "We know that we have passed out of death into life." "We know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 3. 2; 5. 20). It is impossible for a child of God to become unborn, the relationship of the new birth is an abiding, and eternal one.

It is impossible for any to remove God's seal. He abideth with you and shall be in you, "that He may be with you for ever" (John 14. 16, 17). Moreover, none can be removed from the Church which is Christ's Body, into which Christ has baptized them in one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12. 13), and concerning which He has said, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16. 18). To suggest that a child of God can be lost is to challenge the authority of Christ and His power to fulfil that which He has spoken,

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10. 28).

In the light of the plain statements of Scripture referred to above, which is our only sure and safe guide in this important matter, let every doubt be banished, and know joy and peace in believing.

*"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I cannot desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."*

F. McCORMICK.

TEMPTATION—ITS CAUSE

Temptation is the believer's common enemy. Many Christians, when they are saved, expect to sail through life without much difficulty. Instead, they find it just the opposite. It is of the utmost importance that at the beginning we get a right view of this matter, for I am sure it will help us to rejoice in many a dark hour, when otherwise we would give up in despair. Sad to say, that, with all of us at some time, we have yielded to temptation, but let it be said too, that there have also been times when, through God, we have triumphed. There is no escape from temptation's many-sided attacks and so long as we are in the body these will continue. With subtle craftiness the adversary will assail us; with dogged perseverance he will endeavour to bring about our downfall. When we are tempted, we either conquer or are conquered. Alas! that it is we may often go down. James tells us—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life" (1. 12).

Temptation in itself is not sin, but yielding to it is sin. There is no sin until by a voluntary act of the will we succumb to whatever the temptation may be. Moreover we can rest assured of this, that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10. 13).

Though God allows it, He is not its author. The Scriptures are abundantly clear on this matter, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; . . . He Himself tempteth no man" (James 1. 13). "Each man when he is tempted (verse 14) is drawn away by his own lust." There are three definite causes, all working together—the world, the flesh and the devil. From within we have the flesh, and from without the world and the devil. The devil works through the lusts of the flesh and by the enticements of the world; these are the means he uses to allure us into temptation. The three operate together, so that it behoves us ever to be on our guard, ever on the alert and ready when the attack comes.

"The world." John tells us that "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2. 16). Here we have a trinity of evil dogging our steps right on to the end of life's journey. This world in which we were born is the devil's magnet to draw our hearts away from Christ. It supplies what the adversary uses to stir up the lust of the flesh or the vainglory, the pride of life. The apostle Paul tells us that the "fashion of this world passeth away"; it could be rendered, "the stage scenery which is ever changing." So that, anything in this transient scene which absorbs us, gripping us in such a way that the Lord is left out, is a temptation of the world. Well might we say—

*"Oh let me know Thee near me! The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear."*

“The flesh.” How can I know a temptation which is of the flesh? It has often been pointed out that if you drop the last letter in the word “flesh,” and then spell it backwards, you get the word “self.” A temptation of the flesh is selfishness, gratifying one’s own desires, cravings and passions. Indeed there are many different manifestations of the flesh, and in Galatians 5. 19-21 the apostle enumerates various manifestations of the self—or flesh-life, and what an ugly list it is! Though many even in their unsaved days would not be guilty of some of these flagrant sins, it must be admitted that the impulses and desires of the carnal nature are toward them. Then we must remember that the Lord Jesus proves guilt, although the actual act has not been committed, if there has been the impure look or the unholy desire (Matthew 5. 28). Knowing something too of our own evil hearts (apart from the precious blood of Christ and the indwelling Spirit of purity and grace), we confess in Paul’s own words—“In me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7. 18).

“The Devil.” Every temptation is of the devil, whether it is the lust of the flesh or the enticements of the world. “Your adversary, the devil,” aided by myriads of wicked spirits waiting to execute his plans, is working might and main to bring about your downfall. Peter, who so describes him, speaks from bitter experience. Various expressions are used of him in the Scriptures, all of which warn us of the character of this arch-enemy. He appears as “an angel of light,” “a roaring lion,” and has been “a murderer from the beginning”; he is “the deceiver,” “the accuser,” “a liar and the father thereof,” “the god of this world,” “the prince of this world,” “the prince of the power of the air.” Yet though he is all this, remember his power is limited; he is not co-equal with God. The Devil is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. He is really a conquered foe. Our Lord utterly defeated him, rendering him powerless, and with the Lord’s help we too can be victorious. When he comes to tempt us, let us remember what James says: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4. 7).

“Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you
Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus,
He’ll carry you through.
Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you,
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.”

J. BENNISON.

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JOTTINGS

We have already commented on the fact that at the end of an epoch or dispensation times of declension and departure from God and His ways are seen. We have noted certain of these. The end of the patriarchal dispensation, as recorded in the closing chapter of Genesis, finds Israel in Egypt away from the land of promise ; with the death of the elders that outlived Joshua comes that declension in the times of the Judges when many dark days passed over Israel. It was in such times that God forsook the Tabernacle in Shiloh and delivered the Ark into the hands of the Philistines, the inveterate enemies of Israel. The times of revival in Israel in the days of David, which made possible the days of glory in the beginning of the reign of Solomon, were, alas, clouded at the end of Solomon's reign by his departure from God and his idolatry through the influence of his strange wives. What Solomon allowed in the days of his strength became his master in the weakness of old age. In him is exemplified the words, "Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (James 1. 15). Solomon's sin had grievous consequences for Israel in a divided nation. The reaping of sin's reward is ever a bitter thing.

The end of the times of the kings of Judah was a black period. Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who was born three years after the restoration of his father from his affliction, was one of the worst of Judah's kings, perhaps the very worst. He was twelve when he began to reign and his was the longest reign, fifty-five years, of the kings of David's line. Amongst the enormities he committed was his most wicked sin, to "set the graven image of an idol, which he had made, in the house of God" (2 Chronicles 33, 7). Though it is not ours to question the events in the course of sacred history, one wonders if Hezekiah would not have been better to have died, when it seemed God's will to take him, rather than ask for an extension of life, for after his recovery, "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him : for his heart was lifted up" (2 Chronicles 32. 25).

There was a glimpse of sunshine in the otherwise dark scene of departure in good Josiah's reign. It is strange that Hezekiah had so wicked a son as Manasseh, and Amon the son of Manasseh, who was like his father in wickedness, had a good son like Josiah. Some good fathers have bad sons, and some good sons have had bad fathers. Grace does not run in the blood, though fathers and mothers may do much for their children in guiding them into the way of righteousness and peace. They are responsible to teach them the fear of the Lord. Though there was some evidence of revival in Josiah's time, it was largely superficial, as Jeremiah 3. 10 shows ; "Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD." Thus it was, that when Josiah lost his life in his battle with Pharaoh-necoh, king of Egypt, Judah lapsed into their old ways of wickedness in the reigns of the four last kings. Zedekiah, the last of Judah's kings, refused to humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. God is spoken of as rising up early and sending His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place, but they mocked His messengers, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36. 11-21).

Nebuchadnezzar came again and slew the young men in the sanctuary and no compassion was shown to young men or maiden, old man or ancient. He took the vessels of the house of God to Babylon and burnt the house and those that escaped the sword were carried to Babylon. Then began the weary years, for many, of the Babylonish captivity. Zedekiah was brought to Riblah where they slew his sons before his eyes, and then they put out his eyes and carried him in fetters to Babylon. Thus ended the tale of the kings of Judah. Here again we see the reward of sin.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

After the long and weary years of the Babylonish captivity, when the songs of Zion had long ceased, and the captives wept by Babel's streams as they remembered Zion now far away, the Spirit of God stirred the spirit of Cyrus the Persian king. He made a proclamation, in which he said, that the LORD, the God of heaven, had charged him to build Him an house in Jerusalem, in Judah. He granted release to all Jewish captives and the privilege to return with freewill offerings for the house of God. A remarkable movement followed this. The heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin with priests and Levites, whose spirits God had also stirred, rose up and, strengthened by gifts of vessels of silver, with gold, and goods, and beasts, and with other precious things, they set out on the long trek back to their land and the city of God. It was a long and weary journey back along the banks of the Euphrates and thence down through Syria to Judah, possibly 700 or more miles, whereas the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan was something over 400 miles. There were no pleasant cornfields to greet the returning captives from Babylon, and no vines and fruit trees laden and ripening with fruit. Their hard and toilsome journey ended in a land of ruined cities and homes, and of fields neglected and overgrown with thorns and briars. It was enough to dim the hopes and quench the ardour of the bravest heart. But men whose hope is in God, and whose rewards go beyond this scene of earthly gain, dare to do the impossible, and to lay down their lives that others may catch the fire of their enthusiasm and go forward to the goal of the realization of their hopes.

The remnant built the house of God by gigantic efforts, maintaining their families by weary toil in fields which had first to be cleared before a crop could be sown and reaped, and giving service to the building of God's house. Their labour was one from dawn to dusk. Later the wall of the city was built with the same unremitting toil. But alas, the same thing happened again as happened so often long before, the rot began among the people. Here is the story told in brief by the princes to Ezra :

"The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons ; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands : Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass " (Ezra 9. 1, 2).

Ezra did his best to stamp out this wrong doing and he lists at the end of his book all the men who were found guilty, and alas, among them were priests, the sons of Joshua the high priest. The book of Ezra which began so brightly ends on a sad note.

"All these had taken strange wives : and some of them had wives by whom they had children " (Ezra 10. 44).

The same tale of woe is told in the last chapter of Nehemiah. Then, when we come to Malachi the weary tale of departure is resumed. Priests and people vied with each other who might be the most profane. God said, " O priests, that despise My name," and again, " Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel," and the last word in the book of Malachi is " curse." So ends the Old Testament.

But what of the New Testament ? Is the record better ? What was Paul's message to the elders of Ephesus ? He said, " I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock ; and from among your own selves (the elders) shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20. 29, 30). And his closing words to Timothy, written by a hand which enriched the world by its writings, were, " Preach the word . . . For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine . . . and will turn away their ears from the truth " (2 Timothy 4. 2-4). Thus the story of the Scriptures is declension on man's part, but grace on God's. J.M.

EDITORIAL

In things religious the "trend" of the last few decades has been "amalgamation," but it is "amalgamation" without Christ, amalgamation with the Scriptures shut outside. There was a time in Scotland, in the days of the Covenanters, when men and gentle women, because of their love for the Lord and His word, endured privations innumerable, and in thousands of cases, death, rather than live with an evil conscience. We are not oblivious that in the covenanting movement, because of the wicked repressive measures upon an unoffending people, there were ardent spirits who took up arms to fight oppression. The memorials of this God-fearing and believing people may be seen in the stones which mark their resting places on the wild moors to which they fled for safety from their persecutors, in the places where the whaups and the pewits cry. (Whaup is a Scots name for the curlew).

At a later time came the Disruption, when a few hundred ministers with some of their congregations, left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church. Mr. Spurgeon said once, that such a thing could not have happened in any other country but Scotland. Be that as it may, these people separated from the Church of Scotland on principles of truth at issue in their time. But what is the history of this Free Church? In time the light that once existed there grew dim. The Free Church amalgamated with the United Presbyterian Church, and these have now, some years since, amalgamated with the Church of Scotland and are back again in the darkness that they once left. A few congregations remained outside such unions.

Now another amalgamation confronts the Church of Scotland, for there is contemplated an amalgamation of that church with the Church of England, when they hope to have bishops in the Church of Scotland and elders in the Church of England. But are the Scriptures consulted on such matters? No, not at all! Religious men have so much wisdom, they seem not to require God's inspired word to guide them.

The Scriptures do not speak of a minister being a minister of a congregation of people, nor do they ever speak of a bishop over a diocese. Such ideas are foreign to God's word in the New Testament. An elder was a bishop (or overseer) in New Testament times (Acts 20. 17, 28), and each New Testament church was ruled by a plurality of elders (Acts 14. 23; 20. 17).

What is the ultimate object of this amalgamation of the Church of Scotland with the Church of England? The secret is out; it is a secret no longer. Dr. MacLeod, the Leader of the Iona community, and Moderator of the Church of Scotland, said over the Television in a reply to the question, "Are we really talking of unity with the Church of Rome?" "We are, for the body of Christ was one, and for 1,000 years it was possible to have one Church." Dr. MacLeod's confessed purpose is to lead the Church of Scotland back to the Romish Church. Dr. MacLeod is a Romanist at heart in the garb

of a minister and moderator of the Church of Scotland. He was elected to the moderatorship by his fellow ministers of the Church of Scotland.

Dr. MacLeod must know the mind of many of his fellow-clergymen of the Church of Scotland, and we would presume he must also know the mind of many Church of England clergymen to have spoken so openly of the purpose of the amalgamation of the Church of Scotland with the Church of England. What do Dr. MacLeod's words imply? They mean that the Church of Rome was the body of Christ. He quite evidently is not correct in his ecclesiastical history about there being one church for a 1,000 years, and far less is he correct in calling what is really Christendom, the "body of Christ." Though a doctor of divinity he is a blind guide, who is seeking to lead the blind. He does not know what the "body of Christ" refers to! It is not communities of religious people, mostly unsaved people. It is that body of believers in Christ and His atoning sacrifice who are all baptized in one Spirit into one Body (1 Corinthians 12. 12, 13), who are members of this one Body and of one another (Romans 12. 4). Against this Church the gates of Hell cannot prevail (Matthew 16. 18). The Lord at His coming will present the Church to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5. 22-30).

I have not got a Television set, nor would I have. My information about the proposed amalgamation and its object is derived from the Glasgow "Bulletin" of October 28, 1957. J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

REFLECTED GLORY

"But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3. 18).

If we are to adorn God's temple, we must reflect the glory of the Lord. We behold the glory of the Lord in the mirror of God's word, and as true reflection of His glory we are changed or transformed into the same image from glory to glory, and so we live and manifest Christ. This is a present every day progressive action. We may well exercise our hearts as to whether this is true of us. Am I more Christ-like in my talk, walk, manner of life and testimony than aforesaid? Note how this is a vital necessity to the ministry of reconciliation—those who preach Christ must live Christ.

"Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4. 2).

The mirror of God's word gives us a perfect reflection of the glories of Christ from Genesis to Revelation, but the reflection of the excellencies of Christ by us is imperfect and partial, albeit we press on.

To produce a perfect reflected image requires a perfect reflector. It is the unevenness in the glass or metal which distorts the image, and it is the unevenness in the life and character of the child of God which distorts the image of Christ in him spiritually. The work of the Holy Spirit is to remove the roughnesses in the life and walk, so that more of Christ may be reflected by us. Glass or metal has to be ground, then polished, to become an effective reflector, and we may liken this to God's dealings with us in the grinding and polishing experiences of chastening. What is more delightful to both God and His children than to see a truly polished Christian reflecting day by day the glory of the Lord as he is wrought upon by the Holy Spirit? These experiences may not be pleasing to the flesh, but they are designed for "our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12. 10), to make us more like His own Son.

"My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reprov'd of Him" (Hebrews 12. 5).

"Consider Him" (Hebrews 12. 3). May it be ours to be "transformed into the same image from glory to glory"!

*"Like Thee in faith, in meekness, love,
In every heavenly grace;
From glory unto glory changed
Till we behold Thy face."*

MY GLORY

There are two great future events set before the believer in Titus 2. 13, as objectives of the christian's hope, namely,

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The first of these will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus comes to the air for His own according to His promise.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"

(John 14. 3).

Blessed hope, truly, for all in Christ! He has gone, He is preparing a place, He is coming again. Should not this prospect fill us with daily expectation, with yearning desire to see our Beloved? It is not merely a doctrine to be held, but a reality to be looked for. Just as truly as His going to the Father was a fact, so also will be His coming for us. "I . . . will receive you unto Myself." "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout" (1 Thessalonians 4. 16). In the night of His betrayal He expressed His heart's longing in prayer to His Father,

"Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (John 17. 24).

This great event, when loved and Lover shall meet, is therefore the subject of His promise, and prayer (John 14, 17), and also of angelic and apostolic confirmation (Acts 1. 11; 1 Thessalonians 4. 15), and reaffirmed by the testimony of the risen Lord, "Behold, I come quickly" (Revelation 22. 12).

Are we in that happy spiritual condition which will allow us to say in truth, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus" ?

Bright and glorious is the prospect before us; we, who have by faith seen that thorn-clad brow, that marred visage, and the tortured physical form of the lonely Sufferer of Calvary, "Who His own Self bare our sins in His body upon the tree," shall in that moment of moments, "see Him even as He is" (1 John 3. 2). He whom God hath highly exalted, Possessor of all authority in heaven and earth, Co-partner of the Father's throne, with glory upon glory bestowed upon Him as the victorious One in life, and in death; our Redeemer, Saviour and Lord, yes, "we shall see Him even as He is," and His prayer and heart's desire will be fulfilled, "that they may behold My glory."

"We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him." Ere we can bear the celestial splendours of our heavenly home, and gaze with wondering rapture upon that glory which God has given Him, we must know a bodily change, "For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven" (2 Corinthians 5. 2). So that "we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3. 20, 21). With bodies conformed to the body of His glory we shall then be able to behold His glory, which the Father has given Him. This may take place at any moment. Sad, sad it would be if we were found, when the Lord comes, occupied with the things of this world, unfaithful, content to drift with the stream of a Christ-rejecting mass of humanity, instead of reflecting the moral image of Christ in this darkness. Then indeed we may "be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2. 28).

*"Are we watching for the Master?
If He should return to-day,
Would He come and find us sleeping,
As the moments pass away?"*

THE APPEARING OF THE GLORY.

While we are looking for the "blessed hope," we are also looking for an event which will be of world-wide importance. The "blessed hope" has to do with believers in Christ alone. It takes place in the air; it is the meeting of Christ and His Church, never more to part. This event is nowhere seen in Old Testament prophecy, it is a New Testament revelation. But Christ will come later, in manifest glory, to this earth to rule and reign, as is foretold from Genesis to Malachi. Of this event we read,

"He cometh in His own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9. 26).

He is coming to establish righteous rule and government on earth, and "the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isaiah 9. 6). As for His enemies who conspire against all divine restraint, saying,

*"Let us break Their bands asunder,
And cast away Their cords from us,"*

the LORD shall have them in derision, and of Him who is seen in Revelation 19. coming forth with the armies of heaven, it is said,

*"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel "*
(Psalm 2).

In righteousness His kingdom will be established, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11. 9). He shall sit upon the throne of His father David,

"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness " (Isaiah 32. 1).

A glimpse of the glory of that future kingdom is seen on the mount of the transfiguration, of which Peter says,

*"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known
unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were
eyewitnesses of His majesty "* (2 Peter 1. 16).

On that occasion God intervened from "the excellent glory" to say,

*"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye
Him "* (Matthew 17. 5).

The supreme authority of Christ is one of the main characteristics of that future kingdom, His voice must be heard, and His word obeyed.

*"He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out
of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem "*
(Isaiah 2. 3).

There, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty . . . there the LORD will be with us in majesty . . . for the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us" (Isaiah 33. 17, 21, 32). In that day He will be the conspicuous One among the myriads, even as He was to His own in the days of His flesh, and among the heavenly host, the altogether lovely One, appearing in glory as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, "and upon His head are many diadems" (Revelation 19. 12). And "Even He shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon the throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zechariah 6. 13), a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, King of righteousness, and King of peace (see Hebrews 7. 2).

*"Eternal glories crown His name,
As Prophet, Priest, and King ;
Soon heaven and earth shall sound His fame,
Each day fresh praises bring."*

But why should we be looking for that glorious appearing of which the Old Testament Scripture speaks so much? It is because that is the time "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed" (2 Thessalonians 1. 10), and the time also, when those precious and exceeding great promises

which have been made to believers in this dispensation will find fulfilment.

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2. 12).

"He that overcometh, and he that keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations" (Revelation 2. 26).

The apostle Paul, with true spiritual acumen, assessed the possibilities of having something to his account in that day of "the revealing of the sons of God," and he said,

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward"

(Romans 8. 18).

Peter said of himself that he was "a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Peter 5. 1). The promises made to the overcomer in the seven churches in Asia are worthy of prayerful consideration, and the words of Him whom John saw in the midst of the golden lampstands come to us with clearness and freshness,

"Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast till I come."

"I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown" (Revelation 2. 25; 3. 11).

All believers are sharers in the "blessed hope," for the dead and living in Christ shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. This is one of the unconditional blessings bestowed upon all who are in Christ; but not all in Christ will be found among the overcomers. It is the present enduring sufferers with Him now, who will share those special rewards and glories with Him then.

"Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen." (Jude 24, 25).

F. McCORMICK.

"EVERY WORD OF GOD IS TRIED"

(Proverbs 30. 5).

Much has been written on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; and the purpose of this article is to emphasize the matter of their *verbal* inspiration. A firm belief in this truth is vital if progress is to be made in spiritual things. Those who accept any other view of inspiration are courting spiritual disaster, as has been demonstrated in the lives of some young people.

When we say that the Scriptures are verbally inspired, we mean that the very *words* of the original sacred writings were inspired of God. They are therefore to be implicitly relied upon for their accuracy. We can be thankful to God that the sacred text has been wonderfully preserved. In the Bible we have in our hands today a translation

which has remarkably few defects and which may be used in full assurance that it is indeed the living oracles. The men who wrote these were failing men, as all men are, but they nevertheless spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1. 21). This does not mean that they were like unthinking machines. In some wonderful way, known only to God, each writer's distinctive character is preserved, thus giving beautiful variety to the sacred page, but at the same time the divine accuracy and truth of the Word are not impaired. Undoubtedly verbal inspiration is a miracle, but believing as we do in the greater miracle of Christ's incarnation, we accept by faith the truth of verbal inspiration.

When legal documents and Acts of Parliament are drafted, every word is carefully chosen by men of proved linguistic ability, and when they are interpreted in the courts it is the words themselves which are binding, not the thoughts which may have been in the writers' minds. How much more must this be true of the Law of God and our title deeds to heaven!

The strongest proof of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is supplied by the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who came *into the world that He might bear witness unto the truth* (John 18. 37). Being the Son of God, His views on the Old Testament Scriptures must be accepted without reserve. He said, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be accomplished" (Matthew 5. 18). In John 10. 34-36 He builds an argument upon the single word "gods" quoted from Psalm 82; and again in Luke 20. 41-44 on the word "Lord," quoted from Psalm 110. He told Satan that man shall live by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4. 4; Deuteronomy 8. 3).

We trust our few words will quicken the interest of readers in this vitally important subject. It is a divine mystery which must of necessity present problems to our limited, human mind, but it would be foolish not to consider such a fundamental principle because we cannot fully understand it. The disciple who holds it fast will have his faith established and know much joy as his difficulties are resolved one by one in quiet and prayerful study of the Word of God.

L. BURROWS.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN AND THE DIVINE SOLUTION

THE PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

From one point of view, the Bible is a wonderful unfolding of God's solution to the most complex problem ever posed. What was that problem, and what did it involve? It was the appalling fact that sin had entered into the world through one man's disobedience (Romans 5. 12), and it involved—

- (a) an earthly creation out of harmony with its Maker (Romans 8. 19-22);

(b) mankind in danger of eternal judgement.

The entrance of sin with the resulting problem was no fortuitous happening. Besides, it had been anticipated by God. His foreknowledge of Adam's choice and all its consequences was complete. We know this from such profound gleams of divine revelation as Romans 16. 25, 26, concerning a mystery which had been kept in silence "through times eternal." It was known to God, but un-revealed to others. Nor would its revelation have been possible, perhaps, but for God's permission of all the circumstances which led to the fall of man, and the world-wide effects of sin. Against that dark background, the glory of God's character was to be uniquely shown out. God alone could see in clear perspective all the factors involved in the entrance of sin. In His infinite wisdom the circumstances of Eden were permitted; that decision will yet be fully vindicated. Even now as we trace the Bible story of the solution to the sin problem, and see that it involved the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son, we gladly take on trust those aspects of the origin and entrance of sin which God has chosen to leave in present obscurity. If at times our minds try impatiently to probe beyond the frontiers of Biblical revelation, does not the Holy Spirit reprove our impiety with such a word as in Romans 9. 20?—

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why didst Thou make me thus?"

By such reproof we are helped to regain the right attitude of Psalm 131:

*"LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me."*

From that starting point, accepting the truth of the problem as stated in the Bible, and as confirmed by daily experience, we are ready to trace out the riches of divine wisdom, knowledge, mercy and love in—

GOD'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

The grandeur of its scope.

"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Colossians 1. 19-20).

How worthy of our God are these comprehensive objectives! Here is no mere expedient, but a plan immense in its scope, embracing many aspects of the ruin caused by sin. It is a plan of reconciliation. It will result in the harmonizing of creation once more with its Maker. It will open the door of mercy to every believing sinner who is willing to take advantage of God's salvation.

The key to its fulfilment.

The verses quoted from Colossians are emphatic in marking out "the Son of His love" as the One in whom it pleased the Father that all the fulness should dwell. That truth is central to all God's purposes. There can be no solution to the problem of sin apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. As verse 20 reminds us, it is—

"THROUGH HIM" and "THROUGH HIS BLOOD."

None other than the eternal Son of God could cope with the sin question; to do this, He must needs shed His precious blood on the Cross. The atoning work of Christ, and that alone, would provide the foundation on which God's plan of reconciliation could be built.

Its orderly development.

It is particularly important to grasp that God has shown in the Scriptures an orderly development of His solution to the problem of sin. Through failing to see this, some have stumbled, charging God with indifference to present suffering in the world because of sin. The true believer, though he may not see God's plan as a whole, yet gladly waits in faith for its later stages to come into effect, realizing that infinite wisdom can make no mistakes. It is like a soldier hard pressed in battle. He struggles to hold his position against great odds. He sends frantic signals for immediate help, and wonders why his commander does not at once respond. Surviving the conflict, he is later privileged to study the whole plan and course of the battle. The wisdom of his general then becomes clear to him. He sees that reinforcements were deliberately withheld from his sector to lure the enemy forward under a false impression that no further reserves were available. The apparent weakness of that sector had tempted the foe into a trap in which he was ultimately destroyed. However distressed we may at times feel because of sin's present ravages, let us trust implicitly the infinite wisdom of the great Captain of our Salvation!

Some salient stages of its outworking.

We have seen that in His atoning death the Lord Jesus, according to God's purpose, provided a solution to the sin problem. Let us trace together a few of the main stages of the outworking of the divine solution, as revealed in the Word.

- (1) The justification of the believing sinner, and present victory over sin.

Please read Romans **3. 23-26**. Through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God in the present dispensation, believing sinners may be sure that they have been justified. That means they are reckoned by God to be as though they had never sinned at all. God can justly do this because the Lord Jesus became the propitiation for sin on the cross. He bore the judgement for the believing sinner. Every claim of God against the sinner was

fully met by the Saviour, so that God can now be just and the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. On this ground the believer has perfect peace, because the deserved punishment for his sin has been righteously dealt with.

Nevertheless, while enjoying that peace, the justified believer is daily reminded of the truth that sin is still dwelling in his flesh (Romans 7. 20), but he himself has been cleansed from sin. He feels continually the power of the law of sin in his members (Romans 7. 23). To overcome the constant urgings of his old nature he is dependent upon the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8. 4, 9, 13), and of the Lord Jesus as Advocate for him before the face of God (1 John 1. 8—2. 2). Daily overcoming grace is promised, so that while there is the problem of sin in the daily experience of each believer, God has provided both power to overcome, and a means of cleansing in the event of defilement or failure.

(2) The redemption of the believer's body.

While grateful indeed for God's present provision, the believer longs to be entirely freed from sin. This is known at death, but for its full enjoyment he must wait until the coming again of the Lord Jesus to the air—"waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," as Romans 8. 23 describes it. For the believer of this dispensation the problem of sin as it affects him personally will then have been triumphantly and finally resolved. What more could he wish than a fulfilment of the glorious promise in Philippians 3. 21, the fashioning "anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory"? Fitting example of the fulness and perfection of God's treatment of sin!

(3) God's plan for world-wide restoration.

It was Peter who said of the Lord Jesus :

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began" (Acts 3. 21).

To what period was he referring? He was pointing forward to the coming again of the Lord Jesus to this earth, when He will take His great power and reign for a thousand years. That time is often spoken of as the "millennial reign of Christ" because He will rule in this world for a millennium. This is according to God's good pleasure which He purposed in Christ, "unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Ephesians 1. 10). Just as salvation for the individual today is through faith in Christ, so in the millennial reign the world-wide blessings will be alone through Him. At that time will be fulfilled the words

of Romans 8. 21 (please read); one example of the effects of the liberation of creation from the bondage of corruption is seen in Isaiah 11. 6-9. As for the peoples of the world, all will recognize the authority of the Lord Jesus, "and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (Isaiah 11. 5). "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever" (Isaiah 32. 17). All nations shall flow unto the mountain of the LORD's house (Isaiah 2. 2), and the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

Meantime men vainly struggle to contrive their own solutions to the vast problems arising as a result of sin. God's word assures us that all such efforts are doomed to failure. The solution must await His time, and it will be only through Christ.

(4) New heavens and a new earth.

Even the glories of the millennial reign of Christ will be ultimately clouded by rebellion against His authority (see Revelation 20. 7-9). Satan, having been released from his thousand-year captivity, will once more deceive the nations. Then is God's solution of the sin problem to fail after 1,000 years of the exaltation of righteousness? By no means, for "according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3. 13). The Bible closes with John's Spirit-given vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

We read:

"For the first heaven and the first earth are passed away"; and again,

"Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21. 1, 5).

To that ultimate solution of the sin problem, God's word directs the faith of the devout believer. Following that direction, our minds may contemplate in some feeble measure the surpassing glories of a sinless eternity!

REFLECTIONS.

Doubtless as those eternal ages unroll, we shall apprehend in much greater degree many aspects of the glorious work of Christ regarding the problem of sin which at present baffle our puny thought. Meantime, the things we do not know must not be allowed to upset the things we assuredly know. There is the inescapable fact of sin. The truth about its entrance into the world has been revealed to us. We can see that as a result of this the glorious love of God has been made manifest in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. Through faith we have tasted the peace of justification, and known the Holy Spirit's power in overcoming sin in our present experience. Modern history presents its striking fulfilment of prophecy regarding the return of Israel to the promised land. We see the stage of this world being ordered by an

invisible hand in preparation for the second advent of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. That mighty climax of God's plan for dealing with the sin question is hastening on !

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ?"

G. PRASHER, JR.

THE SOUL

It may be profitable for us to consider the uses of the word "soul," especially in the New Testament Scriptures.

The Greek word *Psuchē*, "soul" or "breath," applies to that part of man which cannot be destroyed or annihilated, and not to his perishable body which can be reduced to dust of which it is made. Soul in this sense is man's true self. *Psuchē* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Nephesh*, which means "that which breathes" or "a breathing creature."

Similarly the Greek word *Pneuma*, "spirit, wind, air, breath," corresponds to the Hebrew word *Ruach*, "spirit, wind, breath."

It will be seen that there is some relationship contained in the words *Psuchē*, soul, and *Pneuma*, spirit. The soul like the spirit is not material in its nature, and it would be impossible for us to know that there is any distinction between soul and spirit were it not for the revelation given to us in the Scriptures.

Paul writes of the sharpness of the word of God to distinguish between things that differ, in Hebrews 4. 12, when he says, "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit." His words also in 1 Thessalonians 5. 23 make the matter quite clear, when he writes of "your spirit and soul and body." Also Mary's words in her song add their testimony, when she says,

*"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"* (Luke 1. 46, 47).

There are various uses of the word "soul" in the Scriptures and we shall deal with the matter mainly from the New Testament Scriptures. We shall cite some of the uses of the word "soul" for the help of our readers.

I.

Soul first of all applies to the entire human being.

"Adam became a living soul," which means that he became a living person (Genesis 2. 7 ; 1 Corinthians 15. 45).

"Let every soul (person) be in subjection to the higher powers" (Romans 13. 1).

"There were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (persons) (Acts. 2. 41).

"Eight souls (persons) were saved through water" (1 Peter 3. 20).

". . . threescore and fifteen souls" (persons) (Acts 27. 37).

"My soul (the Lord Himself) is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." This simply means, "I am exceedingly sorrowful" (Matthew 26. 38).

God speaks of Himself as His soul.

"Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen ;
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased" (Matthew 12. 18).

"But My righteous one shall live by faith :

And if he shrink back, My soul hath no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10. 38).

- (A) Soul is used in the sense that it forms part of man's tripartite being, of spirit and soul and body, as seen in the passages already referred to (Luke 1. 46, 47 ; Hebrews 4. 12 ; 1 Thessalonians 5. 23).

"A sword shall pierce through thine own soul" (Luke 2. 35).

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Luke 10. 27).

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Gehenna, the place of eternal fire). (Matthew 10. 28).

"Ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11. 29).

"Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

"Fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2. 11).

- (B) At death the unity of spirit and soul and body is dissolved. The human spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12. 7). The soul or person goes either to Heaven (2 Corinthians 5. 8) or to Hell (Luke 16. 22, 23). As to the body, the dust returns "to the earth as it was" (Ecclesiastes 12. 7 ; Genesis 3. 19).

The Lord at death went to Hell (Sheol or Hades), not to the place of punishment therein, but to that part of Hell which He called Paradise, to which also the repentant robber went the same day. The words of Luke 23. 42, 43 are, "And he said, Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. And He said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Let none of my readers be trapped by those who believe in the theory of the soul sleeping between death and resurrection, or by others who believe that the soul or person does not exist at all after death ; such even teach that the Lord did not exist at all between death and resurrection, and that the Man Jesus will never rise from the dead : I say let none believe such lying words. Some have twisted the words of the Lord, and read what he said thus, "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise," as though "today" referred to what He said that day to the robber. No Greek version gives the meaning thus, and every English version of any worth follows the Greek by translating the words, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

The Lord went to Paradise, Hades or Hell, when He died, as Peter, quoting the words of Psalm 16. 8-11, said on the day of Pentecost :

“ *Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades,
Neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption.*”

Note the R.V. rendering of Acts 2. 31, which is the correct translation of the verse :

“ *He (David) foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ,
that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.*”

“ My soul ” of verse 27 is “ He ” of verse 31. The personality of the Lord is shown to be in His soul. He on the cross committed His spirit to God (Luke 23. 46), He Himself (His soul) went to that place in Hades which He called Paradise (Luke 23. 43 ; Acts 2. 27, 31), and Joseph buried the Lord’s body in his own new tomb (Luke 23. 50-53).

In Luke 16. 19-31 we have corroboration of these facts pertaining to the soul which leaves the body at death, in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. First we are told of the death of Lazarus, who was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. This means at the dissolution of the spirit and soul and body of Lazarus, he, that is, his soul, was carried to Abraham’s bosom, the place of bliss, as the Jews called it. The Lord did not reveal what happened to the beggar’s much afflicted body. Then we read that “ the rich man died ; and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torments.” We must avoid those deceivers who say that Hades or Hell is the grave. The words of the preface to the R.V. on the Hebrew word Sheol are helpful. I quote part of what is said :

“ Similarly, the Hebrew *Sheol*, which signifies the abode of departed spirits, and corresponds to the Greek Hades, or the underworld, is variously rendered in the Authorised Version by ‘grave’, ‘pit’, and ‘hell’. . . . The Revisers therefore in the historical narratives have left the rendering ‘the grave’ or ‘the pit’ in the text, with a marginal note ‘Heb. *Sheol*’ to indicate that it does not signify ‘the place of burial’.”

Some would twist the passage in Luke to read, “ The rich man also died, and was buried in Hades or Hell,” an utter perversion of Scripture. This is absolutely not what the Greek says. “ He was buried ” refers to his body. Then the next sentence says, “ And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” There is no lifting up of the eyes of the dead in the grave, neither are there any torments or flame there. The soul of the rich man was in torments, not his body.

J.M.

(To be continued, D.V.)

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JOTTINGS

Amongst Dictionary meanings of Hope is the following:—

“A desire of some good, accompanied with expectation of obtaining it, or the recognition of better things in store, accompanied with all due effort to gain them.”

God is called “the God of hope”:

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15. 13).

The Lord is called our Hope:

“Christ Jesus our Hope” (1 Timothy 1. 1).

He is also the Hope of glory:

“Christ in you, the Hope of glory” (Colossians 1. 27).

Hope finds its base in God’s love, and this we are told has been “shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us” (Romans 5. 5).

God’s hope in creation on this earth is stated in Romans 8. 19-21:

“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.”

What an unfolding of the divine mind is contained in these few verses! When Adam, who was earth’s over-lord, sinned and fell, all animated creation fell with him. Man’s life in this world became vanity and God subjected all animated creation to vanity, though, with the exception of the serpent, it had done no evil. This subjection of creation to vanity was in hope, that is God’s hope, that the time would come when it would be delivered from the bondage of corruption into which it was brought through man’s sin. Most of animal life is not simply born to die, but to be killed. The law of the jungle and the forest is one of tooth and claw. The weaker animals spend their days and nights in fear of the killers. In this orgy of killing, men, the hunters, have shared a large and gory part, which they call sport. Most of the (clean) domesticated animals are finally slaughtered. Thus the vain struggle of existence goes on century after century. Was this God’s original purpose? We answer, No. God had a good day in view. The time of the coming of the Son of Man was in view, One who would recover what Adam lost through sin; He who is the second Man and the last Adam.

In Him the words of Psalm 8. 4-8 will have fulfilment. “What is man?” in verse 4 does not refer to the Lord. The word for “man” here is the Hebrew word *Enosh*, which means frail, mortal (dying) man. The Lord was not an *Enosh*, a mortal man, though He died. He died because He willed to die, that is, to lay down His life, as John 10. 17, 18 clearly shows. Men killed Him when He allowed them so to do.

The Lord is the Son of Man (Adam) the Representative of the human race and the Heir to all the good which was lost in Adam. All things are put under His feet:

“All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.”

All this animated creation is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, and then it shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. This great change is indicated in Isaiah 11. 6-9; 65. 25.

Saints have their part in the common groan of creation, such as have the first-fruits of the Spirit. We were saved in hope, not by hope; we were saved in a state of hope and we look forward to the day of our redemption, the redemption of our bodies, and then for us the groan will cease for ever. The Spirit also helps us in our present distresses, for He “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8. 26). The Spirit groans, we groan, and creation groans! We wait and long and hope.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

Hope is expectation, expectation of some future good. Paul says, "Hope that is seen is not hope : for who hopeth for that which he seeth ? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it " (Romans 8. 24, 25).

The Scriptures are the foundation of all true hope, of future good and blessedness :

" For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope " (Romans 15. 4).

We must therefore first of all believe the Scriptures. Hence the word of Hebrews 11. 1 :

" Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for."

Faith comes first in the ways of God with us, for if there is no faith there is no hope.

" Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love " (1 Corinthians 13. 13).

Some have thought and written of this verse, that the time will come when faith and hope will cease and love alone abide. Is this so ? What of the words of Peter concerning us ?

" Who through Him (Christ) are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory ; so that your faith and hope might be in God " (1 Peter 1. 21).

Shall we ever cease to be believers in God ? I should say never, neither will our faith and hope cease to be in Him.

It is said of the Lord even now in heaven,

" I will put My trust in Him " (God) (Hebrews 2. 13).

(" Trust " here, in the Greek, is a form of the word *Peithō* to persuade, from which *Pistis*, faith, is derived).

If God's saints who stand in grace and rejoice in hope of the glory of God are to have an increase of hope in that glory, Paul outlines how this will be brought about. He says, " Tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, probation (or experience, proof, trial) ; and probation, hope."

It is not in the sunny days of prosperity that hope is the brightest, but in dark days of trial when in the experience of saints they are put to the proof ; it is then that the lamp of hope shines clearly. The darker the day, the brighter the hope !

The hope of the gospel (Colossians 1. 23) is a hope which is laid up for the believer in the heavens (1. 5).

The hope of Hebrews 3. 6 ; 6. 18, 19 ; 7. 19 is in the fact that the Lord as our High Priest has entered into heaven to appear before the face of God for us. In the past dispensation the hope of Israel on the day of atonement was in the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the people's sins or errors. So our High Priest has entered in to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2. 17), not reconciliation, as in the A.V. This propitiation for the sins of the people should not be confused with that of Romans 3. 25, where it is propitiation made at the Cross for the guilty sinner. Note the difference between propitiation made for the people's sin, and that for the ruler or one of the common people, in Leviticus 4. In the one case it was made at the golden altar in the holy place, and in the other at the copper altar.

The hope of Titus 2. 13 is not the going-in hope of our High Priest entering into heaven itself, but the coming-out hope of His return.

" Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The blessed hope is the appearing of the Lord, not two events such as the coming of the Lord to the air and later to the earth. " Looking " means "awaiting to receive."

We have here in the R.V. a signal proof of the Deity of our Lord ; He is described as " our great God and Saviour". The A.V. wrongly translates as "the great God and our Saviour." God and Saviour both apply to the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.M.

EDITORIAL

(NOTES ON 1 TIMOTHY 5. 20)

We have had an American magazine entitled "Words in Season" handed to us, so that we might read an article therein under the title, "The 'Needed Truth' movement" (November, 1957, pages 204-206), especially that part on page 205, in which there is a criticism of what we wrote in "Bible Studies" of July, 1957, page 111. The above verse as given in the R.V. reads as follows:—

"Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear."

It is clear enough that Paul is giving instructions to Timothy as to elders in this paragraph (verses 17-21), and not as to saints in general. Two classes of elders, shall we say, are in view, (1) the elders that ruled well, who were to be counted worthy of double honour, especially such as laboured in the word and in teaching, and (2) the elders that sinned, who were to be reprov'd, but no accusation was to be received against an elder, except it was sustained by two or three witnesses. Them that sinned must be elders, according to the context, and not saints (what I mean by saints is, saints who are not elders). "Reprove before all"; as saints or the church are not in the picture in this paragraph, "all" here must be all the elders. "That the rest," or "others" A.V., not the rest of the saints, for as we have said, the saints are not in view in the passage, but the rest of the elders also may be in fear. The whole passage is blurred and destroyed if we introduce the discipline of elders before the church or by the church. The sin in view is not one that called for the church taking action and expelling one from its communion, as in 1 Corinthians 5, but was sin of the nature that could be justly met by reproof before elders.

Of course where there is no recognized oversight or circle of elders, such a course as Paul outlines could not be taken.

The criticism referred to above apparently implies that "all" and "the rest" are the saints in the assembly, and that an elder or elders could be rebuked by other elders (or is it by the saints?) before the saints. The impropriety of such a course should be evident even to a person with a meagre understanding of God's will and the godly order that His will produces.

I quote some wise words by Mr. William Kelly, from the "Christian Annotator" of January 5, 1856, page 9, at a time when eldership was denied by most of the outstanding men amongst "Brethren":—

"1 Timothy 5. 17. It is evident that the verse affords no ground for referring the officials in question to those of cities or districts, *i.e.* the bishops of a later date. Plurality is everywhere assumed. It is clear that labouring in the word and doctrine was not necessary to these elders. No elders are spoken of in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, for it must be remembered that, while elders were to rule or preside, there were others, besides, who ruled, and even in a higher way and larger sphere."

Mr. William Kelly with his profound knowledge could see beyond many of his time, that those who ruled were not all on the same level and with the same weight of responsibility. This we too have seen many years ago.

We do not consider that our critic is at all justified in his reference to a society of elders (who ever heard of such a thing ?) in contrast to the word of God. Elders should ever seek to rule by God's word and not by their own thoughts. Such is what we believe the Scriptures to teach.

We forbear to follow the writer of this criticism in his use of the common expression "parrot-talk." Glib expressions of this kind do not enhance either a publication or a writer.

As to the High Priesthood of Christ, it is not ours to deny the Lord's Priesthood to any ; we have no authority over the Lord. But surely the Lord's Priesthood and the house of God are correlated matters. Can this be denied ? It was so in the days of Israel, that the priesthood of Aaron and his sons was connected with the house of God, and Aaron and his sons could not function in the priests' office apart from God's house. The Place of the Name was ever vital to their service. It would be well if our critic set himself the task of finding out what the house of God is and who are in it. We know that many brethren (not with us) teach that all the children of God are in God's house, and this, carried to its logical conclusion, would mean that they are in the house of God even if they are in the Roman Catholic church. We believe that the house of God is conditional, as Hebrews 3. 6 clearly shows. "Holding fast" is not a condition to continue to be a child of God.

Complete confusion exists amongst "Brethren" as to the scriptural terms, "The Church and Churches of God," "The Church which is His (Christ's) Body," "Temple of God," "House of God" ; indeed in all Christian literature (so called) the greatest confusion exists as to these divinely given definitions. We have tried as well as we can, in some small way, over many years to set out clearly our understanding of the meaning of these terms. We would say that unless we are clear in our terms we shall be wrong in our results, in our exposition of the Word of God, and that is a serious matter.

We wish to say definitely that we believe that a Church of God should be ruled by a plurality of elders, and that the elders of such Churches should be joined together as truly as the Churches are to be joined together in one Fellowship.

If any of the friends of our critic wish to know who we are and why we separated from "Open Brethren" (so called), they will find it explained in a small book which we issued a few years ago, entitled "A Search for the Truth of God."

J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST

The holiness of Christ is an eternal fact witnessed to by God, angelic beings, demons and men. Holiness is essentially inherent in His Being by reason of who He is, equally one with the Father, whom He addressed as "Holy Father" (John 17. 11), and with the Holy Spirit. Of Himself it is witnessed, "Neither wilt Thou give *Thy Holy One* to see corruption," and again, "Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One," and again, "Thy holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 2. 27; 3. 14; 4. 27).

Christ is therefore inherently holy in His Deity and humanity, in Being and nature. He dwelt in the unsullied glory of "eternity" with the Father and the Spirit. Heavenly beings describe to each other, and in unison, as they adore and serve in the presence of the triune God, His threefold equality of holiness—"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come" (Revelation 4. 8). Before the throne "there were seven Lamps of fire burning . . . which are the seven Spirits of God." In the midst of the throne, there was "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." Though there was divinity in manifestation, there ever remained equality of Being and attributes, and to each is ascribed that *original, unimputed, and eternal holiness* which belongs exclusively to the triune God.

In the outworking of the divine purposes in redemption the eternal Son assumed the form of perfect humanity, which in no wise affected the inherent holiness of His Person. Even though He laid aside His glory (see John 17. 5), He was the same holy Being manifested in human form, revealing, and manifesting the moral glories which belong to Deity. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit:

"Wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

He was called "holy, the Son of God"; He was that before He became incarnate. The changing of His environment from heaven to earth did not alter His identity or character. The attributes of the incarnate Christ are the same as those which He possessed upon the throne when Isaiah saw Him, before whom seraphim with covered faces and feet cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6. 3). He is no less holy as veiled in perfect humanity.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever"
(Hebrews 13. 8).

As Man in this world He was unique, in that He possessed a purity of nature and holiness which belonged to heaven, and this was a witness to His identity as the Son of God, and to the Father who sent Him. He lived a perfect life which could be lived by no one of the human race, for all were defiled by sin in the flesh.

God gave to Israel His law which was to be lived by them as a testimony to the Name of the LORD who gave it. Alas, by reason of abject failure, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles ! (Romans 2. 24). "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good." It was a reflection of the divine character, but how unlike God man is ! That law could only find its perfect answer in One who Himself was holy, and righteous, and good ; that Person was Christ. He not only answered to the outward commandments of that holy moral law, but also to the inward requirements of the heart. It was *His love* to God and man which was the motive power of fulfilment, for He loved the Lord His God with all His heart, His soul, His strength and mind, and His neighbour as Himself. He never needed to pray like David—"Clear Thou me from hidden faults," for He never thought a wrong thought, never contemplated a wrong action ; in Him was no sin ; He knew no sin, either in mind or heart, walk or ways. No wonder He received the approbation of heaven—

"Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen ;

My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased" (Matthew 12. 18).

He was "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners." He lived in the solitude of that holy life in which none of the human race could fully share. Whilst He was loved by God and all in heaven, He was hated by men, hated without a cause. The Holy One in their midst was a standing condemnation to the unholy and sinful, for they "loved darkness rather than light ; for their works were evil."

The path He trod was ever in communion with the Father, and never a shadow came in between. The Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him, and every inward movement of that Spirit found its perfect expression in the holy humanity of Christ. He lived, He walked, He wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit, doing those things He saw the Father doing (John 5. 19), and finally, "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God" (Hebrews 9. 14).

Sinful man cannot know the abhorrent heinousness of sin because of the numbing effect of a defiled heart and mind, but He whose purity and holiness were as unsullied as when He dwelt on the throne of heaven recoiled in pain and sorrow in the presence of sin and its consequences. Is not this the lesson written across the poignant story of Gethsemane ? His utter abhorrence of sin is seen in His blood-like sweat, in the agony of soul-conflict in anticipation of the cross. It is reflected in those heart-touching words of the Saviour,

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26. 36-45).

In anticipation, the holy, prostrate Saviour felt in all its intensity the pangs and pains of that dark moment when His holy Being would come into contact with sin as the Sin-Bearer. In that conflict of soul He triumphed, and, bowing to the will of His Father, became obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

The holiness of Christ was an absolute necessity to the perfection and acceptability of His sacrifice. The holiness and righteousness of God's throne were vindicated in judgement by the perfection of the holy Victim which answered every claim required by God.

"Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God" (Hebrews 9. 14).

God's pleasure in Him is expressed in the words of the hymn-writer—

*"Thou findest in that Spotless One,
Where all perfections dwell,
All that Thy heart could wish for us,
All that Thou e'er could'st tell."*

God has shown His approval and acceptance of the work and sacrifice of Christ in that He has raised Him from the dead. Of that precious body in which He wrought, it is written :

"Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption."

"He whom God raised up saw no corruption" (Acts 13. 35, 37).

"This is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10. 42).

The Judge of all is the One who in nature and character is absolutely holy, and no sin will escape His notice and judgement ; the Holy One is the Son of Man (John 5. 27).

Even unclean spirits in terror-stricken apprehension asked—"Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time ?" "I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Matthew 8. 29 ; Mark 1. 24).

To us who believe, the pattern and example of His holy life should be our objective. Let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that one day we shall stand at the judgement-seat of Christ, before the holy, piercing gaze of the Holy One of God.

*"Before the holy judgement throne
We'll see, as we in awe bow down,
Our works in fire be tried ;
In view of that devouring flame,
Be this our prayer, and this our aim :
'In Him may we abide.'"*

F. McCORMICK.

STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS

I

Undoubtedly one of the finest and most stirring themes in the Scriptures is the provision for the blessing which God purposed upon the Gentiles, those who had no share in the covenants of promise, and were without hope. We who are Gentiles by descent eagerly search the Scriptures for evidences of God's care for the strangers to the covenants, though we see in the covenants themselves God's intention that in Abraham and in Isaac and in Jacob all the earth should in due course be blessed. There were some, though, who did not have to wait the fulfilment of God's ultimate purposes, but who were enabled by His grace to become partakers with His chosen people in such blessings, privileges, and responsibilities as were then made known to men.

We see something of this in Deuteronomy 23. 3-8 in the commandments concerning the Ammonite and the Moabite in the one category, and the Edomite and the Egyptian in the other. The Assembly of the LORD was indeed closely guarded, but in a certain measure the heart of God responded to the work of faith, whether in Abraham or in the hearts of some poor strangers who desired to be with the people of God, who looked on the sojourning people as strangers in the world, and deemed it to be a far better thing for themselves to be strangers to the world than to be strangers to God. No doubt it was a hard thing to know that many generations must pass ere the full liberty of the chosen people could be shared by the strangers, but this test of faith is itself akin to that of Abraham, who had to look down the ages to see the fulness of the blessing come to his descendants. It is worthy of note that in many of these things men are taught to esteem the blessings to come to their posterity, for "parents to lay up for the children" in a very special and blessed way. Indeed we have to take a wide view of many of the parables of the Scriptures, in which we have to consider the ways of God through generation after generation, to see the characteristics of the parents in the sons, and to note how God speaks to peoples as though He were speaking to their long-dead progenitors.

Even concerning men of whom it was written, "Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever" (Deuteronomy 23. 6), hope is not entirely cut off, though ten generations (verse 3) must await the full blessing. What a fine distinction is made in these words! It is not that men of this class are to be persuaded to come in, but rather is it that the seeker after the God of Israel is not debarred so long as he values the hope and is prepared with patience to wait for it. Then Edom the "brother" (verse 8) and the Egyptian are placed upon the same footing, and in their lifetime may hope to see their descendants of the third generation occupying the place of privilege. A distinction may be drawn between the people of Egypt and the Pharaohs of Egypt, analogous to that which we know exists between the people of this world and the rulers of this world-darkness. God loved the world, and this is again borne out from Isaiah 19. 24, 25 :

“ In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth : for that the LORD of Hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.”

The cases of Rahab and Ruth are well known, and we shall not deal with them in detail, save to remark that entrance into the blessings of Israel was in all probability conferred in a very special way through their husbands, a type of the ease with which the Church which is the Body receives blessing through the heavenly Bridegroom.

The Gibeonites

It is our hope to set forth in a few articles some reflections upon the dealings of God with certain peoples, and with the above introductions we shall now turn our attention to the history of the Gibeonites. Please read Joshua 9. It is generally remarked concerning the Book of Joshua that it should be read in connexion with the Epistle to the Ephesians, for each deals with a place of inheritance and blessing, and each deals with accompanying warfare. The glorious entry into the Land of Canaan and the victory over Jericho were followed by the defeat at Ai, and the people had to learn the lesson that it is often in the flush of victory that we have need to beware of the power of the Adversary, who takes advantage of our pride in our victory to tempt us to go on in our own strength. Even after Ai, where the final victory was assured by the advice and help of God, one feels that Joshua and his fellows had not fully learnt the lesson to do all things solely by the counsel of God.

The “ wiles of the Devil ” are made manifest very early. His first move is often associated with intimidation, whether in the case of Pharaoh in Egypt, or in that of the Council in Jerusalem who beat the apostles and commanded them not to teach the things of the Lord. So we read of a great confederation of kings to fight against Israel, and then of the Gibeonites who worked “ wilyly ” and sought an alliance with Israel. They went to work very thoroughly, every detail had been planned so that Joshua would not suspect them to be inhabitants of the land. So they professed to come from a far country and they were so wily that they only spoke of that which had been done in Egypt and beyond Jordan. There was no word of sharing in the Land of Promise. Moreover, even as the Devil is apt to quote Scripture, so these men were ostensibly covered by the law of Deuteronomy 20. 11 and 15, and they offered themselves as servants.

In that Joshua and the Princes of Israel sought not the counsel of God, they made a covenant with these people, and it was not until later that the people found out the true state of affairs and murmured against the Princes. A difficult problem has indeed to be solved : how shall the Gibeonites be treated ? Shall they be put to the sword ? Not so, for the Princes had sworn unto them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Well then, let them live, some might have said, but let them be banished to the far corners of the Land. Again, not so, but, said

Joshua, let them be servants indeed, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, *and for the altar of the LORD.*

Mere human wisdom would stand aghast at such a decision. Should such a people be allowed even to touch anything that was to be used in the LORD's service? Here indeed we have an insight into the perfect wisdom of God, for if the people of Gibeon had simply been made to be slaves, then the temptation would have been strong to have made many more slaves. Even so, the people of Israel did not escape the snare of Satan, for we afterwards read how they did not slay all the inhabitants of the land, for "it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to taskwork" (17. 13), and in due course they learnt the truth of Deuteronomy 20. 18, for their slaves taught them the abominations of the Canaanites.

But they did not learn any of these things from the Gibeonites, who seemed to have had a quiet resting place among the Israelites for many centuries, and God severely punished the people of Israel for the transgression of that ultra-righteous man Saul, who put some of the Gibeonites to death, "to destroy them from remaining in any of the borders of Israel" (see 2 Samuel 21). God had a care for them, for the Princes of Israel had sworn to them in the Name of the LORD. Moreover, when the men who had deceived Joshua were confronted with the deception, their confession (verse 24) must have had some weight:—

"It was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded . . . to give you all the land . . . And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do."

They no longer held out for the letter of the covenant made with them.

And it seemed good and right unto the LORD to make them hewers of wood and drawers of water . . . *for the altar of the LORD.* This was the secret of their being kept from being a snare unto Israel. Where men would no doubt have kept them from the altar, God gave them some work to do, however humble it might be, in service for Him. As the Gibeonites hewed that wood, their minds would in some degree or other be taken up with the use of that fuel in maintaining the fire on the altar, and we may seek to impress upon each and all that God has a care for those who are taken up with the service of the altar and that they will neither be stumbled nor will stumble others if they are kept very near to the God of the Altar, in the place which He chooses (verse 27).

This is a lesson drawn from a people in a humble condition, doing humble service, but in these days the strangers to the covenants who are made near in Christ have reserved for them in this life a place of service, the highest blessing we may enjoy on earth, in the House of God on earth today if they have humility to come to the Place of the Name and own themselves to be bondservants of the Lord.

A. T. DOODSON.

(To be continued).

THE SOUL

(continued from page 32)

Now the souls of the redeemed go to Heaven, not to Sheol or Hades as in the past before the Lord died. Peter was told by the Lord, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now ; but thou shalt follow afterwards" (John 13. 36). Paul speaks of being at home in the body, and absent from the Lord ; and of being absent from the body, and at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5. 6, 8). Both Peter and Paul long since followed the Lord, to where He was gone, to Heaven, and are absent from the body and at home with the Lord. Paul also says that he had "the desire to depart and to be with Christ ; for it is very far better" (Philippians 1. 23). We also read of the souls of the martyrs of the time of the great Tribulation, who had been slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, being under the altar in Heaven (Revelation 6. 9-11 ; see also 20. 6).

Those who die in their sins cannot go where Christ is, in Heaven (John 8. 21:24). Their place will be that of the rich man who lifted up his eyes in Hell, being in torments.

Thus we see that at death, at the dissolution of spirit and soul and body, the soul, that is, the person, either goes to Heaven or to Hell, and in both Heaven and Hell there is no thought of the soul sleeping, far less that it does not exist at all. Sleeping has to do with the body. Daniel 12. 2 makes this perfectly clear. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Here is the resurrection of the human bodies of the dead.

In order to trip up unwary believers, heretics ask such a question as, "Has man an immortal soul?" If the answer is given as yes, then the questioner will ask for the text that proves this. There is none, of course, for mortal and immortal ever apply to the body, never to the soul. Mortal and immortal do not mean existence and non-existence, even as life and death do not mean existence, and non-existence, but states of existence. Many things exist which do not live and never had life. And what is dead exists though it is dead. If more care were taken in the right use of words less errors would perhaps exist. Some of course are out to deceive the simple and uneducated.

We have dwelt some time on the fact that the soul is that part of man wherein his personality resides whether in life or after death. It has been well said, that "the spirit is in the man ("the spirit of man, which is in him"—1 Corinthians 2. 11), the body is on the man ("the earthly house of our tabernacle"—2 Corinthians 5. 1), and the soul is the man."

II

The word soul is used to describe the life that a person lives. The Lord, speaking to His disciples, said,

“ For whosoever would save his life (soul) shall lose it : and whosoever shall lose his life (soul) for My sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life (soul) ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life (soul) ” (Matthew 16. 25, 26).

It is quite obvious that the Lord is not speaking to unsaved people, for no unsaved person can save his soul, that is, himself. It is possible for a saved soul (person) to have a lost soul (life). The whole life of a believer, as to his life-work, may be lost, burnt up, as Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 3. 15: “ If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as through fire.” Hebrews 10. 39 speaks similarly,

“ But we are not of them that shrink back into perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul (life). ”

Perdition here means utter loss, not of the person, but of the life of the saint for the Lord. Likewise there are those that have faith to the saving of the soul, that is, the life, which would otherwise have been lost through shrinking back from the suffering which obedience entailed.

III

Soul is used of the collective life of an assembly, such as the Church of God in Jerusalem :

“ And all the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul ” (Acts 4. 32).

It is a blessed state where this unity of life exists among God’s people.

IV

In Leviticus we have a dead body called a dead soul (*Nephesh* in the Hebrew).

“ Neither shall he (the high priest) go in to any dead body (Nephesh, soul), nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother.”

The use of soul here is, I take it, in the sense in which we speak of a dead man, though we mean only his body. See also Numbers 1. 6 ; 9. 6, 7, 10 ; 19. 11, 13, 16.

It is a common practice in the Scriptures that the same word may have different usages and shades of meaning according to the context in which the word is found, and this is so in the case of the word soul.

J. MILLER.

“ HE CARETH FOR YOU ”

(1 Peter 5. 7)

“ In nothing be anxious ” (Philippians 4. 6). In one sense we have anxieties, but these Peter tells us to cast upon Him. “ Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you ” (1 Peter 5. 7). Thus God would have us not to be burdened with anxious cares so as to weigh us down and come in between us and Himself. The Lord said to His disciples, “ Be not therefore anxious for the morrow ” (Matthew 6. 34). We must not allow anxieties and cares, sometimes about what may never come, to hinder us in our service for the Lord, or in our soul’s communion with Him. In 1 Corinthians 7. 35 the apostle says, “ Attend upon the Lord without distraction,” meaning, I take it, not to allow the soul to be distracted or the mind perturbed, even by lawful things, so as to hinder or break our communion with God. How often the adversary uses a very little thing to disturb and upset the soul’s enjoyment of God ! The remedy surely is seen in what follows, “ In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Here the Lord bids us bring our cares unto Him. “ Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee ” (Psalm 55. 22). What a gracious God we have, so to interest Himself in us, and in all that concerns us ! No care or burden we have should cause us to be afraid to cast it upon Him when He freely invites us to come to Him. And notice, it is “ in everything,” not only what to us may seem the great anxieties, but the little things as well. There is nothing too insignificant to carry to the Lord in prayer. It is best to unburden the mind by telling Him all our anxieties and troubles first. Indeed, if we are pressed down with these things, it is difficult to be peaceful and in a spiritual frame of mind. There are things we can tell God that we would not care to divulge to others, and He delights to hear us.

Many times God has heard our prayer and interposed on our behalf. John tells us in 1 John 5. 15, “ And if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.” The word that follows verse 6 of Philippians 4 is very assuring, “ And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” “ The peace of God,” what more could an anxious saint desire than to have this wonderful peace? When we have disclosed to Him all our anxiety, all that weighs down our heart, we should leave it to Him, trusting Him, in the knowledge that if it be for our good He will deliver us, resting in the calm assurance that all power is His and what is best will be done. Then the peace of God shall guard (to mount as a sentinel) our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Our prayer and supplication are to be “ with thanksgiving.” Prayer and thanksgiving should not be divorced, the latter eyes the blessings already received ; prayer, the needs still to be met. See how closely these two are allied in 1 Thessalonians 5. 17, 18. “ Pray without ceasing ; in everything give thanks.”

In verse 7 we have "the peace of God" guarding the hearts and thoughts. In verse 8 we have such things as should occupy the mind. "Think on these things." The mind must be occupied, it must have something to think about, and if we allow the mind to dwell on such things as are narrated by the apostle it will be kept in a healthy condition. Concerning the man with an evil eye, we read in Proverbs 23. 7, "For as he reckoneth within himself, so is he." Some by nature have a morbid mind, some a wicked mind, some even have an immoral mind. The people of God ought to have "sincere minds" (2 Peter 3. 1) and "clean hearts" (marginal rendering 1 Peter 1. 22). These we do not have by nature. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17. 9). But the mind that is purified and renewed has new objects.

The things of verse 8 are very precious to think about, namely, things that are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and of good report. How necessary it is to dwell on them, to cultivate the mind and think on them, at the same time looking for them in others!

The apostle goes on to say, "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do." Paul evidently had the assurance that much of his own life and walk had been in keeping with the mind and will of God. He could write to Timothy "Thou didst follow my teaching, conduct," etc. (2 Timothy 3. 10). His teaching or doctrine and his manner of life were in unison, he practised what he preached, and could appeal to the saints and say, "The things . . . ye saw in me, these things do" (Philippians 4. 9). He also wrote "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11. 1). Example speaks louder than words, and when by our manner of life we let others "see" as well as "hear" our testimony, it must inevitably bear weight. "And the God of peace shall be with you" (verse 9). So fully does God want His people to be habituated to peace that He gives it to them as it were in stages. Firstly, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Romans 5. 1). Secondly, "Let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4. 6, 7); and then thereby thinking on these lovely and essential things, by doing what God has taught us by precept and example, "The God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4. 9). What a calm, unperturbed condition ought to be ours at all times! To enjoy the communion of the God of peace and to obey His words, such was the principle of the Lord while on earth. He could say, "And He that sent Me is with Me; He hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8. 29). The expression "God of peace" occurs at the end of some of Paul's letters to the churches, implying, I take it, if heed is given to the commands of God, we shall know and enjoy His peace within us.

May we be ever ready and willing to listen to His voice, to do His will and enjoy the fellowship of the "God of peace." L. BOWMAN.

“BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH THE CLOUDS.”
 “BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY.”

Was the first advent of God's Son foretold in the sacred Scriptures? Yes, undoubtedly it was! Isaiah said that He would be born of a virgin, and He was; Moses, in the book of Genesis, said that He would come out of Judah, and He did; Micah said that He would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, and He was; Zechariah said He would come triumphantly into the city riding on an ass, and He did; the Psalmist said that He would be betrayed, and thus it happened; he further foretold the manner of His death, which was so unfamiliar to the Jewish mind, and it was fulfilled in detail. Isaiah said that His grave would be with the wicked, but that He would be with the rich in His death, and it all came to pass.

Yet Israel rejected Him in *unbelief*. It was left to Gentiles at His birth (Matthew 2. 2), and at His crucifixion (John 19. 14-22) to acknowledge His kingly claim, and to a very few of Israel's race, such as Nathaniel (John 1. 49), the common people (John 6. 15), and His few disciples (Luke 19. 38). Yet by His own people He was utterly rejected (John 1. 11; 19. 15).

Is it possible that today many of God's children are as irresponsive to the truth of His second advent as the Children of Israel were at His first advent, because of *unbelief*, “the sin that doth so easily beset us” (Hebrews 12. 1)?

He, Himself, promised to come back again! Oh, how often the harassed souls of men have lingered long over the precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Let not your heart be troubled . . . for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I *come again*, and will receive you unto Myself . . .” (John 14. 1-3); “*I will see you again . . .*” (John 16. 22), “and *ye shall see Me*” (John 16. 16)!

This is the wondrous promise of His return that holds so much hope for us today. The Old Testament writers, holy men of God, (2 Peter 1. 21), knew about it, though they did not realize that there were two distinct stages in His second coming. This we can reasonably understand, for until the *mystery* of the Church was revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, the *mystery* of the rapture of the saints, at the Lord's coming to the air, remained hidden to Old Testament saints. Yet, we have the following Old Testament references to the second coming of the Lord: Enoch (Jude 14, 15), Balaam (Numbers 24. 17), Asaph (Psalm 50. 3-5), David (Psalm 110. 1, 6, 7), Isaiah (Isaiah 40. 10), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 23. 5, 6), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37. 21, 22), Daniel (Daniel 7. 21, 22), Joel (Joel 3. 16), Amos (Amos 9. 14, 15), Micah (Micah 5. 2), Haggai (Haggai 2. 6, 7), Zechariah (Zechariah 14. 1-4, 9), and Malachi (Malachi 4. 1, 2). Truly a formidable list of evidence, though by no means a complete list!

It is of further interest to note that every writer in the New Testament has something to say on the Lord's return. The evangelists give us the Lord's own words concerning this fast approaching event.

Paul, in his earlier epistles (Thessalonians and Corinthians), expounds this comforting truth, and in much later epistles (Philippians, Titus, and Hebrews), this truth is further elaborated. Both Peter and James add to the refrain (1 Peter 1. 13; 4. 7, 13; 5. 4; and James 5. 7, 8), and the last chapter in the Bible contains the thrice repeated promise of the Lord, recorded by beloved John, "Behold, I come quickly," culminating in John's ardent prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus." About three hundred times in the New Testament this great truth is mentioned! One verse in every twenty-five of the eight thousand verses in the New Testament is devoted to the subject!

The last occasion on which the world, as distinct from His own disciples, saw the Lord Jesus was on Calvary's Cross! God will not leave it so! "Behold, He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him . . ." (Revelation 1. 7). But before that day dawns, and His feet stand on Mount Olivet, and He comes to set earth's affairs right and save the remnant of His earthly people, Israel, out of their sad trouble, He will first have come to the air, as Son of God for His blood-bought Church. The "dead in Christ" and the living in Christ will have been caught up to meet Him in the air, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4. 16-18). Death ruptures the closest unions of earth, husband from wife, parent from child, but never, never can the last enemy affect the "in Christ" relationship of the believer. Dead or living—they remain "in Christ"!

Let us be like men that wait!

JAS. MARTIN.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: Matthew 24. 40, 41: Are these people taken in judgement or blessing, and where do they go?

Answer: In Matthew 24 there are references to some who will receive blessing, as in verses 45-47, and some who will receive judgement, as in verses 48-51. Yet all are bondservants together prior to the coming of the master of the house. The reference to Noah carries similar thoughts. Two views have been frequently presented, and it is possible that there may always be the difference of opinion as to whether the one taken is taken for blessing or for judgement, but it is not necessary to pronounce between them. The important teaching is that the coming of the Son of Man leads to separation (one to judgement, one to blessing). A.T.D.

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JOTTINGS

The subject of the Lord as Jehovah's Servant will ever be a feast to the heart of all who love Him. The sublime words of Paul to the Philippians concerning His self-humbling from the throne of heaven to the cross on Calvary, have been, and will for ever be, a source of endless delight. He was and will ever be in the form of God, but He emptied Himself and took the form of a bond-servant, in which is implied His incarnation (Philippians 2. 6-8). The Lord's servant-character is bound up with His becoming Man, taking unto Himself our common humanity, but, let it be noted, apart from sin. The scripture in Romans 8. 3 makes this abundantly clear, that God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, not in sinful flesh, and being holy and sinless He came to be an offering for sin.

We are introduced to Jehovah's Servant in Isaiah 42. 1-7. Verses 1-4 of this portion are quoted in Matthew 12. 18-21, and be it noted that in the work He did and in His withdrawing Himself that He would not be involved in any strife with the Pharisees, the words of Isaiah were fulfilled.

This Divine Servant was a source of continual delight to the God He served. God upheld Him and put His Spirit upon Him, as at the Jordan, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him as a dove and abode upon Him,

"God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38).

After His temptation for forty days in the wilderness we are told that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and a fame went out concerning Him through all the region round about" (Luke 4. 14).

Why did God put His Spirit upon Him? What was the need for this, seeing He was a Divine Being? Herein is part of the mystery of the incarnation and the servant-character of the Lord. He did not use His divine power to assist His weak humanity. He would be empowered by the Holy Spirit, as God's servants had been in the days before He came to earth, and as the apostles and the saints have been in their service since. It may seem strange to us to think of Him in this way, of the One who made all things and in whom all things consist.

Said Isaiah,

"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (verse 2).

"To cry," here, means to shriek. It describes the cry from the rabble mob. It does not mean that the Lord never cried in the street as He called on sinners to come to Him. In Jerusalem on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles,

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7. 37, 38).

The graciousness of the Lord is seen in the simile that is used about the bruised reed and the smoking flax. In days of old lighting was a primitive art. A wick of flax was drawn through a hollow reed and inserted in a vessel containing oil. Sometimes the reed was bruised, hindering the oil from flowing freely to the light, hence the smoking flax or dimly burning wick. The method followed was to break the reed at the bruised part and relight the lamp. This bruised reed and smoking flax are used to show those that are bruised by sin that the Lord would strengthen and bind up the bruised sinners so that they might perform their proper functions in life. He would neither break them nor quench them. Such was the graciousness of Jehovah's Servant in dealing with sinners.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

The Lord who is Jehovah's Servant would not break the bruised reed, nor would He quench the smoking flax. He would bind up the bruised and heal them, and would remove all that hindered the light from shining from such as sin had bruised.

In contrast to this He Himself was not to fail or burn dimly, nor would He be discouraged or bruised. His light was clear and steady. Though weary oftentimes (for He became a co-sharer of the things that affect us, but not a co-sharer in sin—He hungered and thirsted, was weary and wept), He yet entered into the needs and sorrows of others, as in the case of Samaria's daughter at Sychar's well.

Three times over in these four verses (Isaiah 42. 1-4) judgement is mentioned. "He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles"; "He shall bring forth judgement in truth"; "Till He have set judgement in the earth." Is not this what the nations need, and what this poor world lacks. There are no judgements, no righteous decisions. Councils many there are, and councillors unnumbered, but there is no judgement. Men talk and talk and then give up in the hopeless search for righteous judgement and often, perhaps, they do not really want it. But He who deals so graciously with men now, having borne God's righteous judgement on their behalf, will, at length, set judgement on the earth. His will be a just balance and correct weights and measures. It says in Isaiah 2. 4—

"He shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples : and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Here is the Judge and here the judgement. His decisions will be scrupulously just. War will not only be caused to cease by Him, but it will be seen to be useless to correct wrongs between nations. What has war between nations ever justly settled ?

Jehovah the Creator speaks of calling His Servant in righteousness, and that He would hold His hand and keep Him. This matter of the Lord as Jehovah's Servant being kept or preserved is one which is deep and profound. Two Hebrew words are used regarding this, *Natsar*, to guard, to protect ; and *Shamar*, to hedge about, to guard, to protect.

"I the LORD . . . will hold Thine hand, and will keep (Natsar) Thee (Isaiah 42. 6).

"In a day of salvation have I helped Thee : and I will preserve (Natsar) Thee" (Isaiah 49. 8).

"Preserve (Shamar) Me, O God : for in Thee do I put My trust" (Psalm 16. 1).

"For He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep (Shamar) Thee in all Thy ways" (Psalm 91. 11).

It is not my purpose to make any attempt to comment here on the preserving care of Jehovah of His Servant. I simply quote the scriptures which deal with this matter for the thoughtful consideration of others. There was once quoted to me the words of Psalm 36. 6 :

"O LORD, Thou preservest (Yasha) man and beast"

as equivalent to what is contained in the four passages quoted above. The word *Yasha* means to free or succour, to be safe, to preserve, and indicates the mere physical preservation of men and beasts, in that they are succoured and made safe. I consider that there is something more to be learned as to Jehovah's Servant in the four passages I have quoted.

Jehovah's Servant is given as a covenant of the people. Of old the covenant was contained in the ten commandments written on the two tables of stone which Israel pledged their word to receive and keep. Christ is the Covenant here. The reception of Him by faith brings the believer into covenant relationship with God. This is of course to be followed by having His law written on our heart and mind (Hebrews 10. 15-18). He is also a Light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes and to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon.

J.M.

EDITORIAL

Whilst walking with a friend amongst a hopeless confusion of wooden huts in the over-crowded city of Rangoon, seeking the home of a Chinese Christian whom we hoped to visit, we passed and re-passed four Buddhist nuns with their rice bowls, collecting rice. From one of the huts a woman came out with a bowl of rice and put a spoonful of rice into each of the nun's bowls. I said to my friend, "What does she hope to get for that?" "Oh," he said, "she hopes to get Merit." I said, "Who takes account of what she has done?" He said, "No one." Then I said, "If no one takes account of what she has done in giving the rice, how does she know that she will get Merit for it?" He replied, "You are too exact and too western in your ideas, the Buddhist does not think of things that way. Somehow he will get Merit, but he does not know how." He added, "The Buddhist has no God in his religion." As I walked on I kept thinking and thinking how the woman would get Merit, and am thinking still.

This getting Merit for human works taints the thoughts of the human mind. Only those who believe, through the revelation of the Scriptures, in the utter corruption of human nature, and have sought refuge through faith in the Person and atoning work of Jesus Christ, can hope to please God by their subsequent service and work.

Rome with its system of works of merit taught by its well-nigh innumerable hosts of priests of all degrees of preferment, its monks and nuns, and its millions of followers, continues blindly seeking the favour of God by works through *their* Mary (who is not the Mary of the Scriptures), through saints, and to a much lesser degree through the merits of *their* Christ (who daily becomes, according to their ideas, bread and wine, and who is not the Christ of the Scriptures).

Protestantism too is smeared with this same idea of the meritorious character of human works which commend, as is stated, the sinner in his sins to God. "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," and, "There is none righteous, no, not one: . . . There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one" (Romans 3. 10-12, 23). These seem to be words that are a dead letter in the religious sermonizing of many blind leaders of the blind. Why do they not tell the truth for which Protestantism stands, even Justification by Faith?

I chanced to come across in my reading recently some words of Chrysostom which I thought good and forceful. He says, speaking on 2 Corinthians 5. 21, and Galatians 3. 12, 13.

"This word 'righteousness' the Apostle uses to express the unspeakable bounty of that gift; that He has not given us the operation or effect of righteousness, but His very righteousness, yea His very self, unto us. Mark, says he, how every thing is lively, and as full as can be imagined. Christ, One that had not only done no sin, but that had not so much as known any sin, hath God made not a sinner, but sin itself; (as in another place not accursed, but a curse itself, sin in respect of guilt, a curse in respect of punishment) and why this? To the end that we might be made, not righteous persons, that was not full enough, but righteousness itself; and there He says not, not every righteousness, but the very righteousness of God in Himself."

Luther, as a monk, was seeking divine righteousness by his own works, thinking that the righteousness of God, in Romans 1. 17, was an attribute of God and not that righteousness of God which is a gift of God's free and unmerited grace to cover the whole being of a guilty sinner (Romans 5. 17), but he found out the Mystery of the Gospel, that God justifies the believing sinner apart from works (Romans 4. 1-5). Note the words, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness."

This is what Isaiah wrote of old, in chapter 61. 10,

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

It was what God had done for Isaiah and not what he had done for himself; and what God had done for His prophet, He does for every believing sinner now who has no merit of his own. Woe to the sinner who seeks to merit God's favour by his works and passes by the merits of the crucified Saviour on whose merits alone all believers shall reach the glory of heaven.

J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

The Love of Christ

The love of Christ is the most fascinating subject which has ever engaged the hearts of men, or ever reached the ears of sinful mortals. Here we find heights and depths, and lengths and breadths altogether beyond the capability of the human mind to measure. It takes us back to the dateless, timeless period of eternity past, the period when the mighty urge of divine, limitless love moved in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"God is love" is a statement of an eternal fact. God has a perfect knowledge of the vast cycle of eternity wherein He dwells, and all the events within its vast ambit. Successive ages may run their course with all they contain; yet of these God has perfect knowledge. There is nothing unknown to Him which will ever take place in the flow of the years of time or the ages of eternity. It was through the Son He made or framed the ages (Hebrews 1. 2). The fall of man, the result of the devil's work and man's disobedience, was within the knowledge of God before the foundation of the world. In that knowledge the love of God in Christ flowed out toward His perishing creatures, and even then redemption's plans were known. This is "the wisdom . . . which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory" (1 Corinthians 2. 7). In accordance therewith God's love was to be manifested in the giving up to death of "the Son of His love," the Lamb, "Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation

of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake " (1 Peter 1. 20).

In God's purpose He was " the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world " (Revelation 13. 8), and according to divine foreknowledge, " He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love " (Ephesians 1. 4). How applicable are the words, " Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love " (Jeremiah 31. 3)!

*" From all eternity with love
Unchangeable Thou hast me viewed ;
Ere knew this beating heart to move,
Thy tender mercies me pursued."*

Divine love was manifested in a twofold way, namely, (1) by the Father giving His Only Begotten Son, and (2) by the Son giving Himself a Ransom for all.

The Father loved the Son with measureless love, yet He " so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

" Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins " (1 John 4. 10).

What it meant to God to sanctify and send His own Son into this world to suffer and die is beyond the human mind to grasp. As we meditate upon that love which gave the most loved Object of His heart, for no one could be nearer or dearer to the heart of God than the Son, who Himself said, " Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world " (John 17. 24), we are caused to bow in wondering worship and joy, and in holy rapture exclaim, " Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift " (2 Corinthians 9. 15).

The Lord Jesus said, " As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you " (John 15. 9). We may view the vast, all-inclusive orbit of divine love for the whole of the guilty race, but how sweet and precious it is to read of His personal love for the individual ! How full of pathos are those words in Mark 10. 21, 22, " And Jesus looking upon him loved him " ! Love ever rejoices with the truth, and when the truth was spoken in love, we read of this young man that " his countenance fell . . . and he went away sorrowful." How tragic that that day he departed from One whose love would have filled and satisfied his being for all eternity, and enriched him with heavenly wealth ! The present possession of earthly, vanishing riches blinded his eyes. It was not so with Paul who said, " Howbeit I obtained mercy," and " the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself up for me " (Galatians 2. 20). The full display of divine love is seen at the Cross.

The sacrifice of Christ was a sacrifice of love toward God and man.

" Even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell " (Ephesians 5. 2).

He loved the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and His neighbour as Himself. This love found its culminating expression at the Cross, emitting a fragrant odour, Godward, and bestowing a wealth of heavenly blessing, manward. Here was love that many waters could not quench, neither could the floods drown it, a love which expended its all upon its object, loving to the uttermost, bearing all, and giving all, that object to obtain, unfathomable, incomprehensible !

*“ Yet there it stands. O love, surpassing thought,
So bright, so grand, so clear, so true, so glorious ;
Love infinite, love tender, love unsought,
Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious !
And this great love for us in boundless store :
His everlasting love ! What could we more ? ”*

That love has captivated our hearts ; we have surrendered to its claims in humble contrition by accepting Christ ; there is now “ no condemnation,” there can be no accusation, for love has obliterated the dark record against us, and is able to answer every charge, and no power in the universe is “ able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus ” (Romans 8). And now we love, because He first loved us. Love may grow, increase and abound, or it may wane and grow cold ; it depends upon the spiritual condition. Paul prayed for the Ephesians :

“ That ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God ” (Ephesians 3. 16-19).

The abiding communion of the indwelling Christ is essential to our being rooted and grounded in love, and being strengthened by the Spirit of God ; our apprehension of the love of Christ may grow and expand, filling us unto all the fulness of God. Glorious possibility ! perchance so seldom realized in actual experience, because the Spirit of God within is so often grieved by unholy thoughts or words or deeds. Beloved, “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God ” (Ephesians 4. 30). The first fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5. 22 is love, and in 1 Corinthians 13 we find a list of things which love will and will not do, and these are worthy of earnest consideration.

It is instructive to note that Christ not only loved us as sinners, but He also loves us as disciples. Six times the term is used of a disciple, “Whom Jesus loved.” This too may be our happy experience, for,

“ He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me : and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him.”

Does not this indicate a personal love to the obedient disciple, “ I will love him ” ? Do we covet to know this intimate personal love of the Master ? Paul’s desire was, “ That I may know Him,” and herein lies the secret of knowing Him. “ I will love him, and will

manifest Myself unto him": such is the promise of Christ (John 14. 21-24). He further says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word : and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with Him." Here is a circle of the most intimate fellowship conditioned by obedience, and characterized by personal love toward each other. Oh that we may keep His word and enjoy the fellowship of such holy company! "Lord," we exclaim, "it is good for us to be here," and the Master's word to us is "Abide ye in My love" (John 15. 9).

May it be written across our lives and every avenue of our service—"The love of Christ constraineth us!"

We have but touched the fringe of a vast ocean. Christ loves us! "Unto Him that *loveth* us . . . to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1. 5, 6). F. McCORMICK.

STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS

II. The Rechabites

The purposes of God in His dealings with aliens, as was said in the preceding article of this series, are of very great interest to us who have known what it means to be strangers and aliens. The history of the Rechabites is of particular interest, because the purposes of God in them are not revealed until after many centuries have rolled their course. We shall seek to show that the events of Jeremiah 35 give the consummation of God's purposes, as first announced in some measure in the days of Moses. One lifetime does not suffice for the deep counsels of God to be fully worked out, as we see in connexion with the promises to Abraham, and the spiritual experiences we pass through in our lifetime are often only fully exemplified by the experiences of a nation as revealed in the Scriptures. It is highly significant that a nation is oft-times spoken to by God as though He were addressing their ancestor. Thus the nation of Israel is addressed as though Jacob the man is being spoken to, the characteristics of his sons are seen in the after-history of their descendants, while the promises given to the former are taken as received by them, though the actual fulfilment is experienced by their children.

With this preamble, please read the chapter of Jeremiah and note the prominence given to Jehonadab. The reward given for the behaviour of the Rechabites in carrying out the commands of Jehonadab is attributed to the man long dead. This remarkable man appears for the first time in 2 Kings 10. 15-31. The day of judgement on the wicked house of Ahab has arrived, and the anointed man Jehu has been made the instrument of God's vengeance. In verse 15 we read that in the course of his work Jehu "lighted on Jehonadab the

son of Rechab coming to meet him." The great king stops his chariot that he might be assured of the fellowship of the great commoner, and it is for us to examine as to which of these men is really the greater. There can be no doubt at all that Jehonadab was a great man for he was closely associated with Jehu in the judgements on the worshippers of Baal.

Moreover, it is clear that as he was coming to meet Jehu then he must have had some fellowship with Elisha, who had anointed Jehu for this great work of God. It is indeed strange that this man, regarded as next to the king in importance, should so suddenly appear in the picture, stranger still that he should so suddenly disappear from the picture after the events of this chapter. He appears again, so to speak, only at the reading of his last will and testament as declared by the Rechabites to Jeremiah.

As we seek to trace the history of Jehonadab we quickly realize that he was not an Israelite by descent, but a Kenite (1 Chronicles 2. 55). The Kenites appear in the pages of Scripture from time to time. They were among the friends of David to whom he sent portions from the spoil of Ziklag, just before he came to the throne (1 Samuel 30. 29), a fact which speaks well for them. They received very special consideration from Saul on that notable day when he went to fight against the Amalekites. At that time the Kenites were dwelling in the midst of the enemy, and Saul enjoined them to depart (1 Samuel 15. 6), and in simple obedience they departed, so giving a lesson in obedience which Saul that day might well have taken to heart, and to have learnt before it was too late that to obey is better than sacrifice. We mention this incident because we believe that the simple character of the Kenites here revealed is manifested throughout their history, and as we have seen, from the events recorded in Jeremiah, their descendants the Rechabites also showed this same character.

The history of these particular Kenites begins, so far as our purposes are concerned, in Exodus 2, for we see from Judges 1. 16 that the father-in-law of Moses was a Kenite. We note that this man Reuel was a priest of Midian (Exodus 2. 16), and that Moses was "content to dwell with the man" (verse 21). We may get help as to this by noting that the name "Reuel" means "friend of God." We can only speculate as to how this man functioned as a priest, but his name must definitely indicate that he knew something of God. As a matter of fact, Genesis 25. 2 shows that the Midianites were descended from Abraham through Keturah, after the death of Sarah, so it is not very strange that a man of this race should own the friendship of God. It is not strange, either, for Moses in the perplexity and fear of his heart to be content to dwell with a man of this character. It is a very great thing indeed to have realized that the friendship of God and with God is something worth while, though, alas, many make no further progress than this.

For the purposes we have in view, it is needful to consider this man's history. We meet him again in Exodus 18, and we note that his name is now given as Jethro, but in order that we shall not be led astray the Scriptures repeatedly call Jethro the father-in-law of Moses in this chapter. It is a graphic story. Jethro comes to the camp after the deliverance from Egypt, a man of presence and power, for Moses "did obeisance" (verse 7), and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with him. The confession of Jethro in verse 11 is very interesting: "Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods." There can be no doubt at all that Jethro had knowledge of Jehovah, and we must carefully note that he exercised this knowledge as he rendered a burnt-offering and sacrifices. The most remarkable thing to note, however, is that the elders of Israel "came to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."

The scene next day is also of interest, when the advice of Jethro, manifestly sound, was accepted by Moses (verse 24). Alas, mere wisdom is not all, neither is knowledge, for the last verse of this chapter is to our mind one of the saddest in the Scriptures:

"And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land."

If it is permissible to speak, as we did, as to Jehonadab's last will and testament, it is permissible to refer to this verse as the epitaph of Jethro. We read of him no more, this wise and great man who in earlier days had been glad of the friendship of God, and "now knows" Jehovah, and has seen the gathered people of God, yet does not cast in his lot with them. Maybe Moses did not ask him, for we read that Moses let him go.

The force of the expression just quoted is made all the greater when we consider the dealings of Moses with the son of this man, as recorded in Numbers 10. 29-32. Moses pleads with Hobab, his brother-in-law:

"We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Over a year has passed since the deliverance from Egypt (verse 11), and presumably Hobab has passed a considerable portion of his time with the people, he has seen the tabernacle and the provision of God for His service, and now has come the time of decision. He at least will not be allowed to go without receiving an invitation to stay. We may well ask as to how it comes about that the father is allowed to go and the son is encouraged to stay. We believe that the key to it all is found in the meanings of the names of the two men. Reuel, "friend of God," has become Jethro, which means "pre-eminent." Whether this eminence, dignity, or pre-eminence is due in some way to progress in his priestly office we know not, or whether that priestly office involves such a title we cannot say, but for our part we believe that in any case it expresses the changed character of the man, and if Exodus 18 is carefully read through again it will surely be apparent

that there is indeed something dominating in the character of this man, as he receives obeisance, moves about the camp to criticise and advise, and speaks on equal terms with the men who have confronted kings on the behalf of Jehovah. If it be true indeed that the name expresses the acquired character of the man then there can be no place for him among the people of God. One only can be pre-eminent, and if men seek pre-eminence they are in conflict with Christ (Colossians 1. 18). In a later day Diotrophes merited lasting condemnation because he loved pre-eminence (3 John 9). It would have been ill for a people led by a man whose meekness was like that of the Master for whom he left the pleasures of Egypt, to have had to contend with the evil ensuing from a love of pre-eminence. So Moses "let him go."

It is true today that not many wise and not many noble are to be found among the people of God, but it is also true that while wisdom and nobility according to the estimation of this world might keep men from sharing with the people of God yet it is not the desire of God that people *as such* should be brought in to be a stumbling-block to the people. There is a wisdom which God values, but it comes from above and is associated with humility.

A. T. DOODSON.

(To be continued.)

HEAVEN

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Psalm 73. 25).

One hesitates to embark on such a profound subject as heaven, yet because it is the promised future abode of every child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is profitable to get acquainted with our home by examining the Scriptures. It is the Father's house wherein are many abiding places (John 14. 2). It is where our incorruptible and undefiled inheritance is reserved; where our treasure (if any) is laid up (Matthew 6. 20). A wise migrant will study as much data as possible on the country to which he intends to migrate; so may it be with us who are sojourners and pilgrims.

*"Glorious things of Thee are spoken, heavenly city of our God.
He, whose word can ne'er be broken, formed Thee for His own abode."*

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12. 2, recalls a notable incident in his life, how he was caught up to the third heaven and there heard words unspeakable (verse 4). It is not unreasonable to deduce from this portion that a first and second heaven are in existence. The smoke of the city of Ai that ascended up to heaven (see Joshua 8. 20), would surely not be the heaven to which the apostle was caught up, nor would it be the heaven of the stars and constellations (Isaiah 13. 10). It could only be the atmospheric or first heaven where smoke dissolves. The earth-dweller looks skyward at the first heaven to behold the

everchanging cloud formations where "He bindeth up the waters in His thick cloud" (Job 26. 8); where "the bow shall be seen in the cloud" (Genesis 9. 14), and where "the fowl of the heaven" have their habitation near the springs in the valleys that run among the mountains (Psalm 104. 10, 12). Moses at the LORD's command stood before Pharaoh and sprinkled the handfuls of ashes (soot) of the furnace towards the heaven in his sight (Exodus 9. 8). It is the same heaven where the swift eagles soar (Lamentations 4. 19). Surrounding this terrestrial orb, called earth, which is hung on nothing (Job. 26. 7) is the heaven inhabited by the birds and insects, the dust-laden atmosphere that causes the gold-tinted sunsets, and the rosy hues of dawn.

"By His Spirit He hath made beautiful the heavens" (Job 26. 13, Newberry Margin).

When God prepared the heavens, Wisdom was there; when He marked out the foundations of the earth, Wisdom was by Him as a Master Workman. This is He who hath been "made unto us wisdom from God" for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1. 24, 30). Believers, young in the faith, must clearly understand that the visible things including man are not, according to the modern trend of thought, the product of a long process of evolution.

We do not know the age of the earth itself, but pseudo-scientists are wide of the mark when they aver that man has existed on the earth for fifty thousand years and more, for we know from the Scriptures that man's history is far less than that.

The second heaven or starry firmament shows God's handiwork in the night seasons; indeed the Psalmist tells us that the LORD is very great; "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Psalm 104. 2), moreover "He telleth the number of the stars; He giveth them all their names" (Psalm 147. 4). In orderly fashion the Mazzaroth (sign of the Zodiac) pass the meridian with rigid precision led by Him (Job. 38. 32), whose glory is above the earth and heaven (Psalm 148. 13), albeit who humbleth Himself to regard those same heavens and the earth (Psalm 113. 6, R.V.M.).

He has made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. God hath done great things past finding out; yea, marvellous things without number. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out; He is excellent in power" (Job 37. 23). One answer to the theory of evolution is the inexplicable design of the starry heavens, and where there is a design there must also of necessity be a designer. The heavens are the work of His fingers, in them hath He set a tent for the sun with its retinue of planets. David noted that the starry heavens had no speech or language; no voice is heard, yet their words go to the end of the world. Night unto night showeth knowledge, day unto day uttereth speech and from time immemorial they declare the glory of God. The bright Sirius is reputed to be

eight light years distant from our earth; in effect, the light shining from Sirius in 1958 will not be seen by earth-dwellers until 1966. But many of those distant suns are placed by Him beyond the reach of even Polomar's two-hundred inch reflecting telescope. "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways: And how small a whisper do we hear of Him!" (Job 26. 14). "Great things doeth He, which we cannot comprehend" (Job 37. 5). The things that are seen are temporal; this brings to mind the temporary nature of the host of heaven.

"... and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine" (Isaiah 34. 4). Peter tells us the heavenly bodies shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Peter 3. 10).

The third heaven to which the apostle was caught up, as before mentioned, can only be known by faith. It is redundant to express God's dwelling place in terms of distance, whether innumerable millions of miles or innumerable millions of light years. Faith alone grasps the heaven from whence Jesus came (John 8. 23) the same heaven to which He was carried up (Luke 24. 51).

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24. 9, 10). Christ passed through the heavens to become, among many other things, a Great High Priest over God's heavenly people on earth. He who voluntarily went into death that we might live, is now the "Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1. 18). God made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.

*"Lo, the tokens of His passion
Still His glorious body bears,
Cause of endless exaltation
To His ransomed worshippers."*

We cannot locate the place of heaven in the visible heavens; only faith, which is the test of things not seen, enables us to know that Christ has entered into heaven itself now to appear before the face of God for us. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16. 11, A.V.).

The queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, and came to where the king was in residence. She saw the meat of his table, the sitting of his servants, the standing of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers and the burnt-offering which he offered in the house of the LORD, and there was no more spirit in her. Then she said: "Behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (1 Kings 10. 7). How much more

will it be with us when we shall see the greater than Solomon, the King of Glory!

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2. 9, 10, A.V.).

Believers who have yielded to the Teacher that indwells their hearts, being found in the house of God, have in Christ a Great Priest who is over the house of God. He functions as such in heaven, wherein is “The true tabernacle,” though the house of God is on earth. The tabernacle of Moses was only a copy of the things now in heaven, the holy place in the tabernacle was a pattern of the true. May we who are in the house of God take courage, boldly to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, on the Lordly morning! Let us draw near with a true heart (not a trace of hypocrisy), in fulness of faith (not a trace of wavering) and with gladness and joy as becometh a redeemed people offer the sacrifice of praise to God as a holy priesthood, through the great Priest who is over the house of God.

There is a constant preparation taking place in His Father’s house in heaven for each of the redeemed every day of our sojourn on earth, and when He descends from heaven with the shout, and we are caught up by Him and behold the glory, which the Father has given Him (John 17. 24) in heaven, the third heaven, our eternal home, where “there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth”; then every thing that distressed us on earth shall pass away as a dream, a vision of the night.

Melbourne.

S. STOPE.

THE GENTILES—THEIR TIMES AND THEIR FULNESS

References in Scripture to Gentile dates are infrequent and are invariably in relation to some current event in Israel’s history. Their infrequency makes them noteworthy. The first specific Gentile date in Scripture is in Jeremiah 25. 1, “. . . the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah; the same was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.”

That was a momentous year for the Gentiles, an ominous one for Israel. That year (Jeremiah 36. 1) Jeremiah wrote, at the command of the LORD, the story of Israel’s persistent pursuit of evil during twenty three years of his prophetic office (Jeremiah 25. 3). It was the climax to their back-sliding history. That year also there was revealed to Jeremiah the seventy years’ desolation of Israel’s land while her people would languish in Babylon.

In the year following, that is the fifth year of Jehoiakim, being the second of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah’s servant Baruch (Jeremiah 36. 9) read to the people and princes of Judah the words of the

LORD in the writings of the prophet. Then Jehudi read them to the wicked king, but he could only bear to hear three or four pages, then, cutting the scroll with a penknife, he cast it into the fire which burned in the brazier. Neither the king nor any of his servants feared what he did that day (Jeremiah 36. 23, 24), though three princes made intercession (verse 25). Israel's doom was now sealed and the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah (36. 28) saying, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words . . . The king of Babylon shall certainly come." Israel, doomed; the word of the LORD, enduring for ever.

Meanwhile in that same second year of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2. 1), equally portentous things were happening in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed the dream of the image which had the head of fine gold and so forth. The meaning of the image was conveyed to him by Daniel (who records it in chapter 2), while Daniel himself was given a somewhat similar dream (described in chapter 7), but this time the same truth was conveyed in an imagery of wild beasts.

But the two visions were one. They were a description of Gentile government from the days of Nebuchadnezzar (the head of gold or the great ferocious lion, depending on whether he be viewed from a human viewpoint or a divine) until the coming of the Son of Man.

Thus Israel lost the blessings of Gerizim (Deuteronomy 27. 12), forfeiting the promises of God which would have made her the head of the nations and not the tail. And the longings of God to bless all nations through a radiant law-loving Israel had perforce to recede. In keeping with this we read the words spoken to Belshazzar: "The Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty" (Daniel 5. 8). Thus the sovereignty of the world passed into Gentile hands. And Israel, destined originally to be the head of the nations, went to sojourn in the reproach of the captivity of Babylon.

The times of the Gentiles, therefore, commenced with the beginnings of Nebuchadnezzar and will continue till the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth in His power and great glory. In those latter days the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2 and the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 will be expressed in the ten kings of Revelation 17, who "have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast." "The kingdom of the world" will be "the kingdom of the beast" (Revelation 11. 12), only to become later, "the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever".

Thus, Daniel records in chapter 2. 44, that "in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people." Then Jerusalem shall be trodden down no more of the Gentiles, for their times will be fulfilled. No more shall she be termed "Forsaken" and her land no more termed "Desolate"; but rather "Hephzi-bah" and "Beulah"—which are, being interpreted, "My delight is in

her," and "Married." What a captivating picture is drawn by Isaiah and his fellow-prophets of the glory that shall be Israel's when the times of the Gentiles are complete!

The seventy years of discipline in Babylon brought back part, at least, of the nation in chastened spirit, determined to see the restoration of the years of divine testimony which the locusts had eaten. But the heart of the nation was wholly set on tradition and formalism and on departing from the living God. Therefore when Messiah came they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and take His inheritance" (Matthew 21. 38). But what actually happened was contrariwise, as witness so many of the New Testament Scriptures, for example:—

"Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23. 38).

"The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21. 43).

"Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear" (Acts 28. 28).

In this way the Gentiles entered into their "fulness," described in Romans 11. By Israel's fall salvation came to the Gentiles; and Israel's loss was to prove the riches of the Gentiles. But let us not be conceited in this, says Paul. Israel's branches were broken off that we might be grafted in. Our standing is in grace alone, by faith; therefore in divine testimony we must not be high-minded, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

The fulness of the Gentiles is therefore the great period of Gentile opportunity, while Israel is in a cast-off state since Calvary in the purposes of God, and the word of the Lord is resting among, and going forth to, the Gentile nations. The fulness therefore is seen from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord to the air for His saints, and that fulness will then "come in"; that is how Paul describes its cessation in Romans 11. 25.

But "the times of the Gentiles" will continue until at the close of Daniel's seventieth week, the Lord comes to the earth, and they be fulfilled (Luke 21. 24). "A Redeemer shall come to Zion" (Isaiah 59. 20) or, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer" (Romans 11. 26). He will come to Zion in accordance with the ancient prophecies for the deliverance of Israel in the time of Jacob's trouble. Then He will send forth the rod of His most excellent strength out of Zion and bring peace to the war-scarred earth.

Thus indeed "a nation will be born in a day," when Israel will be grafted in again, and after the parched and dried up centuries will partake again of the root of the fatness of the olive tree. Ungodliness turned away—sins gone!

A quiet reflection on the coming glory of the Lord as enthroned once more on the praises of His ancient people, graphically described in Isaiah 60, and many other parts besides, will warm our hearts in

these chilly days before the dawn of His coming. "He shall come as a stream pent in" for Israel's help (Isaiah 59. 19, R.V.M.). What a description of the readiness of the Redeemer! "For the day of vengeance was in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (63. 4).

At that time Zion's light will have come to her, as it is written, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee" (60. 1). But the Light that comes to Zion will also stream out from it, "and nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (60. 3).

And as we write the air seems charged with the preparations for the final affliction of cast-off Israel. In every land there seems also a sense of urgency in the hearts of children of God, as though the Rapture were imminent. Soon, the fulness of the Gentiles will come in. Soon also the times of the Gentiles will be complete. Then Israel will emerge from her long, long night of darkness and sorrow, and of that day it is written, "The LORD shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isaiah 60. 20).

J. L. FERGUSON.

FOR ME!

Dwelling in heaven, *thinking* of me,
 Planning release from sin's penalty;
 Such was His love—He knew it would
 mean
 Giving His life, my soul to redeem.

Going to Calv'ry, *dying* for me;
 Suffering anguish—how could it be?
 Love so amazing calls for a song
 Filled with His praises all the day long.

Leaving the glory, *coming* for me;
 Born in a manger my Saviour to be.
 Oh! what a theme, God here as a Man,
 Come to fulfil salvation's great plan,

Raised to the heavens—*living* for me;
 Seated in glory, my Lord now is He.
 Once crowned with thorns, despised on
 the tree,
 Now King of kings eternal to be.

Soon He is *coming*, coming again,
 Taking His place as Monarch to reign;
 Ruling supreme in absolute sway.
 Oh, how I'll praise Him day after day!

J. Belton.

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JOTTINGS

Having written a few words on the subject of Jehovah's Servant, as portrayed in Isaiah 42, we continue the subject from chapter 49. Here is a far-flung message to which the people of the isles of the sea are to listen, amongst whom the people of these, the British, isles have had no mean place for hundreds of years, since the blessed gospel of Christ dawned over their hills and forests. The gospel which came, came to stay, and many, many have been the hearts and homes in these islands which have rejoiced in the news of a Servant, whom God sent to serve Him in the interests of mankind which God had so much at heart, for He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son (John 3. 16), for His Son was His Servant.

Has it not been, too, that many whose hearts were enlightened by the divine story of the gospel have sailed forth from these islands to bear the news to lands far over the seas? It will never be known how much good has been brought by Christian British people to the peoples of many lands, as in weariness and privation they trudged through hostile countries bearing the banner of the cross and preaching salvation through God's free grace.

The Lord was called from the womb, and while yet unborn His name was given to Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, His mother. His name was to be Jesus, a name that sings as it goes, in which are all the music and melody of heaven; a name that soothes the infant to sleep, and comforts the aged as they draw near to the gates of death.

*"Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so."*

Why was the Child to be called Jesus? Because "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1. 21). He was a Saviour from His birth, aye, and was the Saviour of Israel before He was born. He was a born Saviour, as the angel said:

"There is born unto you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 1. 11).

He says that Jehovah had made His mouth a sharp sword, and Himself a polished shaft in His quiver. Never in all time nor in the whole earth has anyone laid open the deep inward secrets of the human heart like Jesus of Nazareth, and never were words sent forth as arrows which reached their mark as His words did.

Think of the last assault of His questioners in Matthew 22. First came the Herodians, the political party, with their question about Roman taxes. There had been endless and unsolved discussions among the Jews about Roman tribute. The Lord solved it all with a penny. Whose was the image and superscription? Caesar's! Then give to Caesar his own, but also, He added, give to God what is His. No wonder it says, "When they heard it, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way." The whole matter was settled in a word or two.

Then came the Sadducees, ever denying that there was any resurrection. Yet their restless spirit was not satisfied that there was none, though they hoped there would be none. What they were anxious to know was, if a woman had seven brothers as her husbands, who would have the lawful claim to her in the resurrection? Perhaps they had puzzled many a Pharisee, who believed in the resurrection, with their question. Could they puzzle the Lord also? Out flashes the sword of His mouth: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." He tells them that there is no marriage among resurrected people, but that they are like the angels, and He shows them from the place of the Bush, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were alive, therefore they would be raised from the dead. Here again there is utter astonishment on the part of His hearers.

Now the Pharisees, when they heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, gathered themselves together, and a lawyer from among them baited Him with the question about the great commandment of the law. His answer was as clear and devastating as the others, it was: Love God with your whole being and your neighbour as yourself, and here the legalists of the Jews failed, as all men do.

Then He asked them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" And here they stuck, and still do. No man from that day durst ask Him any more questions (Matthew 22. 15-46).

His mouth was indeed a sharp sword.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

In Isaiah 49. 3 the Servant of Jehovah is called Israel. Indeed, Jacob, who is a type of the Lord as Jehovah's Servant, who was called Israel, because he had striven with God and men and had prevailed, is but the shadow of the Substance, "the body is Christ's," of this and every other shadow of the past (Colossians 2. 17). Jacob as Israel (Prince of God) glorified God only in part, as did Israel, the nation which sprang from him, but of the Lord it is said, "Thou art My Servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Long years after, Jehovah's Servant, standing with His disciples, before He crossed the brook Kidron to the garden of Gethsemane, said in prayer, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John 17. 4). There was not a dark, murky part in the life of service of Jehovah's Servant.

Yet how despondent He seems, in Isaiah 49. 4! It is the complete antithesis of verse 3:

"But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and vanity: yet surely My judgement is with the LORD, and My recompence with My God."

How small His lifework seemed at the end! A few in the upper room, and, perchance, fewer at the cross. He looked down on the small group and He saw His mother. John was there, and He spoke to him about caring for His mother. Would His work be but nought and vanity? Nay, verily! God has assessed its value. His recompense is sure. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," for "My righteous Servant" shall "justify many: and He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53. 11). Multitudes upon multitudes, like the sand on the seashore, shall share in the fruits of the work of Jehovah's Servant in life and in death. Never has there been or will there be such a recompense.

He was formed from the womb to be God's Servant (verse 5). In Hebrews 10. 5 it says, "A body didst Thou prepare for Me." And again:

*"I was cast upon Thee from the womb:
Thou art My God from My mother's belly"* (Psalm 22. 10).

Such a body was never formed since Adam sinned and fell. He was holy, and undefiled in His manhood. In Him there never was any upsurge of sinful thoughts from any cesspool of lust within, as is the case with ourselves. He knew no sin.

He was God's Servant, to bring back Jacob and to gather Israel to God. He died for this purpose (John 11. 49-52). But this was too small a matter, there was a much greater purpose in His work of restoration.

"I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth" (verse 6).

Far as the gospel has travelled in this age, it will know a fuller and wider declaration in the age to come, when idols and sham religions have been cast to the moles and bats, and men the world over shall hear and know the sweetness of the Saviour's name and the greatness of His fame.

The Servant of Jehovah who was despised by man and whom the nation of Israel abhorred will be honoured:

"Kings shall see and arise; princes and they shall worship; because of the LORD that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen Thee" (Jehovah's Servant, as in 42. 1).

Had there been no acceptable time for the Lord, there would have been none for us who have believed in Him, as in 2 Corinthians 6. 2. But He was helped in the day of salvation and His help is ours on whose behalf He wrought. He was preserved, as we have pointed out in our remarks on Isaiah 42, and given for a covenant. He shall raise the land, or establish the earth (R.V., marg.), and make the people to inherit the desolate heritages. How much of Israel's land has lain desolate! but how much more of the earth's surface lies waste! Much more than is in cultivation! But the desert shall blossom as the rose when the Lord comes (Isaiah 35. 1, 2).

J. M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

The Grace of Christ

The grace of Christ is inseparably linked with the manifestation of God's attitude and purposes toward mankind. Grace was in the heart of Christ from all eternity, but was revealed in that self-humbling, self-effacing act of self-denial and sacrifice when He became in the form of a Servant in order to accomplish for man what he was unable to do for himself.

“The law was given by Moses” : that law revealed the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the depths of human guilt, but “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” and “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8. 9).

It was an act of grace on His part to leave the wealth and riches of His heavenly abode and appear as a Bondservant in a spiritually bankrupt world, in order eternally to enrich men. That act originated in the gracious thought of the mind of Christ, it brought Him to the depths of poverty and destitution in order to bestow upon believing sinners, bereft of spiritual wealth, the riches of heavenly blessings. It was grace in the heart of Christ that caused Him to

“*Leave those courts of everlasting day,
And choose with us a darksome house of earthly clay.*”

Thus, “*the Word became flesh . . .*” :

“*and the Child grew . . . and the grace of God was upon Him :*”

“*and Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour (grace, R.V.M.)
with God and men*” (Luke 2. 40, 52).

No boy ever lived and acted as He did or dealt with others so graciously. He never succumbed to jealousies, envyings or fightings, nor did He ever seek to best others to advance Himself. Ah, no ; He was transparently honest, truthful, kind, considerate and gracious in all His ways and words, inside and outside the family circle. He was an example to others. He was absolutely guileless ; there was nothing shady or blameworthy about Him. He was sincerely pure in thought and deed. All boy-disciples of the Lord Jesus should seek to be like Him.

In manhood, as Jehovah's Servant, His graciousness shines out in the beauty and sweetness of His perfect life and service. Of Him it is written :—

“*Thou art fairer than the children of men ;
Grace is poured into Thy lips*” (Psalm 45. 2).

He knew and saw the vile corruption of the human heart with its deception and hypocrisy, yet in compassion He spoke to men words of eternal life. He revealed God's purposes of grace toward men in preaching the gospel to the poor. His words were spirit and life. Never man so spake. At Nazareth in the synagogue He manifested such grace in His God-like demeanour that the eyes of all were “fastened on Him, . . . and they wondered at the words of grace

which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4. 20-22). He was full of grace and truth. "He went about doing good." He had a gracious, loving approach to the needy and sorrowful. Never was there One so sympathetic and kind, so unrepelling and gentle as He entered into the griefs and sorrows of others. With a tenderness of heart which was uniquely His, He manifested the grace of God as He dispensed untold physical and spiritual blessings upon sin-afflicted mortals.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53. 4).

Multitudes were enriched and blessed by His gracious ministry, for,

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20. 28).

Herein is revealed a twofold purpose of His coming: To minister, and to give His life as a ransom price. In life He ministered, in death He gave. Not one moment of that precious life was wasted! What a lesson! What a ministry! We gaze in admiration and wonder upon the perfect symmetry of His holy life, the perfect blending of grace and truth in all His ways. We cannot think of what He did without thinking of the beauty and glory of the Divine Worker, the Man Christ Jesus, manifesting omnipotent benevolence in matchless grace. He reveals Himself as the sent One of God. To us who have come to know Him He is the altogether lovely One, the Chiefest among ten thousand. He was ever the conspicuous One among the myriads of heaven, and will ever remain so among the myriads of the ransomed hosts in all the perfection of His beauty and character as Redeemer, Lord and King.

The crowning act of His wondrous grace is revealed at the cross. There we behold Him as perfect Man, "crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2. 9). It was there the venom, hatred, malignity, and devilish cruelty, latent in the hearts of fallen men, were manifested in all their fury and fulness against the gracious Benefactor and Saviour of men. Never in this world's history were men more manifestly guilty and deserving of judgement than when they became the betrayers and murderers of the Christ. Though they nailed Him to the accursed tree, they could never stop that flow of divine grace and love. From the heart of the impaled Saviour were spoken these gracious words which reached to the throne of heaven:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 24).

In grace He yielded His all, and the utmost depths of His poverty were reached when the Messiah, the Anointed One, was cut off and had nothing. (See Daniel 9. 26.) God has accepted the redemption price paid by the gracious Redeemer, and in answer to that plaintive cry from the cross, God, "not reckoning unto them their trespasses," offers to guilty man a perfect pardon without distinction, and, says Peter,

"We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (Acts 15. 11).

The Lord Jesus is now the exalted and glorified One upon the throne of heaven. Because He is High Priest on behalf of His people we are exhorted thus :—

“ Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need ” (Hebrews 4. 16).

Those who are saved by grace are taught by the grace of God to “ live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world ” (Titus 2. 12). In our failure and need in the struggle, mercy and grace are ministered through One who knows by personal experience all that is involved in the path of obedience. Whatever is involved, we are encouraged to press on by His own words, “ My grace is sufficient for thee.”

“ Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ” (2 Timothy 2. 1).

“ Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal ” (Timothy 6. 12).

“ Grow in grace,” and *“ Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness ”* (Ephesians 6. 24).

F. McCormick.

STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS

III. The Rechabites

(Continued from page 58)

The difference in the actions of Moses with regard to Jethro and Hobab (Exodus 18 ; Numbers 10) is also explained by the meaning of Hobab, “ beloved,” and such as are beloved of God are desired by Him to be among His people. It should be noted also that Hobab is called the son of Reuel, and the reversion to the use of the earlier name of Jethro is emphasized by describing Reuel as the father-in-law of Moses, so that he should not be thought of as the son of Jethro. But some may ask, Are not Jethro and Reuel one and the same person? They are, but the changes in the usages of names should always be carefully noted. When God speaks of Jacob He refers to the same man as is also called Israel, but in different senses. Thus the tribe of Levi were to teach Jacob the judgements of God, and Israel the law of God. The former refers to Jacob and his descendants as men with all their natural weaknesses, while the latter name refers to the same people in covenant relation with God.

Thus Hobab is not called the son of Jethro but the son of Reuel. As the son bears something of the character of the father we therefore judge that in Hobab there was nothing of the love of pre-eminence which afflicted Jethro, but there was an appreciation of the friendship of God which had been the former glory of Reuel when Moses had been content to dwell with him. It is to such beloved ones that the call of God comes that they might be joined with the people of God. The call is clear and firm :

“ We are journeying to the place.”

If we are to pass on the call to others we must be as sure as Moses that the place is known and that the declarations of God are for good unto His people.

"Come thou with us and we will do thee good."

Such is what comes to the ears of Hobab, and his response is interesting. Hobab is standing at the parting of the ways, and cannot realize that the consummation of that promise is to be found long centuries after in the days of the Rechabites. Hobab hesitates :

"I will not go : but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred."

I do not think that God judges a man for hesitating when the call of God comes to him. Far better to weigh up the cost, and the decision made to abide by it, lest displeasure be caused to God by the man who turns back. Untold results hung upon that decision of Hobab, though he knew it not. Humanly speaking, well might he hesitate. His own land, that of the Kenites, is described for us by Balaam :

*"Strong is thy dwelling-place,
And thy nest is set in the rock "* (Numbers 24. 21).

His own land and kindred ! The human heart is stirred at the thought, and to many it is a hard saying of the Lord Jesus concerning them that follow Him. In a day when the wilderness was a place where every man's hand was against his fellow's, it was an incomparable blessing to have a strong dwelling place, set in the rock. What is offered against all this ? Association with a people lately out of bondage in Egypt, weak and despised of the tribes around them, unused to the desert warfare and the desert life, the prey of the warring nations across their path to Canaan. Such is the one side. On the other there is the internal weakness which has been amply apparent, dissension and murmuring are rife among them, and their position as the chosen people is unmatched by the condition which should prevail among them.

The choice is not unlike that of Moses himself, and we could imagine Hobab recalling the history of the man who so confidently spoke to him. He hesitates, and the call of God comes again to him :

"Leave us not, I pray thee ; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee " (Numbers 10. 31, 32).

A purpose in the call is made apparent. It can be truly said that God has a purpose in every man and woman receiving the call, and it behoves us all to ascertain in due course, so far as we may, the work for which we have been called. The man was beloved, but in addition there was a need for him.

"And they set forward from the mount of the LORD." These are the words which follow the call. History shows that Hobab responded to the call, and that he and his after him were always esteemed by the Israelites, as Saul's words show. But what of the esteem by God ? We cannot doubt that Hobab in his lifetime received some of the good which had been promised to him, though

he never arrived at that place which had been so confidently spoken of by Moses. The man who was the son of "Reuel" could always derive some comfort from the thought of God in the midst, but his true reward will be found in eternity.

Long centuries have passed to bring one of Hobab's descendants next to the king in Israel. Is this the consummation? No, for we see from 2 Kings 10 that Jehonadab does not stay the course, as men judge it. Though he does the work of judgement with Jehu, there is no mention of any reward for his services. Jehu gets his wages, which is a different matter; earthly position is assured to Jehu and his children after him for four generations, and who knows what might have been added had his response to the blessing of God been different? "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD."

There can be no doubt that the man Jehonadab whom we judged to have been in the counsels of Elisha would have had no pleasure in association with a king who displaced an Ahab only to walk in the ways of Jeroboam. Please read Jeremiah 35 again and consider the commands which Jehonadab gave to his people after his excursion into public affairs. The name of the man means "God is liberal," and yet he did not take advantage of the liberty he had. It would have been easy to take a "broadminded" or "liberal" view of things, and to do good by using his position in Israel. But this man, instructed in the things of God, assesses at their proper value the things he has witnessed in Israel and the things to be seen in Jehu. For him it was needful to remember the old paths, and the first ways of God. His forefather Hobab had taken the choice and had thrown in his lot with a pilgrim people. Better far to have neither lands nor houses than to forget God and to dishonour His Name.

"All your days ye shall dwell in tents." It meant sacrifice to maintain this separated character, this pilgrim garb, but the men of old had been strangers in the world, the heirs of the promises had dwelt in tents and had made it manifest that they were seeking after a country and a city not of this world. Such a narrow-minded and unprogressive people, as some would regard them, could never have been called "Jehonadabites," but it was highly appropriate that they should be called after Rechab, for that name comes from a root used to describe a horse and its rider, two beings moving in unity, and such were the Rechabites.

Much has been made of the injunction not to drink wine, and there are many so-called Rechabites of this world who have taken heed to the commandment relative to the wine, but yet have drunk deeply of the spirit of the age, such as is spoken of in 2 Timothy 3. 2. Disobedience is a characteristic of the last days, but above all else the true Rechabite must be such that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he will live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us,

that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works (Titus 2. 12-14). These, I repeat, are the true Rechabites.

In a day of gross disobedience it is the simple obedience of the Rechabites which is commended by God. The reward is very striking :

"Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever."

There is hardly a promise made to men which can stand above this. Only the highest and noblest of the servants of God and of the heavenly host are said to stand before God. Thus Gabriel could say: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." So Jehonadab got his reward though Jehu got wages. We can be in no doubt as to which is the greater man, and we may be sure that the will of God is to reward all that will value obedience, separation, unity, and soberness, as manifested by the Rechabites of a past day, and enjoined upon the true Rechabites of this day.

A. T. Doodson.

THE SOUL AND ITS NEEDS

The importance of man's knowledge of himself comes next to his knowledge of God, even as the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," follows the great and first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22. 34-39).

The apostle Paul makes plain to us that man is a composite being, of spirit and soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5. 23); he is, as has been described, of spirit, soul and body subsisting. Whilst man has learned a good deal concerning himself, as to his body, by the study of Biology, which is the science of life in its various forms, that is of bodily existence, there is no means whatever in this study of arriving at the origin of life. (Biology is derived from the Greek, *Bios*, life, i.e. the present state of existence or of manifested life, and *Logos*, word, reason, science). Biology cannot go beyond the physical side of human life; it cannot penetrate into the deep recesses of human existence which touch upon the eternal. Man is not a mere unreasonable beast whose life is to be taken up only with eating and drinking, working and resting, waking and sleeping. Man has a consciousness of a Divine Being, though that consciousness is often warped by evil teaching. God has set the world (Heb. *Olam*, eternity) in the heart of man, who, deep down in his being, does not believe that this life sees the end of his existence (See Ecclesiastes 3. 11.) Though this is so, man of himself cannot find out the work that God has done from the beginning even unto the end.

Anatomy may lay open the human body, may discover its structure, the situation and economy of its parts, but it cannot find the soul, the being that is housed in the body, nor can it discover the

human spirit. To the anatomist there may be little difference between the flesh of man and the flesh of a dog or of a frog. The physical structures of each are built up of cells, and the organs and their functions may bear a greater or lesser resemblance to each other.

It is quite impossible for man to come to a knowledge of himself, beyond the mere physical side of his being, from either Biology or Anatomy. As to Philosophy, it is hopeless to turn to this science, with its vagaries on the origin and existence of man, for a solution of human life on this earth. It is barren of any substantial knowledge whatever. Paul put philosophy in bad company, in Colossians 2. 8, when he associated it with "vain deceit." And as to the pagan systems of the east, these offer no help at all on man, his being and his needs.

If we are to derive any knowledge about ourselves, it must come by revelation, and that revelation is contained in the book called the Bible. We state this without fear of contradiction. Here is laid open the story of human origin, and the history of the course of human life in this world; it tells of birth and the cause of death. It does not reveal how conception and birth take place. It does not describe the circulatory system of the blood, the processes of digestion and assimilation; the knowledge of such things are not necessary to life. Blood circulated in our arteries and veins before we knew that we had any, and digestion went on before we knew that we had a stomach and digestive organs.

Much has been discovered by medical science as to the human body and how it works, but medical science in many things has as great a job in dealing with disease as ever it had, and it has to stand back helpless beside the deathbed of its patient. Why? The cause for this is just what the Bible reveals, which no other book on earth does. Whether men love the Bible and the God of the Bible or not, the plain and undeniable fact is, that it is the only book that deals authoritatively and truthfully with such matters.

Let men be honest and acknowledge their own limitations and the limitation of accumulated human knowledge. Let them stop this chicanery and deceit of foisting upon the minds of the young the evil and lying theory of evolution, that human life, and animal life, as we know it, began by some dynamic force within itself; in a word, let them cease teaching that creation had no Creator, that design, which is seen in every form of life, every substance, every atom, every snowflake, had no Designer. A modicum of wisdom would teach man this, if he did not naturally hate God so much.

Evolution is a moth-eaten garment which should be changed at once for the garment of truth. It is a strange and melancholy thing that this theory, which is discarded by many men of profound knowledge and wisdom, is still being retailed by smaller men who cannot prove as truth what they teach. I say, Have pity on the child and do not administer to it mental poison in its youth. Teach what is truth, and when the child has reached years of discretion,

then it can, as a responsible human being, choose for itself what it will believe. It is deceitful to teach the evil theory of evolution to young people. Is it any wonder that young people, who have been taught by evolutionists that man is only an educated beast, are becoming more and more bestial in their behaviour?

The Bible teaches whence man came and how he came to be, and it also teaches whither he is going. The facts are simple and clear:

“The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”
(Genesis 2. 7).

Soul is not so much what man has, as what man is: he is a living soul. Man came into being by the breath of God. He was created in the image of his Creator, made in His likeness (Genesis 1. 26, 27).

From Deuteronomy 8. 3, which the Lord quoted to the devil in His temptation (Matthew 4. 4), we have a most important insight into the soul of man and its needs. It is said,

“He (God) humbled thee (Israel), and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every thing (word) that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”

Clearly from this we learn that the soul of man has two sides and two needs. Man is fed by bread, the most widely accepted fact, and man is fed, in the case of those who have ears to hear God, by the words that proceed from the mouth of God. Man has a material and a spiritual need, for man is not simply material. His stomach must be fed, and so must also his mind. His soul has two sides, a Godward and manward, heavenward and earthward, spiritual and natural. Man is a spiritual being housed in a house of clay and water.

Man, as originally made by God, lived in two ways: (1) by eating of the fruit of the earth, and (2) by hearing the voice of the LORD God. God spoke to him and his life depended on his hearing and obeying God's word. If he disobeyed, then the day he disobeyed he would die. Alas, he disobeyed God's commandment, which was:

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2. 16, 17).

Genesis 3 gives the story of man's disobedience, his sin and fall. A great and fundamental change took place in the soul of man. He had sinned and died. He no longer wished to have fellowship with God. He had no desire to hear living words from the mouth of God, words which came by the breath of God, by which breath he himself was brought into being. He turned his back on God and fled from His presence to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden.

The facts of that fatal day are simply told, but oh, the depth of human tragedy and misery they contain! No book but the book of God contains the long weary story which ensued upon the act of that day. But long years after, out of midday darkness came the cry, the echo of the tragedy, when the sinless, suffering Son of Man cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was paying the price in His substitutionary death for man's sin.

The words of Deuteronomy 8. 3 are of great importance in the study of the soul of man and its needs. The human soul reaches down to material things through the five senses of the body, through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. If all these avenues by which the soul gains information were blocked and closed, the soul would be in a body, which would be, in a sense, little better than a coffin, the soul would have no means of communication with the world outside. The human soul, on the material side as to bodily needs, is maintained by what comes from the earth, of which the human body is made. Such scriptures as the following point to the material needs of the soul:—

"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb :

But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (Proverbs 27. 7).

"Men do not despise a thief, if he steal

To satisfy his soul when he is hungry" (Proverbs 6. 30).

"Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them."

"Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat ;

And they draw near unto the gates of death" (Psalm 107. 5, 18).

"So that his life abhorreth bread,

And his soul dainty meat" (Job 33. 20).

"I will say to my soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry*" (Luke 12. 19).

The soul, which is the man, needs bread, but does not live by bread only, but by every word (*Rēma*, "the spoken word" or "saying") which proceeds from the mouth of God. In such a word or saying of God we have the answer to man's highest and most important need. Until man hears God's voice in the mysterious depths of the soul, the soul, in its Godward side, is dead. This is what happened to Adam when he sinned ; his soul died toward God. Paul deals with this in Ephesians 2. 1-10. He says,

"And you did He quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience . . . Even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

This is the same thing of which, from another angle, the Lord spoke to Nicodemus, in John 3, when He said, "Ye must be born anew" (verse 7). With this birth there is a divine quickening by the word and Spirit of God, as is contained in that further statement, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life" (verses 14, 15). Isaiah, the gospel preacher of old, said, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me ; hear, and your soul

shall live" (55. 3). We might quote scriptures *in extenso* to prove the fact of the quickening of the soul which takes place through the hearing of the gospel, in faith. At that same time the human spirit is freed from the dark prison in which, through sin, it has been. Sin ever results in the binding of the human spirit. David, after he grievously sinned, in his confession to God, in Psalm 51, said,

*"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation :
And uphold me with a free (or willing) spirit."*

Through man's spirit God reaches down to commune with those whose souls are quickened. We are told by Solomon that--

*"The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD,
Searching all the innermost parts of the belly"* (Proverbs 20. 27).

Man's spirit is the means by which God operates in the depths of man's inner being. Where no man can see into, in the inner being of another man, the Lord can see, and every man is open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4. 13; 1 Corinthians 2. 11). The Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit, that we are children of God (Romans 8. 16). By his spirit the redeemed and quickened man reaches up to the Divine Being to have fellowship with Him. Thus, on the one hand, the human soul reaches down to earthly, material things through the senses of the body, and by this means man adjusts himself as to his material needs. On the other hand, man, with a new life, his soul having been made alive to God, is able through his spirit to enjoy fellowship with God, to hear His living word fresh from His mouth, and to speak to Him. This is *living* in its truest and highest sense. "The just shall live by faith" is a statement which contains the essence of the matter. All others are dead who have not had the experience of this divine quickening.

In Mary's song, at the time of the miraculous conception, we see the holy joy of the Spirit in her soul. She said,

*"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"* (Luke 1. 46, 47).

Here was a saved and quickened soul stretching up to God with words of exultation, with a soul alive and a spirit free she praises Him who had done such great things to her.

The evolutionist, who has no Saviour, and thinks that he does not need one, sees man on the upward move; to him man is just a beast, the descendant of a beast; man cannot even be called a creature, for that postulates a Creator, and in evolution of this sort there is no Creator, no first Cause. Is this barren theorising and speculating satisfying to the human soul? It cannot be. Man seeks security and in evolution there is none. The evolutionist comes to the end of his days, perhaps thinking that there is neither heaven nor hell beyond this life, and as a dying infidel once said, "Now for a leap in the dark." Could Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, have deceived men worse? (Revelation 12. 9.) How glorious is the Christian's hope, to depart and to be with Christ is very far better! (Philippians 1. 23).

J. Miller.

THE FIRST LESSON

It should be the aim of the true disciple of the Lord Jesus to work out with fear (of failure) and trembling (with an eager anxiety) that which has been inwrought; that he may translate into practice that which he has learned of the doctrine of his Lord. Let not the ideal nature of the teaching turn him aside from an endeavour to carry it out. To Timothy, like unto whom the Apostle Paul knew no one like-minded, instruction was sent as to how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God (1 Timothy 3. 14-16). This introduces the subject of "Godliness."

For the apostle to say that this lofty manner of behaviour is "God-like-ness" does not convey much to the human understanding, because of man's inability to apprehend God. "No man has seen God at any time . . ." (John 1. 18), but we rejoice that "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," Thus we find the apostle, by the Spirit, defining "Godliness" as "He who was manifested in the flesh." "Godliness" is here expressed in concrete terms. We often learn thus. The Master Himself taught by His loving examples. Much of His teaching was conveyed in acts and pictures, which the people in His day could apprehend. It is evident then that if disciples are to learn "Godliness," they must take His yoke upon them and learn of Him; they must know the "sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and the doctrine which is according to 'Godliness'" (1 Timothy 6. 3). The ways which be in Christ must be remembered (1 Corinthians 4. 17); the peace of Christ must rule in their hearts (Colossians 3. 15); the word of Christ must dwell in them richly (Colossians 3. 16).

There is a primary lesson to be learned before one may be a worthy ambassador of Him. No amount of teaching will make one proficient unless he or she learns to carry out this lesson in actual practice. It is the lesson taught in the words, "manifested in the flesh." Much is contained therein, in which the disciple may learn a lesson which is not, by any means, the least to be learned in the Incarnation, namely that of "*humility*," which is one of the essential characteristics of such as are godly.

In a fourfold way this lesson is driven home in Philippians 2. The church of God in Philippi, composed of material ranging in difference from such as Lydia the purple-seller, to the jailor, was a commendable assembly. In the letter written to them, little of censure is contained, yet it appears there were intrigues or factions in their midst. Two sisters of good repute were sadly estranged. The appeal of chapter 2. 1, 2, "If there is therefore any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be

of the same mind . . ." is very forcible, indeed, and bespeaks the eager anxiety of the apostle for unity and lowliness of mind which was also the mind of Christ Jesus.

In an anti-climax, four illustrations are brought to their notice, that they may reach this oneness of mind which entails a humility so contrary to nature.

Firstly, in verses 1 to 11 the apostle graphically presents Christ in His wondrous stoop from "being in the form of God" to "the death of the Cross." He who was wont to issue divine commands became obedient . . . we ask, to what? He became obedient to His parents; to the limitations which made Him weary and hungry and sad—yea, He became obedient unto death, and became a curse for us. Could the Philippians, have continued in hautiness of spirit in the face of such a lesson? Surely they ought to have been obedient and ceased their murmurings and disputings!

Secondly, the apostle presents himself, as an example, in verses 12-18. He was willing to be poured out as a drink-offering! Thrice in Philippians 3. 7, 8 he mentions his preparedness for the loss of all things, for Christ. He who had advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his own countrymen (Galatians 1. 17) is found beseeching the Philippians, and the Corinthians, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, as one who in their presence was lowly himself (2 Corinthians 10. 1). Surely he had whereof to glory, for he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words. To one with such a vision, a stake in the flesh was very necessary lest he should be exalted over much (2 Corinthians 12).

Thirdly, in verses 19-24 Timothy is presented as an example of *humility*. The apostle could point unhesitatingly to Timothy's self-abnegation and to his genuine care for the Philippians, for together they had shared service in the furtherance of the Gospel. See also for further commendation of this young man to whom Paul writes so much about the godly life, 1 Corinthians 4. 17 and 1 Thessalonians 3. 2.

Then, finally, lest it might be said that the examples were too high to emulate, the apostle commends Epaphroditus (the devoted), as one of their own brethren, who for the work of Christ had "come nigh unto death, hazarding his life". The Philippians had recognized his worth in that they had trusted him with their bounty intended for the apostle's need. Amidst all the trials that this beloved brother had to endure, in fulfilling his mission, his great care was for his brethren in his home town, and not for himself.

The lesson needs reiteration. Let us refer to Old and New Testaments alike, for, in this respect, man has changed little. "What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk *humbly* with thy God?" (Micah 6. 8).

“Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, *humility*, meekness, longsuffering . . .” (Colossians 3. 12); “Wherefore the Scripture saith, ‘God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble’” (James 4. 6); “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time*” (1 Peter 5. 6).

Here COMMENCETH the first lesson—“Walk *humbly* with thy God.” Take the Master’s yoke upon you, and learn of Him and ye shall find rest to your souls (Matthew 11).

Jas. Martin.

THE PRIDE OF EPHRAIM

“*The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot*” (Isaiah 28. 3).

A study of the history of Ephraim is an instructive one. Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph, and he inherited the blessing that came to his father. Joshua the leader of Israel was an Ephraimite (Numbers 13. 8); and at Shiloh, in the lot of Ephraim, the tabernacle was pitched when Israel came to the land of Canaan (Joshua 18. 1). Of Ephraim the man, we know little. His name means “fruitful.” Of Ephraim the tribe, we know much; their character is clearly depicted for us in the Scriptures.

In number they were one of the smallest tribes. At the beginning of the wilderness journey, the men over twenty years of age, numbered forty thousand and five hundred (Numbers 1. 33). At the end of the journey they numbered thirty two thousand and five hundred (Numbers 26. 37). But though their numbers decreased, their pride increased; and Ephraim’s history, except for one brief period (1 Chronicles 12. 20), is one long tale of pride and failure.

One of the early references to them is in Joshua 17. 14-18. They, along with Manasseh, came to Joshua when he was dividing the land, and said, “Why hast thou given me but one lot . . . seeing I am a great people?” They were great in words and in their own estimation, but not in power. They were unable to drive out the Canaanites. Their pride was great, but their faith was small.

In Judges 8 we find them contending with Gideon while he was fighting against the hosts of Midian. “Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not?” they said. They were more concerned about their own glory than they were of victory over the enemy. They were lovers of self, proud men among the people of God.

In Judges 12 we find them contending with Jephthah, after his victory over Ammon. “Wherefore didst thou not call us to go with

thee ? ” they said. “ When I called you, ye saved me not, ” replied Jephthah. They had no real desire to fight against the enemy, but they were always ready to contend with their brethren, for their own glory. How typical of the flesh !—“ enmities, strife, jealousies ” (Galatians 5. 20). It is the same from generation to generation.

In Psalm 78. 9 we read—

*“ The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows,
Turned back in the day of battle. ”*

They were unreliable, because their hearts were not right with God. They were self-centred. In Hosea 4. 17 we read—

“ Ephraim is joined to idols ; let him alone. ”

Lower and lower they seemed to sink. Pride, conceit, and love of self had robbed them of their manliness, and now they are given up, joined to their idols. “ Ephraim is a cake not turned ” (Hosea 7. 8). “ Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding ” (7. 11). “ Ephraim hath hired lovers ” (8. 9). None loved them in truth. Such is the effect of pride. Could such a people ever be helped ? Yes, God will change even them, as He can change us in all our weakness and failure.

“ Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols ”
(Hosea 14. 8).

*“ Ephraim shall be like a mighty man . . . their heart shall be glad
in the LORD ”* (Zechariah 10. 7).

What is the lesson of Ephraim for us ? It is the lesson of the greatness of humility, and the wretchedness of pride.

*“ A man’s pride shall bring him low ;
But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honour ”* (Proverbs 29. 23).

We turn from the story of Ephraim to consider the wonderful words of Paul in Philippians 2. 1-18. Read them, please. “ Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ” Is this possible with us ? We seem to be so different in so many ways, one from another. It is only when we look away from ourselves and look off unto Jesus, that the impossible is done. “ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. ” He who filled the highest place, came down and took the lowest place—“ the death of the cross. ” As we think of Him and love Him, we are able to count each other better than ourselves. In so doing we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, working out what God works in. Pride destroys, but humility saves our lives. “ God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble ” (1 Peter 5. 5).

G. Jarvie.

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JOTTINGS

We have seen in Isaiah 49. 3, that the mouth of Jehovah's Servant was made like a sharp sword, but in 50. 4 He says :

"The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of them that are taught (disciples), that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary."

Solomon speaks frequently of the tongue, both in its capacity for evil and for good. He says,

"The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver" (Proverbs 10. 20).

"The tongue of the wise is health" (12. 18).

"The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright" (15. 2).

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (18. 21).

James speaks a good deal about the tongue in chapter 3. 1-12, and shows that an uncontrolled tongue is "a restless evil, full of deadly poison." The same tongue may bless God, and curse men who are made in the image of God. Man cannot tame it. Yet through the working of God's manifold grace, the believer may have the tongue of the disciple.

Such was the Lord as Jehovah's Servant. Though He was omniscient as God is, knowing all from eternity to eternity, yet as Jehovah's Servant He was a Learner. It is said of Him, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Luke 2. 52). He advanced in wisdom, though He was the Wisdom of God (Luke 11. 49). "Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles; and some of them they shall kill and persecute." This is the same Wisdom who was by God as a Master Workman (Proverbs 8. 30).

The Jews asked, "How knoweth this Man letters having never learned?" (John 7. 15). The Lord's answer was, "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (verses 16, 17). God was the Teacher of His Servant.

The object of God's teaching was that the Lord might know how to sustain with words him that was weary. Weary means fatigued, exhausted, faint. He who sustained the weary was weary Himself, and He who thirsted gave living water (John 4.). The Hebrew word for sustain has the thought of to hasten, as though one hastened to succour someone. Such indeed was the Lord, as we see Him as Jehovah's Servant in Mark's Gospel; He was ever busy in His Master's business. Straightway or immediately, translations of the same Greek word, are more frequently used in Mark than in any other book in the New Testament. Not a moment was wasted by the Lord; He hastened His work to speak words in season to the weary and worn and sad. No one ever knew how to succour the weary with his words like the Lord, and He still carries on the work by His blessed Spirit, whom He sent to be another Comforter.

Jehovah's Servant said,

"He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (Isaiah 50. 4).

"Wakeneth," to be aroused, is derived from a word meaning to be bare, to be made naked. As the awakened eye is uncovered by the lifted eyelid in the morning, so the Lord's ear was uncovered to hear His Master's voice, the voice of Him who was His Father also. Many have uncovered eyes in the morning who have not uncovered ears. They do not listen to the Voice which speaks morning by morning. They may issue forth to the work-a-day world, not having heard the Voice speaking with them. Not so was it with the Lord. He listened more intently than Samuel in the temple (which was the tabernacle) of old, who said, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth," for Samuel did not yet know the LORD, but "the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD" (1 Samuel 3. 21), which is the way He reveals Himself to us all—by His word.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

The Lord as Jehovah's Servant said,

"The Lord GOD hath opened Mine ear to hear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward" (Isaiah 50. 5).

The word "opened" here means to open anything, a door, a book, the mouth, the eyes, the ears, and so forth. In Psalm 40. 6 the Lord says, "Mine ears hast Thou opened," or as the R.V. marg. says, "Ears hast Thou digged for Me." The word "digged" here is from the Hebrew *Karah*, and should not be confused with "to bore or pierce" in Exodus 21. 6. When speaking of the Hebrew servant it is said, "Then his master shall bring him unto the door post; and his master shall "bore" his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." "Bore" here is from the Hebrew word *Ralsa*, to bore or pierce. *Karah* applies to the digging of a well or a pit or grave, as in Genesis 26. 25; 50. 5. The boring of the ear, in Exodus 21. 6, is for the purpose of marking in connexion with ownership and identification, but the digging of the ears, in Psalm 40. 6 is with a view to hearing. Gesenius says that the words "Ears hast Thou digged for Me," is a stronger expression than, "The Lord God hath opened Mine ear," though both signify the opening of the ears to hear.

What Jehovah's Servant heard He obeyed. He was not rebellious nor did He turn back from God's command, finding it too difficult to obey. In obedience to God's will He says, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." How fully these words were accomplished in His mock trials before the Jewish council under Caiaphas and before Pontius Pilate! "Some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy: and the officers received Him with blows of their hands" (Mark 14. 65; 15. 15, 19, etc.).

Yet, despite the scorn and shame which were heaped upon Him, He, Jehovah's Servant, said,

"For the Lord GOD will keep Me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (verse 7).

"Confounded" means, principally, "to wound," but also signifies, "to reproach, to treat shamefully, to injure." The shame, reproach, and all the indignities heaped upon our blessed Lord in the last hours of His life will return upon the heads of the actors in these fearful scenes of hate and malice. Note the reading of the R.V. in Hebrews 12. 3: "Consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves." Those who were His enemies will be confounded eternally, but not the Lord. He, knowing all that lay before Him, set His face as a flint to meet all He had to face; neither the sorrow of His friends nor the hatred of His enemies could turn Him aside. He knew the trials of the Cross would end in the glory of the throne, where He sat down on God's right hand, His work on earth completed.

He further said,

"He is near that justifieth Me: who will contend with Me? let us stand up together: who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me" (verse 8).

"He who was manifested in the flesh," was "justified in the Spirit"
(1 Timothy 3. 16)

I judge the A.V. is right here in printing Spirit with a capital S, indicating that it is the Holy Spirit that is in view; as the A.V. is again correct in printing Spirit with a capital S in 1 Peter 3. 18: "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit." It is the Person of the Holy Spirit in both cases.

The Lord was justified in the Spirit in resurrection; His resurrection declaring Him to be God's just and holy Servant, as Peter proclaimed Him to be, in Acts 3. How will Annas and Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas stand when they appear before Him in the day of judgement? Will they condemn Him then? It shall be as He says in verse 9: "Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." Puny men! little did they know the truth of the words, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psalm 76. 10). J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

Christ is all

Across the vast panorama of the fulfilment of the divine purposes relative to creation, redemption, and the glories of the eternal future we may write clearly and boldly the truth that "CHRIST IS ALL."

All things find their origin and completion in and through Him.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22. 13).

Co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, He is the eternal Son, "The effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance" (Hebrews 1. 3), originally in the form of God, Himself the object of eternal love, "the Son of His love," and the object too of the adoration and worship of the innumerable heavenly hosts in the realm of eternal light. We fitly sing:

*"Of the vast universe of bliss
The Centre He and Sun;
The eternal theme of praise is this—
God's Well-beloved One."*

"For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth . . . all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (hold together, R.V.M.)"
(Colossians 1. 16, 17).

He upholds all things by the word of His power. The whole universe has its existence "in Him" who created it, and apart from the existence of Christ in His almighty creative and sustaining power the whole would collapse in chaotic confusion. How true, that even in creation, CHRIST IS ALL! He is the great Originator, Upholder, and Sustainer of all.

Men may endeavour to explain the origin of the universe by the existence and operation of certain laws, but laws do not exist without a law-maker, nor can there be designs without a designer. "The world through its wisdom knew not God," but the testimony of Scripture is clear, and may be summed up in the words of John 1. 3:

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made."

Of Him also it is written, "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Colossians 2. 3). Christ, who is the power and wisdom of God in creation, is also the power and wisdom of God in redemption. He is the Cause or "Author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him" (Hebrews 5. 9). Apart from Christ the redemption of mankind is an impossibility, our Kinsman-Redeemer must be both divine and human, able to satisfy the claims of heaven's holy throne in perfect righteousness (and only One who is divine could do that), and also to reach down to the depths of human need in liberating power and grace to release the slaves of sin and Satan.

In this matter of eternal salvation "Christ is all," or nothing. He is the focal point of all promise and revelation.

"To Him bear all the prophets witness" (Acts 10. 43). "And in none other is there salvation" (Acts 4. 12). If it were possible to take

Christ out of the Bible as Creator and Redeemer it would become meaningless, and man would be left to grope in the darkness of night, without a glimmer of light to point him to eternal rest at last. All God's purposes of grace revolve around the glorious Person and work of Christ, and as we think of the unique position which believers occupy in the Body of Christ into which they are baptized in One Spirit, we are bound to exclaim with thankful hearts "*Christ is all, and in all*" (Colossians 3. 11). There cannot attach to any member of the Body of Christ the slightest degree of merit for his being there, his standing there is by reason of the merit of Christ and His work of grace alone.

In contrast to the Body of Christ, which is unconditional in character, there is presented in Scripture a conditional unity of obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus, spoken of as "the house of God."

"But Christ as a Son, over His (God's) house; whose house are we if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3. 6).

It is a strange thing that many, who revel in the truth of eternal salvation, and of the heavenly oneness of every believer in "the Church which is His Body," fail to grasp the truth of the one thing designed by God for corporate testimony on the earth—His house.

In considering the truth of the House of God as found in Scripture we find it requires not only *faith* in Christ as Saviour, but *obedience* (1 Peter 1. 2, 22; 2. 1-5), *separation* (2 Corinthians 6. 14-17), *conduct and behaviour* (1 Timothy 3. 15), and all this in subjection to "ONE LORD" (Ephesians 4. 5).

This is no human conception, it is found in the word of God, in "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). It is designed by God to be the place where His will may be done on earth, and those who find a place therein must be obedient to the words of Acts 2. 41, 42, which show the conditional character of a "church of God." Of the churches of God together we read, "In whom every building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2. 21, R.V.M.).

Over the house of God Christ as Son is seen in supreme authority in His Lordship. "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ" and we are to be obedient from *the heart* to that form (pattern) of teaching whereunto we were delivered (Romans 6. 17).

This is no cold formal dogma, it is a matter of the heart's attitude toward Christ in His Lordship over God's house.

"Blessed is the man . . . in whose heart are the high ways to Zion" (Psalm 84. 5).

If Christ is your all-in-all as Saviour, let us kindly ask, is He your all-in-all as Lord? Has the One who saved you been given the throne of your heart to rule and reign without a rival there? The exhortation is, "But sanctify (set apart) in your hearts Christ as Lord" (1 Peter 3. 15). The supreme Lordship of Christ over God's house demands subjection and obedience, apart from which the house of God could

not exist. "Christ is all" upon the cross, there can be no other Saviour, "Christ is all" upon the throne, there can be no other Lord. If we give Him His rightful place now as Lord, and go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, He will acknowledge our obedience in a day to come, for "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2. 12).

Whatever may be comprehended in the vast realms of heavenly or earthly things or beings, the truth abides that "in all things" He must "have the preeminence."

"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell" (Colossians 1. 19).

It is God's purpose "to sum up all things in Christ" (Ephesians 1. 10). All things will ultimately find their true centre in Christ, and untold blessings will flow in "the times of the restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began" (Acts 3. 21), both in creation and toward man.

His supreme Lordship and authority must then be universally acknowledged, as in public manifestation He is revealed as "King of kings and Lord of lords." All things will be subjected unto Him, yet, wondrous thought, Christ, who is the sum and substance of all things in the outworking of redemption's plan, will Himself, in the moment of His mighty triumph then subject Himself to Him who subjected all things unto Him, "that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (1 Corinthians 15. 28).

F. McCORMICK.

STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS

IV.—The Cherethites and the Pelethites

Among the peoples referred to as being associated with the Israelites, though not by nature children of Israel, there are none which more closely typify the saints of this dispensation than do the peoples associated with David and Solomon. It is common knowledge that David is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only when he was waiting for the consummation of his anointing and patiently enduring the persecution by Saul, but also when he was constrained to flee before Absalom. Solomon stands as the complement to David, typifying the reigning of the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes in power and great glory, to dazzle the eyes of men with the riches of His glory.

It is very remarkable that we find a group of men associated with David and Solomon in the scenes which are most significantly typical of those things which have to do with the Lord. If we turn to 2 Samuel 15. 18 we have prominently brought before us the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and the Gittites. Owing to the fact that there were 600 of these men, it has been readily assumed by some that these were the same 600 men as those who joined David in the Cave of Adullam and

who afterwards followed him into the land of the Philistines (see 1 Samuel 22. 2; 23. 13; 25. 13; 27. 2) unto Achish, king of Gath. We note, however, that the Gittites at least were not Israelites, for Ittai "the Gittite" (2 Samuel 15. 19) was "a stranger, and also an exile," with his "own place" to which he might return. David entreated him so to return and to "take back" his brethren (verse 20). These, of course, will be the Gittites referred to in verse 18. David says of Ittai and his men that they came "but yesterday," though it states explicitly in verse 18 that they came "after" David from Gath. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the 600 men of verse 18 included at least a number of aliens, and that this group of 600 men could not be identical with the Adullamites.

Further, the Cherethites themselves are referred to as being in the land of the Philistines, and they were raided by the Amalekites at the time when Ziklag, David's possession in Gath, was burnt (1 Samuel 30. 14). See also Ezekiel 25. 16.

We must conclude therefore that the Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites were men of the Philistine race, and that for some reason they had cast in their lot with that of David. It behoves us to enquire as to their motives, and perhaps we can discern something common to them all in what Ittai and Achish say unto David. The noble reply of Ittai to David's injunction has rung through the centuries and will be to his glory and honour through all eternity :

"As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be."

Like Ruth the Moabitess, he also could say in effect :

"Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Achish's testimony to David (1 Samuel 29. 9) was that David had been good in his sight, "as an angel of God."

We pass over the circumstances which had led David to seek refuge with Achish in the land of the enemies of Israel, and we overlook the obvious deceit practised by David, just as we must needs pass over many other blemishes in men who yet are set forth in measure as types of the One who alone was perfect. What is of moment is that clearly David had revealed traits which had endeared him to Achish and the Gittites, and it is not only that David had bloomed before them as the flower of manhood and the prince of warriors, but he had impressed upon Achish that spirituality which had caused Achish to revere him as an angel of God. David had undoubtedly opened up the mind of Ittai to the beauty of Jehovah, the great I AM, by whom Ittai could take oath, "As Jehovah liveth." The love of these men for David transcended the love of Jonathan, for it was for David's God also. Like Ruth in regard to Naomi, it was "thy people . . . and thy God."

We judge, therefore, that it was out of pure love for David and the son of David that these 600 men followed David out of Gath when the day came for David to be brought to the kingdom. But their love was not of the kind which could fade with prosperity, for the day came when David crossed the brook Kidron, weeping as he went, cursed and reviled by men, rejected by the people, betrayed by those whom he had loved, a type indeed of that greater One who would cross the same brook on the way to Gethsemane. But there were men with David whose love was too deeply rooted to be affected by the cold wind of adversity, and in the days of his rejection they were a comfort to him.

We pass now to another scene. David's days are well-nigh over, and the appointed heir to glory must be hurriedly crowned because of the usurper (please read 1 Kings 1. 5). Men's hearts have again been stolen, and all the king's sons, the captains of the host, the high priest (verse 25), and the men of Judah (verse 9), have ranked themselves behind Adonijah. The day is come for the revelation of Solomon as the appointed king. We read that those who had not been called to share in the festivities were "Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David" (verse 8), also Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, and Solomon (verse 26). What action the mighty men took is not clear, but we read that Nathan, Zadok, and the mother of Solomon, bestirred themselves and brought the news to David, who commanded that Solomon should immediately be proclaimed as king.

The coronation of Solomon has some lessons for us, if we read aright. The men who took Solomon were "Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah . . . and the Cherethites and the Pelethites" (verse 38): that is, three Israelites and a band of aliens! If it is correct, that these latter people were indeed gathered out of the land of the Philistines, and were thereby strangers to the covenants, we get a delightful picture of the great appearing in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. When He comes on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, who will be with Him? Not many mighty men, perhaps; very few Israelites, probably; but many who once had no hope, but were aliens and strangers, but will be then with Christ in glory. Once they were as the Philistines, proud men by nature (Zechariah 9. 6), but their hearts were drawn after the Man of Sorrows, the One who was rejected and cast out by men, so that in their love for Him they humbled their hearts to love and serve and follow Him.

In that day of glory, He will be marvelled at, not only because of His intrinsic glory, but marvelled at *in* all them that believed; He will be glorified *in* His saints (2 Thessalonians 1. 10). Men will be amazed to recognize in that train of the great King some whom they had esteemed as of no account upon the earth, men who had walked as pilgrims and strangers, having no part or lot in the things of the commonwealth of men, because their heart's love was set upon the Person of their great God and Saviour.

A. T. DOODSON.

THE BELIEVER AND PLEASURE

We live in days when the world in general is demanding the maximum of pleasure. People are prepared to pay the price for it, even though very often this involves sacrificing some of the necessities of life. Wives, homes and children become secondary considerations in the pursuit of the pleasure men seek after. These may be found in one avenue or another according to individual inclinations. It is one of the characteristics of the last days,

“For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money . . . no lovers of good . . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3. 1-4).

There is one form of pleasure which has captured the imagination of the masses; in many homes it has become an idol; we speak of television. Children are fascinated by it, and it is not unknown that men of maturity have threatened to use the strike weapon to get alteration in their hours of work so that they may watch television. No doubt it is a wonderful discovery, and from the entertainment viewpoint it has become an obsession with many.

Is there anything wrong in all this? So far as the man in the world is concerned he has nothing better; the things which he loves are brought by means of television to his own fireside. He knows nothing of the joys and blessings which are found in Christ, and, alas, how true it may be, by this very means “the god of this world” is blinding “the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should not dawn upon them.” How shall we who have been delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love regard these things? One thing is certain, that a new creature in Christ can never grow or be satisfied with worldly husks, nor can the Spirit of God dwell in the believer ungrieved if there is a manifest desire to partake in worldly pleasures. The word is clear:—

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him” (1 John 2. 15).

Young believers are often perplexed as to where they are to draw the line. Let us use a few illustrations. A piano is, within bounds, harmless and legitimate in the home, but if it is used for mere entertainment to excess it becomes a snare, and a musical evening may become more important and enjoyable than time spent in singing from the heart some of the songs of Zion. There exists today what the writer would call “religious jazz,” lively catchy tunes set to words altogether unscriptural in many cases, which only serve to excite sentimental emotions and carry the mind away in fleshly ecstasy. The same may be said of the gramophone; perhaps little objection could be raised to playing perfectly innocent and sound records on occasion, but there is a tendency in human nature to explore the unknown, and it is known that some believers accumulate a pile of records which may

be more suitable to the worldling. It is much easier to get people to a gathering where these things are in prominence than to a quiet coming-together for earnest prayer and sober meditation of the word of God. What we wish to say is this : there is a vast field of what may be considered as harmless, lawful, pleasurable pursuits, which if engaged in to excess may become a snare, and ere the believer is aware, he becomes a slave to what may have been commenced as a harmless pleasure.

There is another field also where believers need to exercise the utmost care. A vast array of literature is available today, books, magazines and papers of all descriptions. Some of these are pure fiction of a type altogether unfit for any spiritually minded person to read. They are suggestive and soul-destroying, defiling both heart and mind and should be ruthlessly avoided. Other books of fiction so grip the imagination that we have seen persons so absorbed in them that they have been almost unconscious of their surroundings. Would that we could see more Spirit-filled men so reading their Bibles ! Certain types of newspapers also are a menace to those who would seek to maintain purity of heart. Such corrupting literature should be avoided and we should " be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." The exhortation is : " Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom " (Colossians 3. 16), and " let the heart be established by grace " ; beloved, " abhor that which is evil."

It will be seen that in the things we have mentioned and in many others, while there are no specific commandments forbidding them by name, there are principles of Scripture which are a safe guide in determining our attitude toward them. Firstly, let us consider, in addition to the detrimental effect on ourselves, the effect upon others if it be observed that we have become enslaved to any of these things. It will affect our testimony, it may become a stumbling-block to young or weak disciples for whom Christ died, and such may themselves be encouraged to partake in the same things ; none of us liveth to himself. It may also be a cause of reproach by unbelievers if we engage in the things which they think a Christian should not be engrossed in. " Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ " is the word to us, " commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God " (2 Corinthians 4. 3). These are weighty and solemn considerations in the light of the judgement-seat of Christ, and we do well to ponder the paths of our feet. Secondly, there is the principle that in our consideration for others we should not please ourselves.

" Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good unto edifying " (Romans 15. 1-2).

If this be so, it will lead us to the principle of voluntary self-denial. We should not indulge even in lawful things if they are a stumbling block or an occasion of falling (Romans 14. 13), for " wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore," the

principle is, "if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble" (1 Corinthians 8. 7-13).

These are principles which apply to the matters we are now considering, remembering also the word, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16. 24). This denial of self and voluntary crucifixion is an essential condition of true discipleship. It is not an imposition to make us "kill-joys," but is designed for our highest spiritual good and happiness. Let us keep clear of all doubtful things, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Let us of our own volition practise this self-denial so that we "overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God." Let these principles guide us amidst the present perils to spiritual life, not the least of these being the danger of television in the home.

Many responsible people are now sensing the dangers latent in television, and "The Council for Children's Welfare" has instituted an investigation into the moral and physical dangers as affecting children. Parents report that in any one week something like a score of violent deaths are seen on children's T.V. An American survey reports that 16,932 men, women and children died before the eyes of viewers in one year, very few from natural causes. Is it any wonder that alarm is growing concerning those children who are taking in this diet of horror? Alas, 3,500,000 British children are developing a taste for this mass slaughter. What then is to be the future of those children who day after day sit impassively watching people clubbed senseless, shot dead, turned into human torches, or just quietly knifed? Much juvenile crime has had its origin in ideas picked up from the screen or television. Such is the deadening, demoralizing effect of watching these enacted crimes day by day, that they become accepted and common-place in the make up of the individual. Not only is this aspect a menace, but there is the obvious lowering of moral standards among older ones fostered also by this means. Some prominent men have raised their voices against these defiling influences and the effect on sexual morality.

In November, 1955, orthodox Jews throughout London were asked to ban T.V. from their homes. They were told, "It is the most contaminating influence of our time." A poster, signed by 150 British, Canadian, and American rabbis condemning T.V. as "a parade of depravity," was pinned to the synagogue notice boards, and the rabbis preached against it in their sermons.

If these be the fears and views of this cross-section of public welfare and religious opinion, what shall be the attitude of those professing the higher standards of God's spiritual house? Can we regard these matters with unconcern and levity? If the effects be the lowering of the standards of conduct by men of the world in an ordered civilization, what adverse effects would it have upon disciples of the Lord? Can we think of any God-fearing mother wishing to expose her children

to these contaminating influences? God forbid, nor should we be so foolish as to expose ourselves. Thankful we are that the leaders among God's people with spiritual insight have discerned the danger and have raised a warning voice.

"Admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (Colossians 1. 28).

The danger is real, in the secrecy of the home; like the water which wears away the stone, the daily impact of the baneful influences of television leaves its indelible mark upon heart and mind, distracting and polluting the soul, and resulting in estrangement from God and the destruction of individual testimony.

Those who seek to lead the little Flock have themselves eschewed television because of its inherent dangers, so that they may by example and teaching guide and guard the sheep of His pasture. It is realized, that if television is found in the homes of God's people as an instrument of pleasure it would be a calamity of the first magnitude. You cannot take poison without being poisoned, and right well does the Devil know how to administer it. Someone may plead that there are some nice things, useful things, things which are lawful and helpful on T.V.; this may be so, but if you bring it into your home and bite the sandwich, the poisonous mixture will be taken unawares, its deadly work will be done, the soul will become estranged from God, and "the backsliding of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity (careless ease, R.V.M.) of fools shall destroy them" (Proverbs 1. 32). Such is the subtle power of this device that the only safe course is voluntarily to banish it from the home. Few, if any, will remain unscathed if it becomes a companion of the daily life. It is not a matter of how near we can walk to the edge of the precipice, but how far we can keep ourselves from danger.

"Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell securely" (Proverbs 1. 35).

*"I thirst, but not as once I did
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasure there."*

"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6. 14).

THE BELIEVERS' PLEASURES

As pilgrims and strangers passing through this world we are to use it and not abuse it, we are to be in subjection to the higher powers, and live honestly in the sight of all men. Our behaviour is to be seemly among the Gentiles, walking as sons of light and of the day, we are to pass the time of our sojourning in fear, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world" (Philippians 2. 15).

The time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles which was an excess (flood) of riotous living and revelling. The cross has cut us off from our former manner of life, and we seek higher and better joys and pleasures as we journey on to a better country and city. The believer has untold joy in his salvation and in his Saviour, he knows the happiness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered, and is able to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. His heart is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory as he remembers that his name is written in heaven, that he has an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading, and that very soon he is going to see the One who has saved him, and who is now preparing a place to which He will take him when He comes again. He is sure that it will not be long, for He has said, "Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me," therefore the joy of anticipation fills the heart of the expectant believer. This is the "blessed hope" which should make every believer leap for joy, and in the light of it, order his walk and life aright. Moreover, this moment of supreme joy when we meet our glorious Redeemer will be followed by those eternal ages wherein God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. With this untold wealth and blessing, why should we turn to the fleeting pleasures of this doomed and perishing world for satisfaction and happiness? It has none of lasting value, and the believer's testimony is this:—

*"That none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me . . .
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus found in Thee."*

But where is He now? He is seated on the right hand of God; therefore, set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. It is the set of the mind which matters. Shall it be heavenward or earthward? It is true of the Son as of the Father, that—

*"In Thy presence is fulness of joy;
In Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"* (Psalm 16. 11).

Shall those who seek their pleasure in God's house be disappointed? Never!

*"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of Thy house;
And Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures"*
(Psalm 36. 8).

The pleasures of God are in Christ and what He has done. God is eternally satisfied in Him, and the joys of God flow like a river from the throne, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God"; of these pleasures we may freely drink. Here is sufficient to cause us to "Rejoice evermore," for

*"Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee"* (Psalm 73. 25).

F. McCORMICK.

“MY BELOVED”

The expression, “My Beloved,” which occurs so frequently in the Song of Songs, is also one of the special names of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God describes as “My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased” (Matthew 12. 18), and tells us what He is to God, His Father. In chapter 5 of the Song of Songs there are some very beautiful words, poetically descriptive of one called “My Beloved,” and we believe that under this poetic imagery we may see some of the wonders of that Blessed ONE who is described as “altogether lovely.” In this poetic imagery we suggest that there are illustrations of certain truths relative to our Lord Jesus Christ, truths which are abundantly evidenced elsewhere in Scripture.

“What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” is the question asked by the daughters of Jerusalem. This question receives an answer giving a most wonderful portrayal of the deeply imprinted image of an absent one. If we can speak of our Beloved as she did of her beloved we shall do well.

“My beloved is white and ruddy”

Two truths are thus expressed which must stand at the forefront of our witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. White is a symbol of purity, and the purity of the Lord Jesus is beyond all that earth can produce and is of heavenly origin. This is shown in Matthew 17. 2 when He was in the mountain “and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light,” as the divine radiance from His glorious Person shone through and transformed them, making them “glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them” (Mark 9. 3). Ruddy signifies healthy humanity, and is used to describe David at the time of his anointing by Samuel. It reminds us of Him who took the form of a Servant and was found in fashion as a Man, sharing in blood and flesh.

“The Chiefest among ten thousand”

This suggests One who is pre-eminant, unique and peerless.

*“Man so perfect!
Holy, noble, humble too.”*

Ten thousand of the greatest names blazoned on the pages of history beside His, fade from view as the stars when the sun arises. He has no peer!

“His head is as the most fine gold”

Here is the truth of headship, so plainly taught in Scripture, but so little thought of today. Gold is symbolical in Scripture of that which is of God, divine in origin. Thus a church of God is spoken of as a golden lampstand (Revelation 1. 20). Daniel, in his interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the image with a head of gold, said, “The God of heaven hath given thee the kingdom . . . thou art the head of gold” (Daniel 2. 37, 38). The headship of Christ is illustrated by the words “Most fine gold,” signifying headship in

its highest form. Thus our Beloved is "Head over all things to the Church which is His Body" and He has all authority in heaven and on earth, for His God has put "all things in subjection under His feet" (1 Corinthians 15. 27). Let us learn this much needed truth for today—subjection of heart and life to Him whose bond-servants we should be.

"His locks are bushy and black as a raven"

If, as has been suggested, His divine authority is seen in the head of most fine gold, so His glorious Manhood is seen in the locks. "Bushy" and "black"—each contains precious thoughts of our Lord Jesus Christ. With humanity age is marked by the thinning or greying of the hair, but of Him it is said His locks are bushy and black.

In Hosea 7. 9 it is said of Ephraim, "strangers have devoured his strength . . . yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him," but our Beloved, our glorious Head, is alive in the power of an endless life. There is no diminishing of strength with Him for it is written—

*"The heavens are the works of Thy hands :
They shall perish ; but Thou continuest :
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;
And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed :
But Thou art the same,
And Thy years shall not fail"* (Hebrews 1. 10-12).

"His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks"

The eyes are the most expressive members of the face. In them often the inward emotion can be easily read. Love, anger, fear, pity and reproach all can be expressed through the eyes. John describes the eyes of the Lord as being like a flame of fire (Revelation 1. 14). Here the Lord is presented as the all-seeing One, who repeats to each church the words "I know", though what He knew of each church was different. But, in this Song, love is the distinctive characteristic. "Like doves": what

*"Gentleness and tender feeling,
Pity too, and grace"*

are suggested by this! The unjust, blasphemous reproaches of His enemies broke the heart of the Lord Jesus (Psalm 69. 20). But the look of love, mingled perhaps with grief, broke Peter's heart after his denial, for "he went out and wept bitterly." The bride here recalls only the tender love of those eyes. We too, in a spiritual sense can realize that look of love.

*"He looked on me, I looked on Him,
And we were one for ever."*

As the Lord Jesus moved about on this earth His eyes were always on the look-out for some good to do. How frequently we read that as He passed by "He saw"! It may have been a man or a woman in need of Him, the blind, the lepers, a weeping widow or a multitude in distress, but the response always was—"He was moved with compassion." One day we shall meet Him; "How shall I meet

those eyes ? ” Those eyes once looked down from the Cross, searching the faces of those around, fulfilling the words of Psalm 69. 20,

“ *And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ;
And for comforters, but I found none.* ”

But when we see Him it will be in His radiant glory, anointed with the oil of gladness, in the fulness of the joy of His Father's presence.

“ **His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs** ”

Yet most shamefully and ruthlessly did His enemies pluck the hair from that lovely face when He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, when He hid not His face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50. 6). In some respects this was the most shameful thing they did to Him. In the days of the law, if a man refused to do the kinsman's part—see Deuteronomy 25. 5-10,—the aggrieved widow would “ spit in his face,” and he stood shamed for ever. What a contrast with the One who had left the eternal Throne and was born of a woman for the express purpose of becoming the Kinsman-Redeemer ! To be spit upon ! Surely, surely, the shame all belongs to those who so acted.

“ **His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh** ”

This would speak to us of the words of Him of whom, at the beginning of His public ministry it is written—“And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth ” (Luke 4. 22). What wonderful words He spake ! words His Father had given Him to speak.

He Himself knew every scripture which told of His sufferings and death. Thus to the two disciples on the Emmaus road He said, “ Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things ? . . . And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” What liquid myrrh was here ! The very quintessence of Scripture witnessing to the sufferings of the Christ !

“ **His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl** ”

The hands speak of action. “ Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.” “ The heavens are the work of Thy hands.” “ The work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained.” These Scriptures confirm the thought that the hands speak of the actions of the One “ who went about doing good.” How wonderful was the grace of Him who touched the leper with cleansing power, who touched the blind eyes to give sight, who touched the bier whereon the dead son of a widow lay, who took the daughter of Jairus by the hand, and raised her up ! Well may we sing of

“ *Those kind hands that did such good,* ”

The rings, being of gold, reminds us that all His actions were according to the will of His Father, as He said—"I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." It can be truly said of Him what could be said of none other—"No word ever needed to be recalled, no action regretted, no step retraced." All was perfect.

*"All His life was right
And holy in God's sight:
No sin He ever knew,
The Son of God so true,"*

and yet at last

*"Those kind hands that did much good,
They nailed them to a cross of wood."*

"His body is as ivory work, overlaid with sapphires"

Of His body it is written, "A body didst Thou prepare for Me" (Hebrews 10. 5). He had a human mother, but no human father. He had a body like ours, yet having no inherent sin, a body in which He glorified God on the earth and accomplished the work He had given Him to do; a body which was laid at last in the tomb, but which saw no corruption, indeed could not see corruption. Ivory fittingly speaks of this. Happy thought, "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10. 10).

"His legs are as pillars of marble"

Here strength is clearly intended. While it is indeed true that "the LORD hath no pleasure in the legs of a man," yet it is equally true that He found infinite pleasure in the strength of will and purpose always evidenced in Him who never wavered, but set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. We read of one of the days, just prior to His going to the Cross, these words—"Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed" (Mark 10. 32). Doubtless the unflinching determination and unfaltering step of that lonely, majestic Figure, as "He went on before" (Luke 19. 24), was something the like of which they had never seen. "Marching in the greatness of His strength," is a word which awaits fulfilment, yet here is something akin to it. He stands out in grand and glorious contrast to all who have ever walked this earth.

(To be continued D.V.).

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JOTTINGS

In Isaiah 52. 13 Jehovah calls attention again to His Servant :

"Behold, My Servant shall deal wisely, He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high."

The Hebrew for wisely means to act with understanding, intelligence, prudence. David is a type of Him in this, he was "prudent in speech" or business (1 Samuel 16. 18), and he "behaved himself wisely," he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways," "he behaved himself very wisely," and "he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul" (1 Samuel 18. 5, 14, 15, 30). Joseph too was addressed by Pharaoh in the words, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou : thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled : only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (Genesis 41. 39, 40). Joseph, like David, is a type of the Lord—a sufferer who became a ruler. They are both miniature pictures of the Lord ; but their experience both in suffering and glory pales before that of Jehovah's Servant.

He was to be exalted and very high, yet He was One at whom many were to be astonished (astonied is an old English word which is now lengthened to astonished) and means to be so astonished as to be stunned into silence. His disciples were so stunned by their Lord's sufferings on the Cross, that they could only mourn and weep during the days between His death and resurrection (Mark 16. 10). "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (verse 14). Visage in Hebrew means the Lord's appearance, look, aspect ; He was so marred or disfigured, from what He ever had been ; so serene and composed was He, and beautiful with the beauty of holiness, but on Calvary so utterly disfigured in the intensity of His sorrow and suffering, which no mind, tongue or pen can describe. His form or body was disfigured more than the sons of men. In meditation we may stay here awhile to dwell on the sufferings of Him, whose sufferings mean so much to us, infinitely more than we understand at the moment : here too we may have our spirits subdued and disciplined, that we have rendered so little for sufferings so great.

"So shall He sprinkle many nations" (verse 15).

There are two Hebrew words used in Leviticus translated sprinkle, *Zarak*, which means to scatter, and *Nazah* which means to spirt or spatter. The former describes how the blood of the burnt and peace offerings was scattered or laved upon the copper altar (Leviticus 1. 5, 11 ; 3. 2, 8, 13). The latter shows how the blood of the sin offering was spirted before the veil (Leviticus 4. 6, 17), also upon and before the mercy seat on the day of atonement (Leviticus 16. 14, 15). Sprinkle in Isaiah 52. 15 is the word *Nazah*. Two meanings are given by Gesenius, (1) that the word *Nazah*, in Isaiah 52. 15, means, "so shall He fill many people with joy because of Himself," and (2) "He shall besprinkle many nations, i.e., He (My Servant, the Messiah) shall purge them in His own blood." The latter, Gesenius says, is Luther's view. I am of like opinion, that His sprinkling indicates the Lord's work of atonement applied to many nations.

"Kings shall shut their mouths at him : for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they understand" (verse 15).

What is meant by kings shutting their mouths at Jehovah's Servant ? Some have thought that this means that they will be dumbfounded at the wisdom expressed in His government, as compared with their own, as, no doubt, the simplicity and justice of His rule will be in sharp contrast to the intricate and often unjust forms of rule that have obtained in the world. I think, however, that this is hardly what is meant here, for the prophet goes on to say "for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they understand." I would connect these words with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2. 6-8 : "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect : yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought . . . which none of the rulers of this world knoweth : for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." But in contrast to the ignorance of earth's rulers who crucified the Lord, and many since, kings in the coming Millennium shall see and understand the hidden wisdom of God in Christ crucified.

—J.M.

JOTTINGS

In Isaiah 53 we reach the death of Jehovah's Servant. We can but offer a few words on this chapter of transcending importance. If the Jewish people understood in part its meaning it would revolutionize their thought and attitude to the tragedy of Golgotha, when they stumbled at Him who is the Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence; yet, God be praised by us who are Gentiles, for "by their fall (trespass) salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Romans 11. 11). We know from John 12. 36-43 that the Jewish people could not believe on Him and so receive Him nationally, though many of their rulers did, of whom were Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus.

Thus the prophet in Isaiah in his day, and the Lord in His, stretched out their hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. Said Isaiah,

"Who hath believed our report?

And to whom hath the Arm of the LORD been revealed?" (verse 1).

The Arm of the LORD is Jehovah's Servant. He is addressed, in 51. 9, as "O Arm of the LORD," and He it was who dealt with Pharaoh and at last drowned him and his host in the Red Sea. But now He appears in lowly guise, as One who grew up before Him as a tender plant, a sucker or sapling, and as a root out of a dry ground. Here, I judge, is a two-fold presentation of the Lord. Before God He was beautiful as a tender plant, an evidence of new life in an otherwise arid and barren scene; but in men's eyes He was like a root out of dry ground; One without form or comeliness, as roots are, and without beauty, and consequently undesired by men. He was as the rough badger-skin covering of the tabernacle, but within the tabernacle all was beautiful with gold and blue and purple and scarlet curtains. Despised, rejected, such was the Man of Sorrows, One who was well acquainted with grief. "Acquainted" is from the Hebrew *Yada* which means to know or perceive by seeing. The griefs (or sicknesses) which the Lord saw touched and melted His tender heart, as is seen when He came amongst the mourners at Martha's house at Bethany.

Men turned their face from Him, which literally means that they turned their back upon Him, as Adam did with the LORD God when he sinned and sought cover amongst the trees of Eden. The Jewish people will yet say in the day of their repentance, "We esteemed Him not," and yet again shall they say,

"Surely He hath borne our griefs (sicknesses), and carried our sorrows:

Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (verse 3).

So they viewed Him on Calvary as One upon whom God's wrath had fallen, because that He who was Man claimed to be God; His claim to them was blasphemy. Though He had borne their griefs, and performed all manner of cures, yet thus He died in their eyes as a blasphemer.

"But" (says the prophet, showing the reason that upon Him had come the wrath of God) "*He was wounded (pierced) for our transgressions, He was bruised (crushed or broken to pieces) for our iniquities: the chastisement (or correction) of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*" (verse 5).

Here is the Healer through Himself being wounded, and here is the cure. There is no healing for the wounds of sin in the soul but by the blood shed at Calvary. This verse has been the spiritual birthplace of countless thousands.

"From oppression (shutting up or restraint) and judgement He was taken away." "Who shall declare His generation?" His own people, the Jewish nation, would not, for had they sought the book of His generation, both of Joseph's and Mary's line, they would have found that they had crucified the Messiah. But God has declared His generation in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

"He was cut off . . . for the transgression of My people was He stricken." The stroke was due to them, but He received it.

"They made His grave with the wicked," a common grave for the three who were crucified, but He was with the rich man (Joseph) in His death, for He had done no violence (unlike the robbers), nor was deceit in His mouth. Such was Jehovah's righteous Servant who bore our iniquities.

J.M.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

“ His riches in glory in Christ Jesus ”

Such are the words of Paul to the church of God in Philippi when writing that memorable letter which contains so much of the excellencies of Christ. Therein are references to the fact of His original Being “in the form of God,” His wondrous condescension in taking “the form of a Servant,” His voluntary humiliation, His perfect obedience even unto death, yea, the death of the cross, all emanating from His lowly, sympathetic, self-abasing mind, the mind which was in Christ Jesus in His thought for the things of others. That mighty stoop was on the one hand a manifestation of perfect grace toward the needy and perishing, and on the other, a revelation and example of perfect obedience. Based on this fact the exhortation is given,

“ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others ”
(Philippians 2. 4, 5).

This Christlikeness was seen in Paul, who said—

“ Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.”

It was also seen in Timothy, of whom Paul says,

“ I have no man like-minded, who will care truly (genuinely, R.V.M.) for your state,”

and in Epaphroditus also who

“ longed after you all, and was sick nigh unto death . . . hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me ”
(Philippians 2. 20-30).

It was the self-effacing mind of Christ which caused Him to become of no reputation, “a worm and no man,” to enrich and bless others; this also characterized these faithful men. In contrast, there were those who thought only of their own things, self-centred, seeking the gratification of personal, fleshly desires; such were of those “whose god is the belly . . . who mind earthly things”; nothing could be more un-Christlike.

The Philippian church thought of the things of others, for they thought of the necessities of Paul in his service for the Lord. They had manifested a care for him far beyond that of others, and in acknowledging the receipt of their gift, he refers to it as an ascending offering, “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” He then adds:

“ And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus ” (Philippians 4. 18, 19).

Here is an unfailing plenitude beyond all human conception. The human heart and hand may fail to minister to the Lord’s servants. Paul could say he had learned the secret of how “to be hungry . . . and to be in want.” The sweetness of this promise is to those who manifest that in them is the mind of Christ. “Your thought for me” resulted in “the fruit that increaseth to your account.”

The same principle is enumerated in 2 Corinthians 9. 6 : " He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully " (R.V.M. with blessings).

"And God is able to make all grace abound unto you ; that ye, having always *all sufficiency in everything*, may abound unto every good work." " My God shall fulfil every need of yours," and whatever that need may be, there is an all-sufficiency in the risen, exalted Christ in glory to supply that need ; indeed all temporal and spiritual blessings flow down to us through Him, the almighty and beneficent Lord of all. God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus are bestowed upon those who with Christ-like mind, and purity and loyalty of heart, honour the Lord with their substance or service. They truly will know the reaping of blessings and the increase of the fruits of righteousness, and there is also a future recompense of reward. God's people have a High Priest who is declared to be a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is a Priest in resurrection glory. Melchizedek was priest of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, and so is Christ. There is unlimited wealth and power at His disposal, and there can be no need beyond His competency to supply according to those riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Are we living in the present enjoyment of this exceeding great and precious promise ? If we do not know this blessing, it is because we have not the mind of Christ in us actively sacrificing present gain or pleasure for the blessing of others and the glory of God. Perchance we hold on too much to our own things for personal interests and advancement. It was not so with Christ ; " He emptied Himself." He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. He yielded His all, and countless myriads of the redeemed have through Him been eternally enriched.

He will never forget the kindness shown to those who belong to Him, it may be a prophet's reward, or a righteous man's reward : "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward " (Matthew 10. 41, 42). In grasping present opportunities to minister to His despised and rejected people, it will result in knowing something experimentally of those rich supplies which are found in " His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." " Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over " (Luke 6. 38). Did not David remember the kindness shown to him and those with him when the people were hungry, and weary and thirsty in the wilderness during the rebellion of Absalom ?

Barzillai with others provided the king and the people with sustenance in a dark day (2 Samuel 17. 27-29). David never forgot this kindness to the day of his death when he then charged Solomon saying—

" But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table ; for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom thy brother " (1 Kings 2. 7).

Of Solomon's servants who provided for his table it is written, "They let nothing be lacking," and when the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon and saw the meat of his table, the sitting of his servants, the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel . . . there was no more spirit in her. "I believed not . . . until . . . mine eyes had seen it," she said, "and, behold, the half was not told me." The glory and wealth of Solomon and the meat of his table of which the sons of Barzillai partook in the presence of the exalted king are not to be compared with God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus, which will be displayed to myriads of wondering angels and men, which are quite beyond the human mind to grasp or describe. The half hath not been told, yet there is the present possibility of being a partaker now of these abundant supplies, and also of obtaining a place near the King in that day of His manifested glory, if we are among those who have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (Isaiah 66. 2).

F. McCormick.

STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS

V. The Bondservants of Solomon

The people who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah to the land of Israel were divided by them into five classes: "Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants" (Nehemiah 11. 3, Ezra 2. 43, 55, 58). We take it that the Nethinim are the descendants of those Gibeonites of whom we wrote in the first article of this series, who by their wiliness saved themselves from destruction at the hand of Joshua, and who were made to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary. It was shown in that article that these men, by the wisdom of God, were caused to be associated with the sanctuary, and consequently they were never, so far as we know, a snare to Israel, but occupied ultimately a place of honourable mention among a returned remnant. We shall now seek to show that "the servants of Solomon" have a history which has a measure of similarity to that of the Gibeonites, and which provides striking lessons for us in that they were strangers to the covenants, yet partook in a real sense of the blessings of Israel.

The servants of Solomon are without question the men referred to in connexion with the building of the temple. It is well known that men who were not Israelites at all were employed by Solomon, and we may particularize Hiram, King of Tyre, and his servants. The builders were divided into three classes, Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites. It is not our intention to consider the last two classes for they received their wages for their services (1 Kings 9. 11-13), though we note in passing that Hiram had a deeper reason than that of commercial prosperity, for he "was ever a lover of David" (1 Kings 5. 1).

Solomon's builders appear to include three classes :

- (1) "a levy out of all Israel" (1 Kings 5. 13) composed of 30,000 men in a rota of 10,000 men ;
- (2) 80,000 men that were hewers in the mountains, and 70,000 men that bore burdens (1 Kings 5. 15) ;
- (3) "a levy of bondservants" (1 Kings 9. 21), which did not include any man of Israel (verse 22).

In addition to these there were certain overseers that were probably Israelites. The first of these classes possibly were men of Israel, though there is a little doubt as to this in view of what is said in 1 Kings 9. 15 which appears to refer to "the levy" as though there were only one, but we may pass over that point for the second and third classes included far more men. The second class were definitely strangers in Israel, gathered by David (1 Chronicles 22. 2) and later by Solomon, men who perhaps were conscripted, but who otherwise had no permanent association with Israel. The third class was composed of the people that were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, the descendants of the people whom the children of Israel would not, or could not, drive out from the land, for these men were determined to stay, and the congregation made them servants.

The Jebusites merit special mention. They were the original inhabitants of Jerusalem until David took the city and called it the city of David, and it was the threshing floor of a man of that race, Ornan the Jebusite, where the angel of God chose to stand between the earth and the heaven, when David's sin of numbering the people caused God to send a pestilence (1 Chronicles 21. 15), and there David was commanded to rear an altar to Jehovah.

It is passing strange that God should choose the house of a Jebusite, but it stirs one's heart to read the words of Ornan after he had seen the angel of God (verses 20-25). There was a full surrender of a man's heart with an understanding of the things pertaining to the altar: the wood, the oxen, and the meal. There would seem to be a connexion between this event and the act of Solomon when he took the Jebusites and their fellows, the Amorites, the Hittites and the rest, to make them builders of the Temple. At one time God had proclaimed everlasting enmity with men of these races. It had been His desire that they should be entirely driven out, but, because of the feebleness of the Israelites, and perhaps their desire for servants to set to taskwork (Joshua 16. 10 and Judges 1. 28), they had been allowed to stay in the land to provide snares for the people, until God in His anger deliberately left the residue of these Canaanites there that by them He might prove Israel (Judges 2. 20—3. 6). It was indeed a sad day for the Israelites when they took Canaanites to be their personal servants. A better example had been set them in connexion with the Gibeonites, as was mentioned earlier, and the time had now come in the goodness of God when there was to be a reversion to that first example, and the Canaanites were levied from their places as servants of the people,

to be servants to Solomon the glorious king, and to be brought into close relationship to the things of God in connexion with His House.

It is not therefore now very surprising to find in a later day many of the descendants of these bondsmen in that ripe spiritual condition which led them to forsake the things of Babylon and to love the Place of the Name when very many Israelites were content to remain away from the Land and the Place. They were strangers indeed to the covenants and were not children of Abraham after the flesh, but truly children of Abraham according to faith, with a place of honour in the roll of the faithful remnant.

The ways of God are still the same, for men must be brought to understand the things of God, and caused to realize His holiness as well as His loving-kindness. Away from the House, men please themselves ; in the House they are taught to obey ; away from the House they may deem any kind of service to be sufficient, but in the House it must be strictly according to the revealed will of God. That will of God for the strangers to the covenants who are brought nigh today is expressed in the word of God. It is the Way of God for men today to be saved and also to be brought into (or planted in) the House of God. In this dispensation the number of Israelites in the House is very small, yet to such men as Paul was given the oversight of the building as committed to them by Him who builds the House.

As we ponder this story of the Canaanites who were determined not to be driven out, but who found an ultimate place in God's purposes, we might well bow ourselves before Him who foreknew us and caused us to be inheritors of the promises, though once we were far off and were strangers to the covenants. Well might we ponder, too, the fact that God's blessing to these strangers was only consummated when they were brought into close relationship to the things of the House of God.

A. T. Doodson.

“ MY BELOVED ” (continued)

“ Set upon sockets of fine gold ”

No mention is made of his feet, but here, we suggest these golden sockets refer to them. Still golden ! In the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw a general deterioration was evident—golden head, silver breast and arms, belly and thighs of copper, legs of iron and finally feet, part of iron and part of clay. The final aspect depicts man, for has it not become a commonplace to say, “ You have only to know a man long enough to see the feet of clay ” ? Alas, how true this is ! But what a complete Person is found in the Lord Jesus Christ ! His thoughts, His words, His actions, His walk, are all in perfect agreement. Those lines are worth repeating—

“ *And all His life was right
And holy in God's sight ;
No sin He ever knew,
The Son of God so true.* ”

Yet those feet which "ran in the way of God's commandments" were at last nailed to the shameful cross! "My Beloved" there for me!

"His mouth is most sweet"

This is clearly explained in chapter 1. 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." His mouth and his kisses are the expression of his love. Where all is gold and glorious, the best of all is his love. Well has the poet expressed it—

*"Thy dying love, O Lord, I own,
A love unfathomed and unknown.
All other love can measured be,
But not Thy boundless love to me."*

"Love divine, all love excelling."

Most sweet indeed! The sweetest experience that any can ever have is to know "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

Having thus viewed the individual beauties of her beloved from head to feet the bride then gives a final and comprehensive witness in the words—

"Yea, he is altogether lovely"

What more can we say? only that we long for the day when "our eyes shall see the King in His beauty," the One, "Whom not having seen we love." But when we see Him at last, "even as He is," we shall love Him with a greater, truer, fuller, purer and more worthy love because He first loved us. Such witness, borne in response to the question, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" moved the heart of the hearers whose decision was, "We will seek him with thee." May our witness for our Beloved be such, so evidently from the heart, and so true to His Person, His work, and offices, that others in our day may be constrained to make a like response—

"We will seek Him with thee."

A. G. JARVIS.

GLEANINGS FROM PHILIPPIANS 4

This chapter opens with an exhortation to the saints of God in the Church of God in Philippi to "stand fast in the Lord." It is important to notice the relationship indicated by the words "in the Lord." Of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ it is true that they are blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love" (Ephesians 1. 3, 4). The testimony of the Scriptures is clear and conclusive that the believer in Christ is secure in Him for ever. There is no obligation laid upon the believer to stand fast so that his position and portion in Christ can be secured. The work of Christ and the word of God guarantee the eternal salvation of the child of God and no believer in Christ can fall away from Him and be lost

eternally. It is greatly to be deplored that many today who preach salvation through faith in Christ teach also that the person who has placed faith in Christ for salvation is not eternally secure, but must hold fast if he is to enjoy the happiness of heaven. A hymn-writer has well expressed the believer's security thus :—

“ *What from Christ the soul can sever,
Bound by everlasting bands ?
Once in Him, in Him for ever ;
Thus th' eternal cov'nant stands.
None can pluck us
From the strength of Israel's hands.*”

“ In Christ ” is a matter of divine grace. “ In the Lord ” speaks of subjection and obedience to His authority, and reminds us that Christ is the Lord, the One who has sovereign authority. He is the One who has the right to command. To His authority we may or may not submit. To His commandments we may or may not give obedience. *In Christ* describes eternal relationship, but we may or may not *stand fast in the Lord*.

In Philippians 4 Paul refers to some very practical issues which have an important bearing upon standing fast in the Lord. An examination of the chapter will show that the apostle deals with certain attitudes and activities of mind, and it is in the light of such that we wish to consider this portion.

SAMENESS OF MIND

Something had intruded between two very valuable and useful sisters in the assembly in Philippi. Estrangements and discord were inevitable consequences. We are not told what had caused the trouble. Experience teaches that often an unwise word, a misjudged motive, an unkind, or even misunderstood, action may serve the purpose of the adversary to separate and to antagonize two disciples of the Lord.

We observe first of all the intense yearning of the apostle. Well did he know the pernicious possibilities of such estrangement, not only for the two sisters personally, but also for the whole assembly. Paul says, “ I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche . . . ” This was no light matter to Paul. It weighed heavily upon his heart. Do we fail to see that the yearning of Paul is but an echo of the deeper yearning of the heart of Him who prayed, “ Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word ; that they may all be one ” ? Do we adequately realize that disunity amongst His saints is a sore grief to God ?

Next let us note the responsibility which was placed upon each of these sisters to put right the wrong which had developed. “ I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.” We may try to think of the effect produced upon these two honourable women when they heard Paul's letter read. What solemn heart-searching would follow ! Each of them had to act. How important it is to recognize personal responsibility in such circumstances !

Humility and meekness are indispensable. Bitter words may generate bitter feelings. Wrong actions may open painful wounds. And Satan takes advantage of human weakness. Only divine grace can give victory and the strength to secure sameness of mind.

It is important also to see that Paul besought one whom he addresses as "true yokefellow" to "help these women." All that can be done must be done to help and to save these sisters. It was possible for Paul's fellow-worker to be aware of the strained relations existing between the two sisters without feeling the spiritual urge to help them to be reconciled. Paul's words emphasize the responsibilities which come to others to help to heal where there is trouble of this kind. The apostle did not encourage his brother to take sides, but to help both the sisters in resolving their problems. Such intervention calls for considerable wisdom, grace and meekness. Prayer, spiritual counsel and entreaty will all find their place in this work. Should sameness of mind be produced great will be the present and the future recompense of the peacemaker. We need to be warned against the fleshly tendency to aggravate rather than alleviate. We may scatter instead of bringing together. Solomon said that there are certain things which the LORD hateth and which are an abomination to Him. One of these is, "He that soweth (Revised Version, margin, letteth loose) discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6. 19). Solomon also wrote, "A froward man scattereth abroad strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16. 28).

We shall miss an important implication of Paul's exhortation if we fail to see that these sisters were "to be of the same mind *in the Lord.*" The authority of the Lord and the obligations of that authority were involved in this matter. Euodia and Syntyche had a joint and several responsibility to one Lord. His mind must be their mind. Difference of mind must somewhere manifest divergence from the mind of the Lord. Further, the desired sameness of mind must not be reached by rejection of the declared will of the Lord. It is not just a matter of peace at any price. The Lord's authority is paramount. The Lord's authority must be the determining factor. It is vital. May we ever remember that one thing which each one of us can do is to forgive when personal wrongs have been inflicted. This often will go far in accomplishing sameness of mind.

Satan will never relax his efforts to shatter sameness of mind among the Lord's disciples. His attacks are incessant and subtle. Let us beware. May we not be deluded to hide behind the theory that differences are inevitable and unimportant. Our Lord's yearning has reached us in words which should move the heart. Very soon we may stand before Him to give account. No doubt Paul had "that day" before His mind when he wrote, "whose names are in the book of life," written there as to their service (verse 3). Our lives are being lived under the eyes and scrutiny of the Lord. In the dark days of Malachi it was written, "Then they that feared the LORD spake one

with another : and the LORD hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name ” (Malachi 3. 16). What is going into the book of life for us ? Are the records being blotted by unchristian differences ? Is service being destroyed because of disunity ? Are eternal rewards being forfeited in consequence ? We would be wise to face these questions now. At the Judgement Seat all these matters will have to be straightened. There will be no discord in heaven. All will be of the same mind in the Lord then.

J. Drain.

(To be continued)

“MY CHURCH”

It was in Cæsarea Philippi, far away from Jerusalem, that the Master chose to make a very important pronouncement, which prefaced the opening of a new and unique dispensation in the purposes of God. This dispensation still runs its course.

The events to which attention is drawn took place possibly during the fourth year of the Lord’s public ministry. The apostles whom He had chosen and called had responded to His call and had companied with Him. They heard the words He spoke and witnessed the miracles He performed.

To the twelve their Leader addresses a very important question, “Who do men say that the Son of Man is ? ” (Matthew 16. 13). We observe the use of the title Son of Man which the Kinsman-Redeemer so often used of Himself. It speaks of His manhood, unique, yet true and perfect. As Son of Man He will return to earth to take His power and reign. The enquiry was concerning the opinion of the common people. The Lord was well aware of the thoughts of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees ; their open hostility and intense hatred were clearly revealed in the questions they directed to Him. They probed and provoked with a view to finding a weakness in His teaching, but this they never found. They had rejected the message of John, the forerunner, and they refused the One who came after him. The various replies clearly reveal that the populace did not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah ; they did not identify the Stranger of Galilee with Jehovah’s Righteous Servant.

The promise of a coming Deliverer was first announced to the Serpent in Eden’s garden. The prophets of God took up the same glorious theme, and spoke often of a coming Saviour. “In the fulness of the time ” He was sent. “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not ” (John 1. 11).

The second question was directed to the disciples themselves and challenged their faith, “But who say ye that I am ? ” Without

hesitation Peter spoke with truth and conviction, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This confession was most comprehensive; the Lord's Messiahship, Deity and Eternal Sonship were all acknowledged. From what source had Peter received this knowledge? The Lord has supplied us with the answer from Heaven itself. It was Andrew, who, having been in contact with the Lord Jesus, brought the enlightening news to his brother. "We have found the Messiah" (John 1. 41). The favourable reception by Peter of his brother's testimony enabled Andrew to bring Peter personally to the Lord. It was then that a shaft of divine light illuminated his soul, that the Person before whom he stood was the Divine Son of the Eternal Father. Thus truth reached Peter not by observation, or investigation, but by revelation. From that moment Peter was "blessed" (or happy) and all who affirm the truth of his confession share a common joy. Peter received both a new nature and a new name.

Peter possessed valuable knowledge concerning the Lord's Person; he is now granted an insight into divine purpose. The Lord continues, "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter (*Petros*), and upon this rock (*Petra*) I will build My Church." Concerning the difference between these two Greek words, Liddell and Scott say: "There is no example in good authors of *petra*, in the significance of *petros* for a single stone." They state that *petra* signifies a rock such as juts out in the sea or on the beach.

W. E. Vine writes, "*petra* denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from *petros*, a detached stone or boulder." "This rock" certainly does not refer to Peter, nor, we suggest, to his confession, but to the Lord Himself as described by Peter, "the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was upon rock (*petra*) that the wise man built his house (Matthew 7. 24).

In the Old Testament God is variously described as the Rock, the everlasting Rock or Rock of Ages, a strong Rock. These titles speak of the abiding and unchangeable nature of the Divine Being, in whom supreme confidence may be placed. As the Son is "of the full Deity possessed" the title is also His, and the Lord applies it to Himself in this passage. In speaking of Israel's wilderness experience Paul describes Christ as "a spiritual Rock that followed them." The Person of Christ is the Foundation upon which His Church is built and established. It is to be observed that the Lord said, "I WILL build." The future activity of which He now speaks was not the subject of Old Testament prophecy and revelation, it was, however, the subject of eternal counsels of the Godhead, "Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men" (Ephesians 3. 5). God's intention regarding the Church is described as "the Mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations" (Colossians 1. 26). This is not an afterthought in Divine purpose, but

the result of God's foreordination, yet the truth was “kept in silence through times eternal” (Romans 16. 25). Certainly, in retrospect, and in the light of Calvary and New Testament revelation, we see Christ and His Church represented typically in Adam and Eve.

Further, is it not apparent that the Church, as the Bride of Christ, is foreshadowed in Rebekah? This woman was brought willingly to be the bride of Isaac who, in figure, passed through death and resurrection. This was subsequent to the death of Sarah his mother. It was not apparent to Old Testament saints that these events had any typical significance with regard to God's future purposes.

The Saviour Himself gives the first ray of light when He speaks of His determined intention to build “My Church”; and further illumination has been granted through the apostle Paul when he describes the same company of redeemed persons as “the Church which is His (Christ's) Body” (Ephesians 1. 22).

In its scriptural use the word “church” always denotes a company of people who are both called out and called together. The original word is the Greek word *ekklesia* from the word “to call” (*kaleō*) with the preposition *ek* meaning “out of” prefixing it. We have the call from the Lord's own lips in chapter 11, verse 29 of this same Gospel, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” All who respond in faith to the gospel call become members of this Church.

Christ is both the Builder and Possessor of this Church, it belongs to Him by right of redemption. He is the Creator of all things, but in order to purchase this vast company of His creatures He paid the ransom price. It is a blood-bought throng.

The Lord Jesus was not building this Church during His earthly ministry, He distinctly said, “I *will* build.” His atoning death, glorious resurrection and ascension to heaven, were all necessary before the purpose could be put into effect. As He later promised His disciples, when He returned to heaven He would request the Father to send the Holy Spirit to indwell all those who placed faith in Him. Paul deals with this matter in 1 Corinthians 12. 13: “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body.” He associates membership of the Church which is His Body with baptism in the Holy Spirit. This would indicate that the work of building the Church began on the day of Pentecost, when, under the influence of the Spirit, the gospel was preached in power and many souls believed.

The Lord Himself, being the Saviour (Preserver) of the Body, guarantees the eternal security of each individual member and preserves the exquisite beauty and perfect unity of the whole Church. “The gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” Satan and the powers of darkness may assail, they can never prevail, they are continually repulsed. The Church is invulnerable and remains inviolate

against all attacks, because it is firmly established upon Christ the solid Rock. Neither the Foundation nor that which is built upon it can be harmed. The Lord's words provide assurance of the believer's eternal security ; we have no ground for doubts, but every reason for confidence and thankfulness. The passing of time, nor even death, has any effect upon the believer's union with the Church's raised and glorified Head :

*“ His members all—below, above—
As one with Him are blest.”*

At the coming of the Lord to the air “ the dead in Christ shall rise first,” then, together with the living, the whole company will be “ caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ” (1 Thessalonians 4. 17). The Head will “ present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ” (Ephesians 5. 27).

In association with the Lord's disclosure as to His intention, He gave a personal promise to Peter, “ I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” We suggest that Peter was invested with this authority on the day of Pentecost, when he proceeded to use the keys, in preaching the gospel to the many Jews and proselytes in Jerusalem at that time. They were further used by him in ministering the gospel to Cornelius, thereby opening wide the door of grace to all Gentiles.

From Matthew 16 references to His death became frequent and unmistakably clear. His Deity was firmly believed in by His disciples. Matthew records, “ From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem . . . suffer . . . and be killed.” His suffering preceded His glory. Peter's violent reaction also shows that this came as a surprise to them, and it was necessary for the Lord to rebuke Peter.

As the Master spoke of His rejection, intense sufferings and violent death, He stressed the fact that those who would follow after Him must be prepared to suffer for His Name's sake. The Lord's question is very pertinent and should come in force to all believers, “ What shall a man give in exchange for his life ? ” The word exchange has the force of “ a marketable value,” the point is that nothing can redeem a wasted life, its loss is irrecoverable. Paul, who had a right sense of heavenly values, could say, “ Howbeit what things were gain to me these have I counted loss for Christ ” (Philippians 3. 7). The Lord Jesus gave Himself, His life, His all that He might purchase the Church, the “ one pearl of great price.” What have we given for Him ?

We have stressed that Christ is the Foundation, Builder and Possessor of the Church which is His Body, nevertheless, it pleases

Him to use men in spreading abroad the glad tidings of the gospel.

*“Let all that look for hasten
The coming joyful day,
By earnest consecration
To walk the narrow way ;
By gathering in the lost ones,
For whom our Lord did die,
For the crowning day that’s coming
By-and-by.”*

David T. Hyland.

COMMUNION

Communion with God is the root and centre of the Christian’s life ; from it springs the worship of God which is the highest pinnacle of human experience, the zenith of human happiness. Communion is an unfailing source of spiritual strength and vitality. The possibility of it is a miracle of grace, and he who enjoys it is enriched with unspeakable blessings. Its basis is the cross of Christ ; its sphere of operation is the heart of God and of His saints. It gives the storm-tossed soul true tranquillity, and to the tried and troubled it imparts a peace that passeth all understanding. It is a flower of heavenly beauty in the garden of the soul (Jeremiah 31. 12 ; Isaiah 58. 11). It has a celestial fragrance, and is extremely delicate in its nature. It dies in the cold and darkness of sin, but thrives in the light and warmth of divine love. It gives joy to many, by others it is lightly esteemed. What then is this rare plant, which is so difficult to grow in this squalid scene, and yet is of such surpassing value ? It springs from God’s desire for man, and man’s desire for God, in which both find mutual delight, and become sharers in common ; man becoming a sharer in divine things. It is a state of harmony with God in the soul of man, and is expressed thus—“ He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him ” (1 John 4. 16).

Moreover, it is essential to communion that such a man should also “ walk in the light ” (1 John 1. 7), and abide in the light (1 John 2. 10), which is the outward expression of dwelling in love, and is in beautiful harmony with the character of God, for “ God is light ” (1 John 1. 5), and “ God is love ” (1 John 4. 8). For this the godly have longed throughout the ages.

*“ O God, Thou art my God ; early (earnestly R.V.M.) will I seek Thee ;
My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee,
In a dry and weary land where no water is ”* (Psalm 63. 1).

Oh that we might realize more and more the vital necessity of the nearness and presence of God in our lives ; John-like, reclining on the bosom of infinite Love, listening to the secrets of His heart ! All who are in union with God through Christ should also be found in communion with Him day by day, and we must not confuse our state in communion, which is ever changing, with our standing in Christ which is unchangeable. The believer may abide in hallowed communion with God when in self examination and self judgement sin

is confessed and forgiveness takes place. Then truly we may abide in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Then it may be ours to experience the truth of Psalm 91. 1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

*"Hold Thou Thy cross before my faltering eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Morn soon shall break, and earth's vain shadows flee;
Till that bright dawning, Lord, abide with me."*

F. McCormick.

A MEDITATION

(Thoughts suggested by a suffering, absent brother)

The Loaf and Cup upon the table set;
The Loaf is whole, the Cup unpoured as yet.
'Mongst gathered saints there doth a hush prevail:
By faith they see His flesh—the Sacred Veil.

His visage more than any man was marred;
His body with the nail and spear was scarred.
That cross of His, which shows the world's shame,
Doth loud proclaim the love of Jesus' Name.

They take the Loaf, give thanks, and break, and eat;
Likewise the Cup: His love to them is sweet!
And as they thus partake of bread and wine,
By faith they eat of Him who is Divine.

On wings of faith they rise before God's throne:
Their unpaid debt of love to Him they own.
The body and the blood of Christ in symbol seen
Tell them of Him on whom their soul doth lean.

The church, when brothers after brothers rise,
Gives praise to Him who lives above the skies.
And saints though silent, join with glad "Amen,"
And hymn their praises to Immanuel's Name.

Each saint by faith His Sacrifice doth see,
And gladly owns the truth—"He died for me":
And though with falt'ring lips their thanks they give,
They know the One in whom through grace they live.

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JOTTINGS

As we look abroad on this world of men and their affairs and see as far as we are able the storms which lie heavily on the various ships of state of many lands, the words of the prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, to Asa king of Judah come to mind :

“ Hear ye me Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin : the LORD is with you, while ye be with Him ; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you ; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you. Now for long seasons Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law : but when in their distress they turned unto the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city : for God did vex them with all adversity. But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack : for your work shall be rewarded. And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations (idols) out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim ; and he renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD ” (2 Chronicles 15. 2-8).

The state of Israel had its effect on the nations. In those times when Israel was without the true God, without a teaching priest and without law, it was a time of distress for God's people, but not for them only, for great vexations were upon the inhabitants of other lands, and nation was broken in pieces against nation, and city against city. It cannot be gainsaid that the original purpose of God for Israel was to be what they will be in the millennium, a blessing in the midst of the earth (Isaiah 19. 24). Alas, they failed miserably in fulfilling God's purpose in them. Their behaviour spoiled their testimony, “ for,” as Paul says, “ the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you ” (Romans 2. 24). That there were bright examples of great and godly men in Israel is beyond dispute. That holy seed was the stock or substance of Israel (Isaiah 6. 13) and in one sense the cause of the preservation of the people, but, alas, these noble men and women had oftentimes a shocking time of persecution at the hands of the nation in general. Stephen asked the Jewish Sanhedrim, “ Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One ; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers ; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not ” (Acts 7. 52, 53). It was a solemn but true indictment which cost him his life. The Lord's words were like Stephen's, “ Ye are sons of them that slew the prophets,” “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her ! ” (Matthew 23. 31, 37). The apostles of the Lord shared the same treatment as the prophets (1 Thessalonians 2. 14-16) at the hands of the Jews, and at last the wrath of God came upon the Jews to the uttermost. Their blackest crime of all was their killing of the blessed Lord Jesus, who ever went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.

However, their disobedience will not bring to nought the purposes of God. With a wisdom beyond that of any or of all created beings, God will do His will, which is a mystery save to those who read with diligence His Word in the Holy Scriptures. Therein lies revealed what He will yet do amongst men.

When God has fulfilled His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus relative to the building of all believers into one Body, the Church of this entire dispensation of grace, the Lord will return again to deal with Israel and the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached, by Jewish men first of all, I believe, in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations. This must take place before the end come, which end is the coming of the Lord in judgement to the earth (Matthew 24. 14, 29-31). So great will be the revival through the out-pouring of the Spirit, as spoken by Joel (2. 28-32) and quoted by Peter in Acts 2. 16-21, and so great also will be the martyrdoms, that out of that time of the great tribulation there will be a great multitude of redeemed Gentiles which no man could number (Revelation 7. 9-17). The spiritual battle of those times between God's saints and antichrist will be fast and furious, but happily it will be of short duration, for had the time not been shortened no flesh had been saved (Matthew 24. 21, 22).

J.M.

JOTTINGS.

The events between the Lord's coming to the air for the Church, and His coming to the earth in judgement upon the antichrist and the wicked, and for the deliverance of Israel, and the elect and saved people of the Gentiles, is one of great interest to all who take delight in events related to the coming of the Lord. How long the time extends between the Lord's coming to the air and to the earth is not revealed in the Scriptures, so far as I am aware, but there must at least be seven years between these events. Some speak very mysteriously about the seventy heptads of Daniel 9, and no doubt some have wondered, as I once did, at this seemingly profound wisdom in the use of this magic term. *Hepta* is the Greek word for seven. The Hebrew is *Shebah*, which also means seven, and is the usual word for week in the Old Testament, a period of seven days. But in Daniel 9. 24, 25, 27 the period is not seven days, but seven years. Seventy sevens of years is four hundred and ninety years. Four hundred and eighty three of these years ended with the death of Christ on the cross, and there are yet seven years to be fulfilled. The prince that shall come, the antichrist (of 1 John 2. 18, 22) or the beast (of Revelation 13, etc.) shall make a covenant with many (of the Jewish people) for one week (of years) in the midst of which he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, evidently breaking his covenant (Daniel 9. 27), and setting up the abomination of desolation (Daniel 11. 31; Matthew 24. 15-22) which is the image of the beast, in the holy place, not in the sanctuary where the beast or man of sin will sit (2 Thessalonians 2. 4), but in a place where this image can be publicly seen. The flight of those that read and understand Daniel's prophecy and the Lord's words will then take place to the location prepared for them (Revelation 12. 6, 13-17), which is in the wilderness beyond Jordan (Isaiah 35. 3-10), in Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon (Daniel 11. 41).

Of those who remain in the land, two thirds shall die, and the third part God will bring through the fire and will refine them as silver and try them as gold is tried; God will hear them, and each shall say, "The LORD is my God" (Zechariah 13. 8, 9).

Zechariah 12 and 14. 1-4 tell of God gathering all nations together against Jerusalem. This is done by the three unclean spirits which issue from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, they little appreciating the fact that for the time being God is using them in this way, and the nations are gathered together at Har-Magedon (Revelation 16. 12-16). In the siege of Jerusalem the Jews will fight strenuously, and Jerusalem shall prove to be a burdensome stone to all the peoples that burden themselves with it. The magnificent fighting qualities of the Jewish defenders are described in Zechariah 12. 8, "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them." Nevertheless, "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14. 2).

In the dire extremity of the Jewish people, Zechariah 14. 3-5 says,

"Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the holy ones (saints, A.V.) with Thee."

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12. 9).

This is shown with even greater clearness in Revelation 19. 11-21. J.M.

EDITORIAL

We commence this month a series of articles on the important subject of the Tabernacle, a series which will take many months to complete. It is generally agreed that there is a mine of wealth of spiritual teaching in the materials, construction, and use of the Tabernacle, and no articles, however lengthy, can exhaust the subject or even deal with all the facets of truth that may be found in it. Further, each item can be the starting point of thoughts and remarks leading far away from the strict exposition of the subject. Therein is part of the fascination of the subject of the Tabernacle, and the Epistle to the Hebrews shows the use that was made of the teachings of the Tabernacle with regard to matters which had not only to deal with a people and its functions in a by-gone day, but had also vital lessons for the people of the apostle's day and therefore for ours also. Those who seem to think that the teachings of the Old Testament are of little importance when we have the New Testament should ponder well this fact, that much of the teaching of the New Testament is related to the teaching given to the people of the past dispensation.

The subject is complex and readers must distinguish for themselves where strict exposition ends and meditation begins. All who seek to write on such a subject as this would not explore the same avenues of thought. Like the rod of Aaron which was laid up before the LORD and brought forth buds and blossoms and ripe almonds, so we are thankful for the ripe fruit and yet recognize that we may look for more fruit as the buds and blossoms mature. We must look for further light and understanding and so this present series of articles should be the stimulant for further thought and exposition.

It is necessary, however, to remember that the Tabernacle and its teaching have primarily to do with a redeemed and gathered people, and not with individuals who live as masterless men, laws unto themselves. The exposition applicable to this day in which we live is for a redeemed and gathered people, but at times the meditations of that people may be concerned with what they once were as sinners, then as believers, then as disciples. This can be considered in the light of Ephesians 2, where the apostle, after taking the thoughts of the Ephesian disciples to heavenly blessings, turns their thoughts to a backward look and says, "Wherefore, remember." Those who are the people of God in His House have understanding and blessing common to all believers, but they have something more.

Our beloved brother who will write on this subject will let his thoughts range over all these things yet ever keep before our minds the fact that Tabernacle teaching is essentially House of God teaching, vital to a people gathered and united according to the Word of God.

A.T.D.

THE TABERNACLE

A Holy Nation

The desire of the LORD to have a people together to be a holy nation is clearly shown both in Old and New Testaments. There are many references to this, but two passages in particular call for careful consideration if we are to glean the Lord's mind on this matter. These are Exodus 19—24, and 1 Peter 2.

If we recall that the antediluvian world became so corrupt that the LORD had to destroy it with a flood, saving only eight souls in the ark; also, that soon after the flood He judged the whole earth at the tower of Babel, confounding their language and scattering them, we may be helped to appreciate better what is involved in the term, *a holy nation*.

To secure this purpose of His heart God made choice of an individual, separated him from his country, his kindred and his father's house, and brought him to the land of promise. Thus Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees and came into the land of Canaan.

We forbear to dwell on the long trail of Abraham's faith, but wish it to be noted that this commencement to secure "a holy nation" is introduced with a call to *separation*. From this separated man came a separated family, and this family was so multiplied that eventually there emerged a nation freed from the thralldom of the land of Egypt.

Their deliverance from Egypt was complete when they had known redemption by blood, and were safely through the waters of the Red Sea. They sang the praises of the LORD as a Man of war when they beheld their enemies overthrown in the sea, but soon the redeemed people were encountering the difficulties of the desert way. Marah's bitterness was sweetened by their God, and was followed by the bliss of Elim's palms and springs, but empty kneadingtroughs in a barren land brought forth their lack of faith in God, yet He displayed His love and grace in the manna which He sent from heaven. He quenched their thirst by the waters from the smitten Rock in Horeb, and Amalek was overcome while Moses' hands were raised. All this reminds us,

*"In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found;
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound."*

Still, with all these experiences, be it noted, the children of Israel were not yet constituted a holy nation; they were but in preparation for it.

In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth from the land of Egypt they came to Sinai where God spake audibly "out of the midst of the fire." There He gave Israel His law, and took them into covenant relationship with Himself—He to be their God, and they to be His people. Verse 4 of Exodus 19 is deeply interesting: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." All this is what *He*

did for them in sovereign grace. Then follows that wherein they had responsibility :

“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples : for all the earth is Mine : and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

Note, please, the conditional character of their being a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation : it was contingent on their obedience, on their keeping the covenant.

THEOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

Here was a kingdom of an unique character. It was a theocracy, a kingdom wherein God rules, and the law with its statutes and judgements was the instrument of rule and government. The book of the covenant was “ read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the LORD hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you upon all these conditions ” (Exodus 24. 7, 8, R.V.M.). The essentials of a kingdom were present—a Ruler, a law, and subjects in subjection to the Ruler, as regulated by the statutes and judgements of the law.

How different this is from democracy ! Though by reason of men’s failure in government there are many arguments in favour of democracy, yet it is far removed from the divine method of rule. It has been defined as, Government *of* the people, *by* the people, *for* the people ; but divine government is invested in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given authority over all flesh (John 17. 2) ; again He says, “All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth ” (Matthew 28. 18).

“Thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him” (Colossians 1. 16).

“Jesus Christ . . . is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him ” (1 Peter 3. 22).

Powers on earth, therefore, of whatever form they may be, are within the sphere of the Lord’s authority. He is supreme, and soon He will return to earth and take unto Him His great power and reign. Theocracy, the rule by God, will then obtain throughout the whole world.

During the advanced years of Samuel, the people, viewing his life and the unreliable character of his sons, asked that they should have a king. Samuel was displeased at this, and the LORD was angry, and said to Samuel : “ Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them ” (1 Samuel 8. 7). This reveals the position of God as to rule among them prior to this declension.

THE KINGDOM AND THE HOUSE

While Israel had many privileges under the gracious hand of God prior to their being constituted a holy nation, as recorded in Exodus 24, there was one thing which could not obtain earlier, namely, their building God a house. The kingdom had to be set up first, and this we see consequent on the agreement at Sinai, and the ratification of the covenant there. The nobles of the kingdom were together with their King, the God of Israel, who had beneath His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. Immediately thereafter, when Moses went up into the mount of God he received the command from God: "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25. 8). God's house could not be builded until His kingdom was established, His rule in the midst of a holy nation. Here was an elect people for God's own possession.

OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD

Those to whom Peter wrote are termed an elect race, and this is found in the midst of seven terms: living stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2. 5-9). "Living stones" is descriptive of all saints whether they are together or not; but the other six terms are applicable only to those brought together according to the will of God.

They were "elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 1, 2). We should note that the sprinkling of the blood in this passage does not find its type in Exodus 12, where the blood was applied to the door posts and lintels of the houses, when Israel were redeemed from Pharaoh's bondage. The type is in Exodus 24, and in this we are taught that Christ died not only to redeem us from the pit, but also that He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 14).

"Save yourselves from this crooked generation," was the exhortation to the eager inquirers in Acts 2, following which three thousand having received the word were baptized and added to the hundred and twenty of Acts 1. 15. And like those in Jerusalem these in the five provinces had been separated from the surrounding evil; they had purified their souls in their obedience to the truth, and had come "to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." The responsibility associated with the divine position is emphasized in the warning:

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape, who turn away from Him that warneth from heaven . . . Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12. 24-29).

Purity of heart and holy living were called for in the law of the LORD.

“Ye shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgements, and do them : that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, vomit you not out. And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I cast out before you . . . Ye shall therefore separate between the clean beast and the unclean . . . and ye shall be holy unto Me : for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be Mine ” (Leviticus 20. 22-26).

From this quotation it will be seen that response to the law in its moral and ceremonial aspects would set the people apart as a holy nation for the LORD.

“Thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God : the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth ” (Deuteronomy 7. 6).

In this portion commands are given against the worship of false gods.

The ceremonial part of the law was rescinded by the Lord (Mark 7. 19), but the moral aspect remains intact and binding (except the Sabbath), being incorporated in “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). This once-for-all-delivered faith is synonymous with the apostles’ teaching, in which the early saints continued steadfastly (Acts 2. 42) when, as living stones, they had been built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood. The entire body of doctrine contained in the New Testament is here contemplated. Obedience to the faith, then, is what is required by the Lord if we are to be a holy nation, a people separated unto Himself.

Though at one time having the character described in Romans 3. 10-18, those addressed are termed, “beloved of God, called saints.” “But thanks be to God,” says the apostle, “that whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form (pattern) of teaching whereunto ye were delivered ; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness” (Romans 6. 17, 18). In this portion we see that burial with Christ in baptism and rising to walk in newness of life, are part of the teaching. The saints in the holy nation were all baptized believers, thereafter they were added, and together they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

In 1 Corinthians 6. 11 the apostle says, “And such were some of you” (note the evil list which precedes) : “but ye washed yourselves, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (R.V.M.).

“Come ye out . . . be ye separate . . . touch no unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ” (2 Corinthians 6. 17—7. 1).

These scriptures should suffice to show us the longing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who died that He “might gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad” (John 11. 52).

The salvation-bringing grace of God instructs us "to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." "The true grace of God" (1 Peter 5. 12) furnishes complete instruction for godliness of walk, as see chapters 2 to 5. May it be that we shall not receive the grace of God in vain!

G. PRASHER.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

The Oil of Gladness

From whatever angle, and in whatever circumstances we may view our great Redeemer, we may see fresh beauties and radiations of His glory. There is nothing that He has done, or will yet do, that will not display something of the Divine glory which uniquely belongs to Himself, and in which also are manifestations of the Godhead. We have before briefly made reference to God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus and it is a soul-satisfying thought that God has found in Him that which satisfies the deep longings of His own heart for all eternity.

There is no requirement of God's holy throne that has not found its perfect answer in the perfect life and Cross-work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no longing in God's heart of infinite love that has not found its full response and satisfaction in the Person of Christ. With joy we may exult and say—

*"Behold, O God our Shield,
And look upon the face of Thine Anointed"* (Psalm 84. 9).

"To Him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen." Indeed if this were not so, there could be no outpouring of blessing upon the children of men. It was only when God had received His portion from the sacrifices on Israel's altars that they could receive the blessings and benefits flowing therefrom.

God has found in the accomplished work of Calvary and the glorious triumph of resurrection, eternal delight. He can with joy look upon the Man of His right hand, upon the Son of Man whom He made strong for Himself, "The Man that is My Fellow." From the terrors, horrors and darkness of the cross and tomb, God has raised Him up. He has seated Him at His own right hand, and of Him it is prophetically written,

"Thou shalt make Me full of gladness with Thy countenance"
(Acts 2. 28).

He had known the bitter loneliness of being forsaken by God, the hiding of God's face, the unanswered cry in the experience of His deepest distress when it was fulfilled,

"Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53. 10).

“ *The head once full of bruises,
So full of pain and scorn,
Midst other sore abuses
Mocked with a crown of thorn.
That head is now surrounded
With brightest majesty,
In death once bowed and wounded,
Accursed on the tree !* ”

Yes, the crucified One is now the enthroned One, the everlasting doors have been opened for the return of the triumphant Saviour. He has been “ received up in glory,” and of the Son God saith,

“ *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.
Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ;
Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee
With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.* ”

(Hebrews 1. 9, 10).

Two things are said about making Christ glad. He was made glad with the Father’s countenance, and He was anointed with the oil of gladness by the Father. It rejoices our hearts to think that the lonely Sufferer of Calvary has been made glad with the countenance of His Father, He has looked upon the battle-scarred returning Conqueror with infinite delight and approval. What joy filled the heart of the Father ! What a wealth of meaning is conveyed by the countenance ! It speaks volumes without words.

For the Son to look upon the countenance of His Father which conveyed such unspeakable pleasure, filled Him with the fulness of gladness. As Psalm 16. 11 says,

“ *In Thy presence is fulness of joy ;
In Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* ”

Thus we see the blessed or happy God rejoicing over the Son of His love in the knowledge that all had been completed, the basis had been laid whereby all God’s future purposes of grace could righteously be accomplished. He had truly loved righteousness, even though it had involved Him in untold suffering and reproach. Nothing could or did cause Him to deviate from the paths of righteousness in the slightest degree, and in this He had found delight.

“ *I delight to do Thy will, O My God* ” was the language of His heart. He was that blessed or happy Man of Psalm 1 who delighted in the law of the LORD ; and in His law did He meditate day and night. There was no happier Man on earth than He, He was possessed of an inward joy, and a calm unruffled peace within, which was known to no other. He was the perfect hearer, and fulfiller of God’s law and will. He could say,

“ *I have glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which
Thou hast given Me to do* ” (John 17. 4).

Now the Father shows His approbation and makes Him glad with His countenance, “ *The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart* ” (Proverbs 15. 30). Moreover, in association with His throne and

sceptre He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. It is said in Proverbs 27. 9 that "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart." After referring to this wondrous occasion, the Psalmist then says,

*"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;
Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made Thee glad"*

(Psalm 45. 8).

And who more worthy than He to be made glad!

"And I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing"

(Revelation 5. 12)

All heaven acclaims His worthiness, and of all in that holy, happy land, there is now none so radiant with joy as He, and all heaven rejoices in the honour bestowed upon their King and Redeemer.

Never again will He be called upon to go out alone into the darkness and storms of a cruel, God-hating world to suffer. With joy we can now sing,

*"'Tis past, the dark and dreary night,
O God, we see Him now,
Our morning Star, without a cloud
Of sadness on His brow."*

Why should His people then be sad? Should we not catch the spirit of that anointing scene in heaven and rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory? Should we not be manifesting on earth something of the joyousness of Christ's triumphant gladness? Our Saviour is a rejoicing Christ upon the throne, and we through Him have received "The oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." It is ours with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation, and say with the psalmist, "We will triumph in Thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners" (Psalm 20. 5).

Being a Christian is not a miserable, long faced, sanctimonious profession, it is a joyous life to be known and lived in like kind to Christ's. May we so live and act that others may see in us this joy, so that they, like the Queen of Sheba, may testify truly,

"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" (1 Kings 10. 8).

Have we not known the happiness of them "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered"? and also the happiness of "the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee"? Have we not been comforted in Zion, the place of God's choice? and have we not found it to be a place "like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (Isaiah 51. 3)? Therefore,

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice"

(Philippians 4. 4).

F. McCORMICK

GLEANINGS FROM PHILIPPIANS 4

(Continued from p. 107)

PEACE OF MIND

Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14. 1). For most people life holds experiences of perplexing sorrow, of frustrating trouble, of discouraging disappointment. The mind is attacked by disturbing and distressing influences which exploit these very experiences. A troubled mind does not help us to stand fast in the Lord. What is the answer to the troubled mind? Some would say that man possesses tremendous powers which need only to be recognized, set free and developed, and then man becomes master of himself and of his circumstances. By this theory man himself is the answer to the troubled mind. This is not the teaching of the Scriptures. We ask again, what is the answer to the troubled mind? God Himself is the answer.

Paul said, "In nothing be anxious." The Authorised Version renders, "Be careful for nothing." The word refers to distracting, harassing, anxious care. This is indeed a pernicious thing. What is the remedy? "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4. 6). God is the answer. Access to Him is guaranteed to His children. We can speak to Him with reverent boldness. What are the things which are causing the state of anxiety? "Take them to the Lord in prayer." We can talk to Him. We can pour out our hearts to Him. We can ask Him specifically about things. Is something tending to make us fret and worry? Are we anxious about some course in life, about a career, about a companion, about our children? God's infinite knowledge takes in all; and yet He encourages us with trustful hearts to inform Him. May we thank Him for the privilege.

It is perhaps easy to exhort others and say, "In nothing be anxious." Paul practised what he preached. Who had more cause for anxiety than he? Yet he must have known the remarkable and desirable result of leaving his life with all its problems in the hands of God. Then follows, "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." One has said, "Mere reason cannot find a way out of perplexity." For the trusting child of God there is the peace which passeth all understanding. "Where reason fails with all her powers, there faith prevails and love adores."

The peace of God is powerful for protection. Like a reliable garrison it encircles the heart and the thoughts, and shields from the intrusion of hostile and disturbing forces. Faith reposes in God and finds refuge. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26. 3).

DEVELOPMENT OF MIND

The mind is a functioning organ and its functioning will be determined largely by the nature and extent of its development. The child of God needs to be very careful as to what enters into and engages his mind. In him there is the flesh as well as the divine Spirit. Paul wrote,

“ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death ; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace ” (Romans 8. 5, 6).

It is very clear that our minds may develop along lines which show the working of the Holy Spirit or along lines which manifest the activity of the flesh. What we hear, what we read, what we see will all have an influence upon our minds and will affect their development. Wisdom will instruct us therefore to be cautious about what may have contact with our minds.

In this connexion we think particularly of television. Here is something which is a remarkable example of human achievement. That such an invention could be used for perfectly legitimate and innocent purposes is unquestioned, but the fact is that it is being used for purposes which constitute a most serious menace to the mind of the child of God. It is very dangerous in its corrupting influence. The published reports of widespread investigations prove that in a general way television is having a detrimental effect upon the minds of old and young. It has even been observed that an increase in particular types of crime has followed the showing of certain programmes on television. Solomon said, “ A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil ” (Proverbs 14. 16). The disciple of the Lord Jesus will do well to listen to these words.

What kind of things should engage our minds ? What will furnish and develop them with desirable thoughts and purposes ? In Philip-
pians 4. 8 Paul enumerates certain things and he says concerning them, “ Think on these things.” These are things for serious meditation, things to be taken into account in reckoning true values, things which will determine the lines of godly reasoning and conduct. Let us examine the kind of things which Paul recommends.

Whatsoever things are true. This does not refer merely to things that are true as opposed to false. Certainly we should keep falsehood far from our minds, but some things may be true and yet most undesirable. Things that are in agreement with the revealed will of God are true and such things should fill our minds.

Whatsoever things are honourable. It is desirable that the mind should be exercised by serious and dignified thoughts. Things which are entitled to veneration should occupy our minds.

Whatsoever things are just. It is important to have before us the standard of things which are right in the sight of God. There are things which are right and there are things which are wrong. The mind of the child of God should seek what is right in relation to God and man.

Whatsoever things are pure. Sin is a defiling power and it has fouled the whole stream of human thought and the course of human action. In the experience of regeneration we have known a complete cleansing, but with the flesh still resident in the body the child of God can suffer the effects of impure thought. Impure thought can lead to impure activity. Apart from what the flesh within us will produce there is available to our adversary Satan a vast store of defiling *stimuli*. Paul wrote to the church of God in Corinth,

“ I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ ” (2 Corinthians 11. 2, 3).

How very careful we need to be that the test of purity is applied to what feeds our minds, whether moral or doctrinal.

Whatsoever things are lovely. There are things which have the evidence of divine loveliness, things which are amiable and which provoke unto love and good works. Pleasant and friendly and grateful is the mind wherein are things which are Christian and consequently lovely.

Whatsoever things are of good report. “ Of good report ” has been defined as “ commendable, laudable, reputable,” “ fair-sounding as implying essential worthiness.”

We might enquire where such things as Paul speaks of can be found. In Proverbs 8 Wisdom says,

*“ Hear, for I will speak excellent things ;
And the opening of My lips shall be right things,
For My mouth shall utter truth ;
And wickedness is an abomination to My lips.
All the words of My mouth are in righteousness ;
There is nothing crooked or perverse in them.”*

May we receive such instruction and knowledge !

If we are thinking on things which are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, we shall be found doing things which have these same characteristics.

SYMPATHY OF MIND

It was a cause of deep joy to Paul that thought for him had revived, or bloomed afresh, in the minds of the Philippians. Paul suffered much in his faithful service for the Lord and often his experiences must have been very trying and perplexing. It was a source of strength to him to realize that there were those who had thought for him in his trials. They had fellowship with him in his affliction.

As we pass through life it is good that we should feel for others and have thought for others. How easy it is to become self-centred ! Paul wrote, “ Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.” There are lonely hearts to cherish ; there are burdened minds to ease ; there are drooping spirits to raise. What a large and important sphere of service lies open to us ! May

God grant to us sympathy of mind so that we shall think about others and feel for them! Paul wrote, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Many a burdened heart has been relieved by the evidence of the sympathetic thought of others. Perhaps many a heart has been grieved by the thought that nobody cares.

CONTENTMENT OF MIND

Paul was a man whose life held a remarkable variety of experiences. At times he was abundantly furnished with the things of this life. At other times he was in want. There were times when he was filled. There were occasions when he knew the pangs of hunger. Describing some of his conditions he wrote, "In labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Corinthians 11. 27). Whatever his circumstances were, favourable or unfavourable, there was one constant feature of Paul's condition—he was content. He had learned a great and important secret, the secret of abiding contentment of mind. In all his experiences he regarded his circumstances as being in the will of God for him and his circumstances satisfied him. Doubtless he makes known the secret when he says, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4. 13).

There was never a time when men generally had so much of the material things of this life and so much leisure as at the present time. It is also true that there never was a time when there was so much general discontent. Contentment of mind is rare. There is disclosed in human nature the weakness that the more men receive the more they want. The more benefits are extended the more favours are claimed. And thus the terrible disease of discontent works its way.

It is a matter of urgency for disciples of the Lord Jesus that in the circumstances of present day discontent they should be exercised to learn the secret of contentment. Are our minds disturbed by an agitated striving after more than we have? Do we fret for circumstances of life different from those which have been our lot? The secret which Paul learned enabled him to write,

"Godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall therewith be content (or satisfied)" (1 Timothy 6. 6-8).

A godly man is a contented man. This does not mean that he is not diligent and spiritually ambitious. It does not mean that he will not be prosperous. It does mean that whatever be his circumstances in the will of God he will be content with his lot.

As we reflect upon the foregoing matters in relation to standing fast in the Lord we can perhaps hear the injunction, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2. 5). If this is fulfilled then it will be true that in thought and motive, in disposition and action, we shall be in the will of God.

JOHN DRAIN.

“ THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS ”

(Revelation 14. 13)

1.

Rest, brother, rest !
Beyond the reach of time.
God called thee to His Home above,
Where all is joy, and peace, and love ;
O blissful clime !

2.

Rest, brother, rest !
Away from loved ones here,
But present with the Lord until
He comes the Scriptures to fulfil ;
His time is near.

3.

Rest, brother, rest !
With Him whose hands and feet,
Once pierced by nails at Calvary,
Will prove to thee eternally
God's love complete.

4.

Rest, brother, rest !
Thy voice is heard no more,
Constrained by love of Christ to tell
How sinners may be saved from hell,
And torments sore.

Melbourne.

5.

Rest, brother, rest !
The grave was not thy goal
But Christ who promised to return
To catch away from earth His own ;
All on God's roll.

6.

Rest, brother, rest !
For thee we do not grieve,
As others without God and hope,
In nature's darkness ever grope,
But ne'er believe.

7.

Rest, brother, rest !
O death, where is thy sting ?
God giveth us the victory
Through Him who died at Calvary ;
Our Lord and King.

8.

Rest, brother, rest !
Thy soul is freed from wrong,
To join the myriad hosts above,
And sing the merits of God's love,
In endless song.

S.S.

FRAGMENTS

“ God takes up the weakest instruments to accomplish His mightiest ends. A rod, a ram's horn, a cake of barley meal, an earthen pitcher, a shepherd's sling.”

“ It is worthy of note that when the heart is full to overflowing with the joy of redemption, it gives expression to its devoted purpose in reference to a habitation for God ” (Psalm 132. 3-5).

“ Is there a godly jealousy at work within thee ? Dost thou strive, with the Spirit working in thee mightily, to bring every thought into obedience to Christ Jesus ? ” (2 Corinthians 10. 5).

“ Men imagine that splendid ends can only be reached by splendid means ; but such is not God’s way. He can use a crawling worm as well as a scorching sun, a gourd as well as a vehement east wind.”

“ Can heavenly desires arise within the loaded, pampered flesh ? Can that mind find communion with God which grovels after earthly gratification ? ”

“ Art thou a soldier of Christ, and dost thou never fight ?
Hast thou a cross to bear, and dost thou never try its weight ? ”

“ Is Christ’s life stirring within thee, enabling thee to spend and to be spent in the best of services ? ”

“ Nothing could fathom man’s ruin but God’s love, and nothing could equal man’s guilt but the blood of Christ.”

“ When God sent forth His ‘ fiery law,’ He spoke only in one tongue ; but when He proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, He spoke in the language of every nation under heaven ” (Acts 2. 1-11).

“ Christ is our Life and Christ is our Righteousness. May His Name be precious to our hearts ! May His cause ever command our energies ! May it be our meat and our drink to spend and be spent in His service ! ”

Israel vowed, “ All that the LORD commanded we will do.” Did they ? Witness the golden calf, the broken tables, the desecrated Sabbath, the despised and neglected ordinances, the stoned messengers, the rejected and crucified Christ, the resisted Spirit. Such is man !

John Milne.

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JOTTINGS

It has often been pointed out that when the Lord read from Isaiah 61 He stopped in the middle of verse 2. He knew how far to read so that He might say in truth, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4. 17-21). He knew that He was the One who would proclaim both the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, but between these two events many long centuries would roll their course. The acceptable year of the Lord has now run on for nearly two thousand years, a year in which the good tidings have been preached to the meek or the poor, when the broken-hearted have been bound up, liberty has been proclaimed to the captives, and the opening of the prison, or the eyes, to them that are bound. No wonder, when the Lord read these words and said that now they were fulfilled, that the eyes of all in the synagogue in Nazareth were fastened on Him, and they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded out of His mouth. The sequel to that day was like the sequel of His life. When He showed Himself by His marvellous works in the healing of human bodies that He was the Healer of the souls of men—Jehovah Ropheca, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee" (Exodus 15. 26)—they killed the Prince (or Author) of life (Acts 3. 15). The close of that day in Nazareth found them casting Him out of the city and leading Him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, that they might throw Him down headlong. But it was not thus He was to die. He was not to die with broken bones and a battered body. He was not to be cast down, but lifted up, as He said to Nicodemus, but a short while before this, that the Son of Man would be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (John 3. 14, 15). The typical message in the paschal lamb, was "A bone of Him shall not be broken," either by His being thrown over the precipice or being stoned to death.

He was to be wounded, bruised, chastised, and to receive the stripes that we might be healed. His hands and feet were to be pierced. All that happened to Him was foretold by the prophets, when the Spirit of Christ which was in them pointed forward to the sufferings of the Christ, and, thank God, to the glories which should follow them.

The day of vengeance will surely come. It will be short by comparison with the acceptable year of the Lord! With what patience the Lord waits to receive sinful men! With unwearied love He has waited on men during the long centuries since the blessed Carpenter of Nazareth stood up in the synagogue of His home town to read the Scriptures. Now in our time we are sweeping on to the climax, things are in the rapids, and soon the thunders of the falls will break upon the ears of men and they will be hurled into the depths of the mighty waters of judgement. Once it was the Saviour who braved the rushing waters of the mighty cataracts.

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy cataracts:

All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me" (Psalm 42. 7, R.V.M.).

"Save me, O God;

For the waters are come in unto My soul.

I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing:

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me"

(Psalm 69. 1, 2).

Men cruelly treated Him in the day of the Lord's fierce anger upon the Man of Sorrows, when He was dying for them, but the day will come when His enemies shall know the mighty waters of divine judgement (Isaiah 28. 17-19) in the day of vengeance.

Then will He comfort them that mourn, and to them that mourn in Zion He will give a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and they shall be trees of the Lord's planting, and then shall the LORD be glorified as never before on the earth since sin entered and marred the work of God. This day of grace shall be followed by the day of judgement, and after that has passed the Sun of righteousness shall shine forth in His splendour. First He shall glorify His people Israel, and then through them the nations that are left, after the waters of judgement have cleansed the earth of the wicked, shall learn God's ways, such as have a heart to say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths".

J.M.

JOTTINGS

Isaiah 61 begins with the Lord through the prophet foretelling His coming to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and then, when that has run its course, the day of vengeance will come with all its terribleness for those who have not found the Lord to be to them the Rock of salvation. There will be no hiding place on that day, but in the Lord Himself. The end of the chapter describes the great joy of the prophet. He says,

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isaiah 61. 10).

Many have similarly rejoiced who have been justified by God through His wondrous grace. This righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe (Romans 3. 21, 22), upon whom is not only the robe of righteousness, but also garments of salvation. What wondrous protection is here! But not only protection; there is also beauty, like the bridegroom's garland and the bride's jewels. When Israel left Egypt after having been redeemed by Jehovah they went out a princely people, decked with jewels of silver and gold and raiment, as it says,

"And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked" (Exodus 12. 35, 36).

The garments of slaves were not good enough for the LORD's redeemed; these suited the soil-stained slaves of Pharaoh, but that people, now God's people, the greatest people on earth, though they were the smallest, went out arrayed in the best. Theirs was a worthy redemption of an all-worthy Redeemer.

The prophet Isaiah goes on to speak of Zion in the following chapter (62). Many speak of and rejoice in the righteousness which has been imputed to them on the ground of faith, but few, oh, so few, speak of Zion's righteousness, the righteousness which is proper to the place of the Name, which is, shall we call it, practical righteousness, not imputed righteousness, but the righteousness which has to be practised.

"Seek ye first His (God's) kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6. 33).

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well pleasing to God, and approved of men" (Romans 14. 11).

"Follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2. 22).

"For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world (age)" (Titus 2. 11, 12).

What does it say of Zion's righteousness? It says,

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory" (Isaiah 62. 1, 2).

In Zion will yet be seen the righteous acting of a people who are every one of them justified by faith. Each Israelite in the days yet to come will be justified by faith. "They people also shall be all righteous" (Isaiah 60. 21). Jehovah Tsidkenu, "Jehovah is our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23. 6) shall be known by all. In that day, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jeremiah 31. 34). Such is one of the conditions of the New Covenant which applies today (Hebrews 8. 10-12; 10. 15-18).

May God's children who are all righteous know something now of the righteousness, the right-acting of a collective people according to the revealed will of God in the Scriptures! How many these days think about Zion? Alas, how very, very few of God's dear children have come to Zion! Read Hebrews 12. 22-29. Many speak of revival, but what about revival as to Zion, as to God's house and kingdom? May we plead with God's children in the light of our Lord's soon return!

J.M.

THE TABERNACLE: The Court and the Gate

The tabernacle of the LORD was surrounded by a court made with hangings of fine twined linen. These were supported by pillars standing on sockets of brass (copper), and by hooks and fillets of silver. The measurements of the court were one hundred cubits long by fifty cubits broad, and the height of the hangings was five cubits. There were twenty pillars on the south and the same number on the north; and on the west side there were ten. The east had a gate, on either side of which were three pillars, while the screen of the gate hung upon four pillars. The gate was twenty cubits wide, and it was made of blue, purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer. See Exodus 27. 9-18; 38. 9-20.

It will be helpful for us to note two passages in the New Testament which cast light on the subject of the Mosaic Tabernacle. The former is Hebrews 8. 5 which reads, "who serve that which is a *copy* and *shadow* of the heavenly things." A copy has an original, and a shadow has a substance or body. Thus the tabernacle was merely a copy and shadow, the original thing, the substance, being in heaven. *Hypodeigma*, translated copy, means a pattern, example; from *hypodeiknumi*, to give a mere glimpse of. So by our study of the tabernacle we may gain a glimpse of the heavenly dwelling of the LORD.

The latter passage is in Hebrews 9. 9 where in connexion with the services in the holy and most holy places of God's dwelling we read, "which is a parable for the time now present." A parable, as is well known, is an allegorical method of conveying instruction by means of a short narrative or story. Thus in the Mosaic services we can trace a heavenly story. There are many today, we fear, who regard the tabernacle story as having no meaning for us.

THE VALUE OF THE TYPES

Sir Robert Anderson says, "The types of Scripture are like the alphabet of a language." If we fail to learn the alphabet we shall make little progress in acquiring the language. Let us bear this in mind when we come to consider the Scriptures, and give due value to the importance of the types of the Old Testament. Ignorance of the types involves failure to read aright the language of the New Testament. The Epistle to the Hebrews will be little understood if we are unacquainted with the significance of the Tabernacle and its services.

DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let us now inquire as to the significance of the fine twined linen which formed the court hangings. As they stretched along the hundred cubits of the length of the court and the fifty cubits of its breadth, what story do they tell? to what do the shadows point? "God is His own interpreter," as Cowper says, in what is supposed to be his last hymn, and we turn to Revelation 19. 8 where we read:

“The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” From this we glean that the Spirit of God presents to us in the type of the linen the great truth of righteousness, and so we judge that the linen hangings speak to us of righteousness (not as in Revelation 19. 8 as pertaining to saints), the righteousness of God. As men approach God and the divine dwelling this was what they were confronted with. What a solemn message is thus conveyed from God! “Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of Thy throne” (Psalm 89. 14), and He would have man acknowledge His righteousness. As shadowed in the hangings of the court it seemed to say, God is inside and man is outside, and the righteousness of God is the barrier between.

DIVINE JUDGEMENT

There were sixty pillars around the court which stood on the same number of sockets which were made of copper. The copper, we understand, speaks of judgement, as is indicated by the altar at the door of the house being covered with this metal. That was the place where divine judgement fell upon the victim, and thereby we are reminded of the provision of God for the guilty one who seeks to approach Him. The crosswork of the Lord Jesus at Golgotha, where He bore the judgement due to sin, is the foundation on which God can deal with the sinner, and the basis on which we can approach Him.

ATONEMENT

There were fillets and hooks of silver which connected the pillars, and on which the curtains hung. The upholding work of these hooks and pillars suggests the atoning work of Christ since the silver was obtained from the ransom money of Exodus 30. 11-16; 38. 28. We can indeed rejoice in the knowledge that the death of Christ, whereby He made atonement, upholds the righteousness of God while He comes out to receive us, and while His people draw near before Him in prayer and worship. The chapters of silver repeat the precious narrative. May it be that all who read these lines are able, through faith, to glory in that great work of atonement wrought out by Christ when He laid down His life upon the cruel cross.

*“The atoning work is done,
The Victim’s blood is shed,
And Jesus now is gone
His people’s cause to plead.
He lives in heaven their Great High Priest
And bears their names upon His breast.”*

THE HEIGHT OF THE COURT

The hangings were five cubits high, and reckoning the cubit at 22 inches, they would be just over nine feet high. As men stood beside this high curtain, unless they were abnormal in size, the hangings would rise above them, and in this, we judge, the Holy Spirit indicates that we fall short of the high standard of God. “Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God” (Psalm 36. 6); “Thy righteousness also,

O God, is very high ” (Psalm 71. 19), are statements which present these facts, and remind us of the New Testament declaration :—“ For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God ” (Romans 3. 23).

This is one of the early lessons we must learn when coming to God, and having dealings with Him ; and great indeed is the joy of heart in the believer when he comes to realize that what he could never attain by his own efforts is provided for him in the Gospel, as it is written : “ For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith ” ; and “ But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe ; for there is no distinction ” (Romans 1. 17 ; 3. 21, 22, R.V.M.).

THE GATE

On the north, south and west sides there was no entrance, the unbroken barrier stretched all around ; but on the east there was the gate of the court. As man approached this gate his back was toward the east and his face toward the house of God. There is something suggestive in this when we recall that Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt . . . on the east of Eden (Genesis 4. 16) ; also that after the Flood men journeyed east in the land of Shinar and built their city and the tower of Babel, thus bringing upon themselves the judgement of God. Alas ! that so frequently the LORD had to lament His people’s turning their backs to Him—“ For they have turned their backs unto Me, and not their face ” (Jeremiah 2. 27) ; and the prophet who was brought into the LORD’s house said, “ Behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east ; and they worshipped the sun toward the east ” (Ezekiel 8. 16).

THE ONLY WAY

This gateway, being the only entrance to the court, foreshadows Christ as the only way to God. Men vainly try to point to other means of approach, but the Scriptures make it very plain that through the Lord Jesus Christ *alone* can the sinner come to God. Peter said, “ He is the Stone which was set at naught of you the builders, which was made the Head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation : for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved ” (Acts 4. 11, 12).

The gate was twenty cubits wide. This seems spacious as we consider that the entire width of the court was fifty cubits, and it may remind us of the largeness of the heart of God. “ God so loved the world.”

“ *Blessed thought ! for every one
At the cross there’s room !
Love’s atoning work is done ;
At the cross there’s room !* ”

*Streams of boundless mercy flow,
Free to all who thither go ;
Oh ! that all the world might know
At the cross there's room."*

THE MATERIAL OF THE GATE

Blue, purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer, was the material of the screen which formed the gate. The *blue* suggests the heavenly origin of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone of men who trod this scene of earth could say, "I am from above" (John 8. 23). He spoke of Himself as "He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man"; and John the son of Zacharias says of Him, "He that cometh from above is above all" (John 3. 31). Then in chapter 6. verse 38 He tells the great purpose for which He came, "For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

The *purple* tells of His kingly character. He was born a King (Matthew 2. 2) ; He presented Himself as King just before He was taken and crucified : "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee" (Matthew 21. 5). Alas ! that the rulers of the people would not have Him. The sweet voices of the children crying "Hosanna to the Son of David" moved them with indignation : and He left them to spend the night in Bethany. In the morning as He returned to the city He cursed the fig tree, which immediately withered away from its roots—a symbol of the judgement of God upon Israel which had already rejected her King. Yet we know the Lord Jesus will certainly reign on the earth in that glad day of the regeneration. Meanwhile Ezekiel 21. 27 is being fulfilled—"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it . . . until He comes whose right it is ; and I will give it Him." This Person with the right to reign is the Lord Jesus Christ. May God graciously hasten that happy day when the King will reign in righteousness !

The *scarlet* denotes the humility of Christ. It has been called worm scarlet, the dye being obtained from the cochineal insect. What wondrous humility was His when He left the riches that are unsearchable (Ephesians 3. 8), and stooped down to poverty on this scene so blighted by sin ! "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8. 9). "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant (slave) . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2. 5-8).

His dignity is also indicated by the scarlet as may be gleaned from the references to the use of garments of this colour. As David lamented over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan he directed the daughters of Israel to "weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet

delicately," or as the Hebrew word means, with delights (2 Samuel 1. 24). Then the virtuous woman is said to be unafraid of the snow for her household ; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. This delightful adornment of the daughters of Israel in the days of Saul, and the protective garments which marked the household of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. 21, betoken the dignity which belonged to those so clothed, and so we think of the wonderful dignity of the Man Christ Jesus. Though moving about in the lowly circumstances, both in His private and public life, yet He was marked with a dignity that was awe-inspiring. How deeply Pilate the Roman governor felt this as he had before him a Prisoner whose dignity was compelling ! Surely this was what the officers felt when they returned without their Prisoner, and they confessed, " Never man so spake " (John 7. 46).

The fine twined linen speaks of His righteousness of whom the Holy Spirit says, " My righteous Servant." As such He is set forth especially in the Gospel by Mark : the humility of the Man and His dignity are shown in the Gospel by Luke : the King is the special theme of Matthew, and John sets forth the Son of God from heaven. In this manner we can consider Him who is seen in the shadows of the gate. He is the eternal, heavenly One as seen in John : the suffering, dependent One as seen in Luke : the sinless, obedient One as seen in Mark : the royal, kingly One as seen in Matthew.

THE HEIGHT OF THE GATE

The height of the gate is referred to in Exodus 38. 18, where it is said to be five cubits, *answerable* to the hangings of the court. The shadow here is very precious and reminds us that the Lord Jesus answered to all the requirements of the law of the LORD. The equality of the heights of the gate and the court shows that provision for entrance did not fall short of the requirements of God's righteousness. " It pleased the LORD, for His righteousness' sake, to make the teaching great and glorious " (Isaiah 42. 21, R.V.M.). Surely this was accomplished during the life of the Lord as He performed the will of God among men ! Where all others fall short He came up to the divine standard. " Think not," said He, " that I came to destroy the law or the prophets : I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished " (Matthew 5. 17, 18). Far-reaching are the words of John 19. 28 : " Jesus knowing that all things are now finished." *Telos*, means, *full performance*. The delight of the Lord Jesus even while on the cross was in knowing that He had fully performed the law of His God. It is a sobering thought that instead of magnifying God's law the Israel people so acted as to cause God's name to be blasphemed. But what a contrast is found in the Son of God who magnified it and made it honourable !

THE PILLARS OF THE GATE

Four pillars held up the screen of the gate. The blue, purple and scarlet, with the fine twined linen, were thus held up in the view of the people. As we consider what these fabrics shadow forth of the blessed Son of God may we not link these pillars with those four men who have lifted the Person and work of the Saviour before the gaze of the world! Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have been used of the Holy Spirit to this end, and we cannot spend too much time considering Him as set forth in those divine records. Let us pray too that as the Scriptures come into the hands of the myriads in all lands they may make many wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. The Master still requires pillars to hold up the truth before men. Young men, please take note! To be a pillar necessitates growth, and youth is the time for growth (see Psalm 144. 12).

The grace of God which clothes men with divine righteousness, thus fitting them for a place in heaven, is intended also to bring them to His dwelling on earth. Should this purpose of grace fail then we have indeed missed the mark. The gate of the court led not only to the altar, but also to the house where dwelt the God of Israel. Our prayer should be that of the Sons of Korah,

*“ O send out Thy light and Thy truth : let them lead me :
Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill,
And to Thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy ”* (Psalm 43. 3, 4).

G. Prasher.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST:

The present work and ministry of Christ in heaven

The present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven is a theme of absorbing interest. His work in resurrection-glory is vast and comprehensive in its scope. We may try to explore in measure the work of Christ in sustaining the vast universe and all things therein. By His word they were brought into existence, and by His word they are upheld and sustained; His almighty power is inherent in His word, and the vast universe is subject to His omnipotent will and word, “Upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1. 3). Everything, everywhere, is dependent for its present existence upon Him and the effectiveness of His word of power. It is standing witness to the existence of Christ in resurrection-glory and power that all things continue in ordered movement and place, undeviating in their course to fulfil the divine will.

“ And in Him all things consist ” (R.V.M., hold together) (Colossians 1. 17).

It is a theme which should cause our hearts to be bowed in adoring wonder and humble worship, for what are we in this vast array of created things to be thought of at all? and yet,

“ All things living He doth feed,
His full hand supplies their need ;
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.”

Not only does He sustain the universe, but He is mindful of the needs of all His creatures.

“ He watereth the mountains from His chambers ;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works,
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man ;
That He may bring forth food out of the earth :
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread that strengtheneth man’s heart ” (Psalm 104. 13-15).

The millions of the human race are supplied with the necessities of life by the operation of those laws which men call the laws of nature, but which are in fact the laws of God functioning through Him who is the power and wisdom of God both in creation and redemption. Little do men think that they are dependent for their daily bread upon the One whom this world cast out and rejected. Likewise, the vast kingdom of the animal creation, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, are all provided for by His beneficent hand (see Psalm 104). Apart from the exercise of the power of Christ upon the throne of heaven in thus supplying the needs of all living beings and creatures in this world, scientific ingenuity would utterly fail to make provision for them.

If we should think, additionally, of the spiritual needs of fallen humanity, then we find that “ there is . . . one Mediator also between God and men, Himself Man, Christ Jesus.” He was between God and men on the Cross to effect reconciliation. His work is a completed work in that respect, but the application to the needs of men of that work is something which goes on throughout time. “ Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour ” (Acts 5. 31). He is now in the glory of heaven, “ Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant ” (Hebrews 12. 24), and “ the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises ” (Hebrews 8. 6). He has ratified that better covenant by blood, and now lives in the power of an indissoluble life to administer its terms to those who comply with it, whether it be the sinner coming for salvation, or the believer responding to the terms of that covenant by practical obedience. The work of the Lord Jesus ever goes on in this respect.

THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH

We remember His word in Matthew 16 where in anticipation He says, “And upon this Rock *I will* build My Church ; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” In 1 Corinthians 12. 13 it says, “ For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body,” which is described as “ the Church, which is His Body ” in Ephesians 1. 21, 22.

The work of building this Church goes on throughout this dispensation, and is the work of the Lord Jesus in heaven; it is He who takes believing sinners and baptizes them into One Body. He is its Nourisher, Cherisher, and Preserver. He is the Head of the Church, controlling and fashioning that wondrous structure according to God's eternal purpose. He is also "Head over all things to the Church," supplying its every necessity as He awaits the glorious moment of presentation to Himself of that which will be eternally "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," His fulness, or complement, answering to the deep longings of His own Being, His satisfying portion for ever, as a wife to her husband.

PREPARING A PLACE FOR YOU

Who has not pondered and revelled in the sweetness and preciousness of the promise?—

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 2, 3).

What comfort to our hearts in this squalid scene of earth with all its sorrow and trouble to know that amidst the many abiding places in that land of glory, there is "a place" being prepared by Him for us, "for you"! Can we not hear the throbbings of that heart of infinite love in those breathings of prayer?

"Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (John 17. 24).

Yes, He who has bought us at infinite cost at Calvary is engaged in preparing "a place" for us. He is longing and waiting for that glorious day when He will see us all in that wondrous abode. Are we expectant and longing to the degree that we may be able to say in truth like John, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus"?

*"Blest words to those through pain and sorrow wading,
Tis to My Father's house I needs must go,
There to prepare a place where joy unfading
In Mine own presence ye may ever know."*

THE ADVOCATE

Meanwhile we are left for a little while in this scene of earth to bear testimony for Him. Midst the pitfalls and snares besetting our path, how apt we are to stumble and fall, how we fail and fall short in that manner of life required of us by reason of the activities of our evil nature. Indeed we would be utterly cast down and give up the struggle, but for the assurance that "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." His present work as Advocate in heaven is on behalf of all God's failing children who come to God in confession. He is able to present before His Father, by reason of His shed blood, and His inherent and manifested righteous character, an unailing plea for the forgiveness of God's erring children, hence,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9).

By reason of the advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ before the Father on our behalf, we may know the preciousness of the words "He restoreth my soul" and thus we may go on in happy communion with God.

THE LORD'S SHEPHERD CARE

Whilst every individual sheep may share in the Shepherd's love and care, there are undoubtedly blessings which they can never know apart from obedience to His will. He is the Good Shepherd who died for them, He is the Great Shepherd who lives for them. He is also the Chief Shepherd, the Shepherd of the Flock, but many of the sheep never know the joy of being gathered into His Flock; they have never responded to His call to separation unto Himself outside the camp. The Flock is a gathered, known and numbered people together on earth by His call. To be one of His sheep requires simple faith in Him as Saviour, but to be in the Flock requires obedience to His will. Scattered sheep are not a flock; a flock is composed of gathered sheep under the care and guidance of the Shepherd.

F. McCormick.

(To be continued)

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

I

The Bible speaks to us with authority about God. It does not set out to prove His existence. It commences with the sublime statement "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," thus disclosing at once that there is one God and that He is the sole Cause of creation. It may be possible to establish His existence by the application of pure reason, but that is not our approach to the subject in this paper. We commence where the Bible commences. We accept that "God is" and, further, we acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures comprise a revelation of God which is authoritative and infallible. It is not that Scripture contains a concept of God which men have reasoned out for themselves and which we may value as a contribution to the store of human knowledge on a profound subject. Such an approach to the Bible is all too common today—a subterfuge which panders to human pride.

The nature of the disclosure of God in Holy Scripture is that of self-revelation. So that the knowledge of God to which men may attain is confined to what He has chosen to reveal about Himself. This is a very important consideration to be borne in mind in approaching the Holy Scriptures. Herein God reveals Himself and the true knowledge of God can be acquired only by unquestioning acceptance of what is written; to go beyond it is presumption. And over against the danger of presumption must be placed the equally serious danger of negligence. To be in possession of a divine revelation and to treat it with indifference is surely an affront to the divine

Being. Thus Moses counselled the people of Israel regarding the revelation of God given to them :

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children” (Deuteronomy 29. 29).

This is a caution which needs always to be heeded. We must neither go beyond what is written nor fall short of it. And because of our tendency to form concepts from our own imagination we need to bring our minds back continually to the consideration of what is revealed in Holy Scripture.

In all the range of subjects available for human investigation there is surely none so important nor so satisfying as the knowledge of God. And like all other branches of knowledge it can be acquired only by diligent and earnest application :

*“If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures ;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God”* (Proverbs 2. 4, 5).

There is, however, in the pursuit of the knowledge of God, one important factor operating which does not occur in other fields of learning. Man's spiritual condition makes the true knowledge of God unattainable to him unless he is enlightened by God's Spirit. This is made abundantly clear in Scripture. Human intellect and perception *in themselves* are not the key to the hidden treasures of God's Word. In Scripture God is revealed and yet concealed. Many men of brilliant intellect have spent many years in the study of the Bible and yet have failed to discover its spiritual treasures. Such were the Pharisees to whom our Lord said :

“Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life ; and these are they which bear witness of Me ; and ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life” (John 5. 39, 40).

If further emphasis of this fact is needed it is found in the words our Lord addressed to His Father :

“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes ; Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight”
(Matthew 11. 25, 26).

Here, then, are the essentials to progress in the knowledge of God ; earnest inquiry and diligent application to the Holy Scriptures, a child-like mind, unquestioning faith, and the enlightenment of the Spirit of God. What untold riches await the discovery of those thus furnished ! The words of G. H. Pember are appropriate in this connexion :

“If a man be so favoured as to be indwelt by the Spirit of God, he will perceive divine wisdom shining in ever clearer light in the words of Scripture. Unspeakable awe will fill his mind as he perceives that he is becoming possessed of the secrets of God ; and—yet more wonderful !—that divine virtue with which those secrets are instinct, is gradually . . . transforming his whole being.”

It should be observed that the revelation of God in Holy Scripture is progressive. There is a gradual and orderly unfolding. In the

dealings of God with men through the ages there have been great crises, and these have been marked by further manifestations of Himself, e.g. the dealings of God with Abraham, with Moses and the people of Israel, and with David. But the climax and fulness of divine revelation was reached when God sent His only Begotten Son into the world.

It should also be noted that the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures is not only authoritative and infallible, but also complete. The writings of our Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ constitute the final inspired communications of God's truth to men. The Faith has been "*once for all* delivered to the saints." This makes Scripture the final court of appeal. Human tradition, no matter how ancient or revered, cannot add to the revelation of God which we have in the Holy Scriptures. Many attempts have been made to append to the Christian faith doctrines which are completely devoid of Scriptural authority. Glaring examples of this are the Romish doctrines of Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary. These heresies are based on supposed tradition; they have no basis whatever in the revelation of God contained in Holy Scripture. Other examples could be quoted, even in Protestant circles, where the traditions of men are given almost equal authority with Holy Scripture.

We mention now some of the basic facts regarding the Being and Nature of the God who is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. Firstly, consider the fact that "there is one God" (1 Timothy 2. 5, see also Galatians 3. 20, 1 Corinthians 8. 4). Such a statement is by no means commonplace. We should not allow it to pass through our minds as a mere platitude; it has profound and staggering implications. It is one of the facts God has revealed to us about Himself. In Old Testament times the Jews alone believed in the existence of one God and this they knew only by divine revelation (Deuteronomy 6. 4, comp. Mark 12. 29). The heathen nations surrounding them believed in a multiplicity of deities. Such a belief is called Polytheism. It is shown by Scripture to be completely erroneous. That God does employ created beings in the administration of the affairs of the universe is clearly taught in Scripture, but these beings are separate from, and subject to, the one supreme God.

Underlying many of the religions of the East and some of their Western equivalents (e.g. Christian Science) is the doctrine that God is everything and everything God. This is called Pantheism. It is a denial of the personality of God and reduces Him to a mere force or influence. But Scripture reveals not only that there is one God, but that He is a *living* God (Jeremiah 10. 10, Joshua 3. 10). He is a living personal Being, not an abstract force or influence. There is a great gulf between a God who is a force and the living God revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

This one God is not only living and personal; He is eternal and self-existent (Isaiah 40. 28, Psalm 90. 2, Romans 1. 20). And He is

the Cause and Creator of all material and spiritual existence. If anything existed apart from Him or did not owe its existence to Him, then He could not be God. The Bible does not teach the eternity of matter as do some false religions. It teaches :

"Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created" (Revelation 4. 11).

The Scriptures, then, reveal that there is one God, that He is a living God, and that He is the primal Cause of all created existence. What do they teach with regard to the position He now adopts towards His creation? There is a heresy known as Deism. Deists do not accept the Bible as a divine revelation. Many of them believe that the God who created the universe no longer exercises control over it. Everywhere Scripture denies this. God is infinite, He exists apart from, and is not subject to, the material universe. He is the Sovereign Creator and Judge of the world and yet He pervades the entire universe. Speaking to the philosophers on Mars Hill, the apostle Paul made a statement regarding the God who reveals Himself in Holy Scripture, which expresses concisely some of the important truths we have been emphasizing :

"The God that made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things . . . He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17. 24-28).

God has not abdicated His position as Lord of this earth. What comfort lies here! The forces of evil may appear to us to be in the ascendancy, but God is on the throne. In His infinite wisdom He allows much to occur which is incomprehensible to us because of our finite understanding. But it is still true

*"God everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might,
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.*

*We comprehend Him not,
Yet earth and heaven tell
God sits as sovereign on the throne,
And ruleth all things well."*

T.M.H.

REMINISCENCES

The occasion of these reminiscences is a conference some years ago, when the subject for consideration was that of "Giving unto the Lord." The plan for study was that each speaker should, in turn, give illustrations of "Giving unto the Lord" from the Pentateuch, from the times of the Judges in Israel, from the times of the kings, and from the Prophets and the Psalms. Later these historical, practical illustrations were emphasized from the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, in the New Testament.

We cull one of these illustrations from the casket of memory, brought back by the Blessed Holy Spirit to one's remembrance, sweet as ever and as powerful in its application. The story is that of Hannah, recorded in 1 Samuel 1.

The skies were clouded for Israel, the people of God. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21. 25); and further, "The word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no open (frequent, or widely spread) vision" (1 Samuel 3. 1, R.V.M.). We know that "where there is no vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29. 18, A.V.). The old priest, Eli, who should have kept before the people the instructions of God, was dim of vision, "his eyes were set, that he could not see" (1 Samuel 4. 15). Against such a background the story of Hannah shines brightly. Thus, often in the history of God's people, the faithfulness of the individual rises above the failure of the many, and holds aloft the torch of truth and devotion thereto.

Year by year, Hannah was consistently faithful to God in her worship and sacrifice in the house of God which at that time was at Shiloh. But she had one paramount desire, to give to the LORD that which she most desired for herself. The gift that she would give back to Jehovah was denied her, for she was childless. Added to this sorrow of inability to give, was the provocation of her rival, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah. And thus, "in bitterness of soul," Hannah "prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore" (1 Samuel 1. 10).

How wrong of those, Peninnah-like, who, having that which they might devote to the Lord, keep it back, and further provoke those who have not! There is an echo of such an attitude in the early days of the church of God, in Corinth, where the apostle Paul rebukes those, who, having houses to eat and drink in despised the church of God, and put them to shame that had not (1 Corinthians 11. 22).

But Hannah asked liberally, that she might give generously. "She vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid and . . . wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head" (1 Samuel 1. 11). What a "woman of worth" (i.e. "a virtuous woman," *ep. Proverbs 31. 10*) was Hannah! She foresaw what the people of God needed in her day—a man of God, a man separated unto the LORD, who would carry out, unflinchingly but in love, the commandments of Jehovah. The LORD granted to Hannah her request, and "she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD" (1 Samuel 1. 20).

How instructive for Samuel were those few years in which she nourished her son! Timothy-like, Samuel would learn line upon line at his mother's knee. And the maternal yearning of Hannah's heart would grow no less as the time came to lend him back to the LORD. Yet she forgot not her vow, for the time came when she granted him back to the LORD for as long as he should live. Following such giving,

it is recorded, "And they worshipped the LORD there" (1 Samuel 1. 28, R.V.M.).

How like the "magnificat" of Mary, recorded in Luke 1. 46-55, is the prayer of Hannah! (1 Samuel 2. 1-10). In the latter, amidst many other precious sayings, we read the first recorded mention of the Messiah, in "the LORD shall . . . exalt the horn of His Anointed" (1 Samuel 2. 10), thus foretelling the future coming of the Christ of God. In the former we read of the precious blessings that would accompany His first advent into this world of sorrow.

Both these wonderful women gave their most-coveted possession to the LORD. How much of the sword piercing her own heart did Mary suffer we may never know. But immeasurable are the blessings and joys that have flown out to mankind from Immanuel, God's gift through Mary. Hannah, also, received, in rich measure from the LORD, in return for her loan back to Him. (See 1 Samuel 2. 21). Year by year as the child Samuel grew before the LORD, Hannah continued to show her care for her son, in providing for him "a little robe." As he donned it, memories of the care of a godly mother must have cheered the hours of loneliness as Samuel lay down to sleep in the temple of the LORD. It was there, however, he was to hear the LORD calling him by name, and entrusting him with a momentous message for Eli and for Israel.

From the gift of a godly mother, there was granted to Israel a wise judge (1 Samuel 7. 15), a persistent intercessor on their behalf (1 Samuel 7. 9, 8. 6, 12. 23, 15. 11 and Jeremiah 15. 1), a great prophet (Acts 13. 20), who, at his death, was a much-lamented man (1 Samuel 25. 1).

Where shall we start with our giving or what shall be given, our money, our talents, or our time? It is for each to decide, but outstandingly there was brought before the Corinthian church, the commendable example of those in the churches of God in Macedonia, "how that, in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, . . . yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, . . . but first they gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8. 1-5).

"Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for *God loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Corinthians 9. 7).
Jas. Martin.

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JOTTINGS

Human effort is consequential on both divine election and prayer. No one was seen to be more truly chosen than Jacob. His mother Rebecca in her distress went to enquire of the LORD and was told that she would be the mother of twin sons, and that the elder would serve the younger. On this fact Paul lays great stress when he wrote :—

“ For the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated ” (Romans 9. 11-13).

The choice being that of an unborn man, works played no part in his election ; he could do no works before he was born, and his works after birth could play no part in his election, for he had already been chosen. It is a falsity to suppose that election is based upon the fact, that because God knew beforehand in His foreknowledge what the elect person would eventually do, therefore God chose him. This is to base election upon works, and make election according to works and not on Him that calleth, which is the exact opposite of what Paul says, as quoted above. Yet this falsity of explaining election by God's foreknowledge of what elect persons would do is held, I think, by some with whom I have spoken.

This way of explaining the mystery of election is an attempt to explain the unexplainable. Election is a fact which must ever remain a mystery to us on earth, and perhaps for ever ; it reaches down to the inscrutable of the divine will, of which the apostle wrote :—

“ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen ” (Romans 11. 33-36).

Thus Paul ends his treatise on election. “ He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay His hand, or say to Him, What doest Thou ? ” (Daniel 4. 35). Thus wrote Nebuchadnezzar in his famous declaration, when he had learned that the heavens do rule. He had been truly as a beast before God (Psalm 73. 22), and he learned much through being humbled.

In Jacob we not only learn the truth of divine election, we also learn how an elect person

*“ Wrestles on toward heaven
'Gainst storm and wind and tide.”*

Election is not fatalism, which latter assumes that if things are to be they will be, and that man on earth is subject to the inexorable decrees of fate, whatever fate is—some ogre or monster which presides over human destiny, a creature or a will which actually does not exist, but is a satanic invention to paralyse human beings and stop them seeking after God. What will be, will be, and man is a mere plaything in the hands of fate. This is not true !

Was there ever man who wrestled so much against the circumstances of adversity ? Seeing he was God's elect, why was he not born first, born with the birthright ? It would have been quite easy for God to cause him to have been the firstborn. Why did God not give Isaac insight into His purpose in Jacob and so have saved him from the wrong course of going to give the firstborn's blessing to Esau when Jacob had bought the birthright and his too was the election ? Why did Jacob need to wrestle with Laban who in his unrighteousness had changed Jacob's wages ten times and whose double-dealing caused Jacob to steal away to his own land ? Why his trouble over Esau ? his breaking with God ? his sorrows with his family, consummated in the selling of Joseph into Egypt ?—all these things were against him, but were like the inward rolling wave which lifts the boat and lands it safely on the shore. He was chosen yet he wrestled and there was no fixed fate.

J.M.

JOTTINGS

As with election, which is not according to the works of the elect but according to the will of Him who calleth, so prayer is not a matter which rests simply on asking God without the exercise of the person seeking what he asks for. Thus it is we find the psalmist writing :—

*“ One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after ;
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple ”*

(Psalm 27. 4)

This psalm was written at an early time in his life, probably early in the time of his persecutions by Saul, before David brought his father and mother to the king of Moab for safe keeping (1 Samuel 22. 3-5). He says in Psalm 27. 10, “ For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me up.” The one thing that David asked, which was the central feature of his life, was to be in God’s house and to be near to Him all his days ; to be in His safe keeping and to know Him better and still better ; this was accompanied by his seeking after what he asked. His praying and his seeking were complementary. He was not one who prayed and went his way forgetful of what he asked, or so uninterested in formal praying that he did not bend his energy to reach the goal of what he asked. Did not the Lord exhort His disciples, “ Watch and pray ” ? Does it not often happen that we do the praying and think that God can do the watching ? Indeed, are we not like the disciples who may have prayed when the Lord told them to pray, but they fell asleep ?

Paul’s words to the Christian soldier are apposite in this matter when he exhorts the soldier in this spiritual warfare to take up the whole armour of God—

“ with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit (not to the Spirit as some erroneously do), and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints ” (Ephesians 6. 18).

Perseverance (*Proskoptō*, *Pros*, towards, *koptō* to cut or strike) means to strike against. It may be illustrated by the words of the Lord, who exhorted His disciples in prayer to knock and it would be opened unto them. They were to knock and to keep knocking, to ask and keep asking. We must ask as David did, for when he asked he set a watch to see when and how the LORD would answer him. The LORD’s watchmen are never to hold their peace day nor night, they are to take no rest and to give Him no rest (Isaiah 62. 6, 7). Sometimes one has heard very well-thought-out and well-spoken prayers which were but eulogies of some of the ways or doings of God, but one was almost tempted to say to the brother, “ Ask something ! ” God is interested about doing things and we should ask Him to do them. How many things we would like Him to do, both for ourselves individually and for God’s people ! and if we ask Him in regard to them do we seek after what we ask, do we persevere ? We may get tired, languid, and perhaps fall asleep and instead of praying it is snoring. Is it not time to awake righteously ? Is it not time to shake off dull sloth ? We need not go to sleep though times are bad and there is a prevailing deadness and indifference. Though we walk through a cemetery we need not fall asleep in it. God is alive ; He is awake. He is doing His work unseen by most, and He will work for us if we ask Him and seek after what we ask. He knows whether we are in earnest. Remember, He works for them that wait for Him. “ *Though it tarry, wait for it ; because it will surely come, it will not delay* ” (Habakkuk 2. 3). God’s seeming delays are not denials. Were we in His stead and had His wisdom we would do exactly as He does. The Fellowship is in need of godly, praying men and women. We may not be able to preach with eloquence, but we can pray with power. We can be persistent. We can sit on God’s doorstep and knock ever and anon. We can hold on and not let God go unless He blesses us. We can pray always and without ceasing. We may be frequent visitors to heaven. The way is there, it is free, and there is the utmost liberty to speak to God through Christ. Pray as you walk, pray as you sit, pray as you lie down, pray as you stand, pray on your knees, pray always and in every place.

J.M.

“ THESE SEVENTY YEARS ”

“ *Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying . . . these seventy years* ” (Zechariah 7. 4, 5).

“At length I became aware of a movement . . . supported by a monthly paper called ‘Needed Truth.’ The paper was devoted largely to the setting forth of the principles of the Church and the Churches of God, the Fellowship, the Kingdom of God, the House of God, etc. It purposed to show from the Scriptures that God has arranged for a *collective* people on earth to the end of the dispensation, and that those who claim to be disciples of the Lord should give effect to such principles, and thus know the blessedness of being in the will of God collectively, although all believers may *not so act*.” These words were among the last which appeared in “Needed Truth” (Vol. 42, p. 68) from the pen of a man valiant-for-truth, Mr. W. J. Lennox, in an article entitled “My Story,” and we quote them in this commemorative note on the seventy years of the existence of this publication.

For years prior to the issue of the first number in October, 1888, there had been an earnest desire on the part of many children of God for a positive exposition of doctrine relating to the House of God. This had received scant attention (and still today is rarely if ever alluded to) in current publications of comparable character. In 1887 a “Circular Message” had been issued by certain brethren humbly submitting that, “light has been given, light is being given to the hearts and to the understanding, of those who are willing to receive it; which is leading such to discernment in the Word of God of the will and the way of the Lord, in matters which have lain in obscurity for ages.” Following this, with but one break of five years (1909-1913), during which “Wholesome Words” was published, “Needed Truth” has been issued regularly (at the beginning it appeared quarterly, but later as a monthly magazine), and its numerous volumes now constitute a library of expository and other truth which, we believe, is altogether unique in character and content.

To some it may seem utterly presumptuous to consider so small a movement, as that which followed the publication of “Needed Truth,” as being in any way significant in a period outstanding in all the history of the human race. And we might well agree if it were not that the LORD has spoken, who sits “upon the circle of the earth” and marks the progress, or otherwise, of men in their knowledge of His way and will. For it was the LORD Himself who, concerning the seventy years spent in captivity in Babylon, questioned His people: “When ye fasted and mourned . . . these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me?” To Him, of whom it had been written, “The LORD’s portion is His people,” this period of their history *was* a matter of concern. And we may wonder how He would question us, His people in this day, regarding our use of *these* seventy

years. "Surely it is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."

The few years immediately following the first issue of "Needed Truth" were marked by a deep exercise of heart on the part of many of God's children, to the extent that in the years 1893 and 1894 they separated themselves from varying ecclesiastical associations, subsequently gathering together in Churches of God. The record of this movement is to be found in "The Search for the Truth of God."

The truth, needed truth indeed, had liberated men from sectarian bondage. But this truth of separation was one aspect only of the great body of doctrine which called, and still calls, for the exercise of heart of those who, like the Bereans, "examine the scriptures daily" to learn what the will of the Lord is. How easy it is for us to forget that, as in Joshua's days, so today, "there remaineth much land to be possessed"! If Moab had "settled on his lees," having been "at ease from his youth," so also had Israel, of whom God said, "I will search Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees" (Jeremiah 48. 11 and Zephaniah 1. 11).

Seventy years have passed since the first issue of "Needed Truth," and in the light of the happenings of today, especially those centred in the State of Israel, we wonder how near we may be to the coming again of our Lord Jesus. And we ask ourselves what is *NEEDED TRUTH* for today? Certainly we may not yield one iota of the precious heritage which is already ours. Dearly the truth has been bought by our spiritual forbears. We must not sell it. And yet the message which Wisdom cries aloud to us is still the same:

"Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you . . . whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell securely, and shall be quiet without fear of evil, . . . if thou seek her as silver . . . then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 1. 23, 33; 2. 4, 5).

And those who would find such knowledge must:—

*"Search the Scriptures,"
Receive "the knowledge of the truth,"
"Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness,"
"Offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually,"
Have "an understanding of the times,"
"Earnestly desire the coming of the day of God."*

How much land, indeed, remains to be possessed! "Till we all attain

*Unto the unity of the faith,
And of the knowledge of the Son of God,
Unto a full grown man,
Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*

May our greatest concern be, not only that the testimony shall be maintained, but that individually "we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

A. R. G. CHAMINGS.

MEDITATIONS ON PSALM 139

What a treasury Christians have in this psalm! Nowhere else can they find language expressing so exquisitely the attributes of God, nor so appropriately the cries from the depths, out of the human heart. The range of thought is vast, the words used are so divinely chosen! The Psalms, read in the light of the life and words of the One they so frequently picture in (what we call) the Messianic Psalms, become very real to the Christian (though he be Gentile-born) despite their being expressed with a Hebrew background. The Psalms, the Lord Jesus Himself said, were amongst the Scriptures that spake of Him. And He came to declare to us His God and Father.

Psalm 139 reveals, from the experiences of David, deep thoughts of God. This is the great search of great thinkers of all times—to find God. In verses 1 to 6 we read of His *Omniscience*; in verses 7 to 12 of His *Omnipresence*; in verses 15 and 16 of His *Omnipotence*. Thereafter lessons are learned in the light of these revelations of God.

David commences by admitting that he knows God has searched him. All is open before His eyes—a solemn thought! Morning and evening God searches us, weighing up the value of our *thoughts* long before they are translated into *acts*. Where we go, what we say, are all within His *omniscience*. Too wonderful for David! Too wonderful, and very solemn for us! Some of this “searching” (verse 3, R.V.M.) is “winnowing.” He expects to find some precious grain in our lives. He does not always “winnow” with the wind. Isaiah 28. 24-29 reveals His wonderful counsel and excellent wisdom in teaching the farmer both to sow and to reap, and to winnow. The winnowing may be performed according to the plant being winnowed, by a staff or by a rod. Yea, even bread corn, the richest of the wheat, has to know the pressure of the upper and the nether grindstones! Sharp instruments and the cart wheel are used for others. Are these because of our hardness of heart? Our trials may be varied. If we are but fetches or cummin a rod may suffice; if we are true wheat we may have to suffer to be “ground.” But whatever result He desires from His threshing-floor to fill His garners full, we rest assured He “is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom” (verse 29).

Perhaps we prefer to ask, as the bride in the Song of Songs did—

“Awake, O north wind; and come thou south;
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden
And eat his precious fruits.”

In verses 7 to 12 God is *Omnipresent*. He is with us in the council-chamber, the conference room, the sick ward, in the shipyard, in our homes and on the highways. Him we cannot avoid—if we ever dare to think we can do so! He is in the heights of heaven, He can descend to the depths of Sheol. The Lord Jesus, co-eternal Son

of God, descended into Sheol, was not left there and has ascended into heaven. How all-pervading is God's presence! How thankful we should be that *His hand* leadeth us and *His right hand* upholdeth us! 'Tis a comforting thought.

"Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," we have found by experience to be true. Oh, to keep the lines of communication open, that we may send our requests and receive His messages!

We read in 2 Chronicles 16. 9 that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him." Thus He found a wandering man, a Hebrew, Abraham, to whom He revealed His will and to whom He made exceedingly wide and great promises (Genesis 12. 1-3, 15. 1-6). Similarly His eyes found the fugitive Jacob, and revealed to him—roofless and lonely as he was—the gate of heaven, the house of God (Genesis 28. 10-19). Much of sorrow must have met those searching eyes as

*"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were any that did understand,
That did seek after God"* (Psalm 14. 2).

But what a delight it was to Him in the fulness of time to behold the Man, Christ Jesus, arise from Jordan's waters, when His voice out of the heavens said "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3. 16, 17)! Surely a moment of divine joy!

What a contrast between this and the time when those eyes saw only the dark, dark clouds of wrath that lay heavily upon that same lovely, lonely Man of Calvary! and wrung from Him that bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Describing that cry, Elizabeth Browning has written—

*"It went up from the holy lips,
Amidst a lost creation,
That of the sons, no one should cry,
That cry of desolation."*

Verses 13 to 16 show His *Omnipotence*. In other Psalms the writers use the majesty of God's wondrous works on land, in air and on sea to extol this attribute of Deity. Here in Psalm 139 the effect is more personal, nearer us, more individual. His omnipotence is shown in the wonderful transformation of the infinitesimally minute embryo to a full grown man, planned and designed and created in God's image. From such a creation God's highest praises should sound. Cannot we all, in some measure, reiterate the words of the Psalmist?

*"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O 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."*

David, who had opened his psalm for the Chief Musician with a truthful acknowledgement of God's searching, *now* welcomes that searching thus:—

*“ Search me, O God, and know my heart :
Try me, and know my thoughts :
And see if there be any way of wickedness (grief, R.V.M.) in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Can we reach that stage in divine dealings? I wonder. Few of us can bear more than the chastening of the rod. Some great souls like Job have risen from the crushing of the cart wheel to record

“ Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him ” (Job 13. 15)

and to triumph through tribulation.

“ Behold we call them blessed which endured : ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful ” (James 5. 11).

There fell into the earth that day a grain of wheat which died, and, abiding not by itself alone, has borne, is still bearing, and will yet bear much precious fruit.

(See John 12. 24.)

J. MARTIN.

THE TABERNACLE :

The Copper Altar

The copper altar which stood at the door of the tent of meeting was made of acacia wood, overlaid with copper. Particulars as to its structure are found in Exodus 27. 1-8, 38. 1-7. It was five cubits long, five cubits broad, and three cubits high, with horns at the four corners. Its grating of network was of copper, and this grating had four copper rings for the staves by which it was carried.

In commencing our consideration of the altar, which, together with its victim, presents precious shadows of the Lord Jesus, we draw attention to the fact that the first object to be encountered after entering the gate was not notable for magnificence of material or structure such as would speak of the glories of Christ. It tells us rather of His sufferings, to endure which He laid aside His glory; He, “being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself.” The sovereign Lord stooped from the glory and majesty of His position in heaven to become a bondservant on earth, thus not only bridging the chasm which yawned between Deity and humanity, but also becoming Jehovah's bond servant. Marvellous was His lowliness as thus He was found among

men; all His life revealed that He was girded with humility. The story of John 13 is an illustration, and His death on Golgotha's tree where He "was numbered with the transgressors," the very vilest of earth, displays the reality of this emptying of Himself.

HIS DIVINE NATURE

Let us carefully guard against the theory which asserts that the Lord in emptying Himself left His Deity behind. He who when asked by the high priest, "Art Thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed?" could reply, "I am," was not bereft of His divine nature. His divine glory was repeatedly manifested, and we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). "Born of the seed of David according to the flesh" He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness" (Romans 1. 3, 4). "I and the Father are one" (John 10. 30) are words that fell from His lips, and caused the Jews to take up stones to stone Him, and say, "Thou . . . makest Thyself God." They understood the signification of His words, but they refused to acknowledge His claims.

THE ACACIA WOOD

The acacia wood of the altar would remind us of the humanity of the Lord. The altar could have been made of metal, but instead we have wood, the product of life. The acacia wood is said to be without a peer as regards durability. It speaks of the peerless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53. 9). Sinless and immaculate at His birth, He grew up well pleasing to God, and the Holy Spirit testifies that "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5). This reveals to us what He is as to His *being*. Then He tells of One who suffered and left us an example, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2. 22). Thus as to His *being* and *doing* He was perfect.

As we consider Him as the Victim which was to be offered on the altar we remember that He must be without blemish as all the sacrifices had to be. They had to be perfect to be accepted, and they were but the shadows of Him who was without sin, who knew no sin, and who was holy, guileless, undefiled and separated from sinners.

THE COPPER COVERING

The acacia wood of the altar was covered with copper, and this, we think, speaks of *endurance* and of *judgement*. Had there been no copper covering for the altar, the fire that burned constantly would have made inroads on the wood, despite the shielding by the

earthen altar or hearth within it, but the copper afforded the needful resistance. It is interesting to recall that the Holy Spirit uses the word *endured* when speaking of the Lord Jesus on the cross: "Who for the joy that was set before Him *endured* the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12. 2). Then we remember how He was strengthened in the garden of Gethsemane. "Greatly amazed, and sore troubled," His "soul . . . exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," His beloved disciples sleeping because their eyes were heavy, "there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, *strengthening* Him" (Luke 22. 43). It is at Golgotha that we see the fulfilment of the prophetic words through the Psalmist:

*"Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand,
Upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself"*
(Psalm 80. 17).

At the north side of the altar the victims fell beneath the stroke of judgement. As the knife plunged into the vitals of the sacrifice it bespoke the requirements of the righteous throne of God. Judgement must fall where sin was laid, and this was daily seen at the side of the copper altar. On Golgotha the Saviour bore the stroke which was due to us, "and the LORD made to light on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53. 6).

*"Whatever curse was ours He bore,
The wormwood and the gall;
There in that lone, mysterious hour,
Our cup He drained it all."*

THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR

The horns which were on the four corners of the altar suggest to us the authority and kingly power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The symbolism of horns is frequently employed both in Old and New Testaments, as in Daniel 8. 20; and Revelation 17. 12. When down here in lowly form the world had no throne for the Lord Jesus, there was absolutely no niche into which He could be fitted in the arrangement or cosmos of man's day. He was "The Stone which the builders rejected" (Psalm 118. 22), but, thanks be to God, He "is become the Head of the corner." When He returns to earth He will take unto Him His great power and reign, "for He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet" (1 Corinthians 15. 25). The four horns pointing as they did to the four corners of the earth might remind us of the universality of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him;
And His enemies shall lick the dust . . .
Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him:
All nations shall serve Him"* (Psalm 72. 8-11).

Again in Daniel 2. 44 we read : "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another nation . . . and it shall stand for ever." As we think of these things, and the glory of the coming age, we do well to "give the more diligence" to make our calling and election sure, so that there may be richly supplied unto us the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A PLACE OF REFUGE

When Adonijah, one of David's sons, usurped the throne about the time of David's death, he was afraid when he realized that Solomon, the chosen one of David for his throne, was anointed and in the place of power. We read, "And Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar" (1 Kings 1. 50). If there was a safe place on earth for the man who was in danger of death it was at the horns of the altar. Solomon extended mercy to him, but alas! later he made it manifest that he lacked repentance, and he was put to death. In the case of Joab, also, who died beside the altar, it was shown that there is no sanctuary for the unrepentant sinner. Solemn reminder this that Calvary's cross is no place for the unrepentant, but those who come in repentance towards God and place faith in Christ will obtain mercy.

THE GRATING OF COPPER

The grating reached half way up the altar from the ground to a ledge, and in this grating were the rings of copper in which were placed the staves for carrying the altar when journeying through the desert. If we realize this it will remove the wrong idea that the grating was inside the altar. The fire burned on the hearth (Leviticus 6. 9), which may have been of earth or stone (Exodus 20. 25), built up inside the copper framework. This hearth would not conduct the heat in the same way that copper would, and so we can the better understand the continual fire of the altar as to its effects upon the altar.

THE STAVES

These were made of acacia wood, and overlaid with copper. Whatever else the staves may speak of, the lesson of fellowship in the service of bearing the altar is plainly taught. The heavy burden of the altar was shared by a number of men, and the staves would distribute the weight between them. Thinking of men bearing a burden thus together reminds us that in assembly life there are joint responsibilities, and it is of the utmost importance that we learn to keep step and work together. Often the unity of the assembly is marred by failure in this respect. Working heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; and striving together for the faith of the gospel, are among the lovely things we are exhorted to think upon.

The burden carried for the LORD over the desert road by the Levites of old takes our thoughts to Habakkuk 1. 1, which says, "The *burden* (or oracle) which Habakkuk the prophet did see." Also to Nahum 1. 1, "The *burden* of Nineveh." The Holy Spirit speaks of the message or oracle which these prophets bore as *the burden*. Certainly the prophets felt the weight of the oracle, and we are assured that it is only as we feel the *burden* of our message that those who hear will feel its weight. Let us learn this lesson, those who speak forth the word of the Lord.

THE SACRIFICE

On the altar were placed the fire and the wood, and thereon was placed the whole of the burnt offering, its head, fat, inwards, legs, and the remainder of the body of the victim of the burnt offering. Added to this were the fat that covered the inwards, the kidneys, and the caul upon the liver from the other sacrifices, besides parts of the meal offering, and all were burned with fire that burned as incense, and which went up to God as a sweet savour. It was as a sweet savour of Christ which delighted the heart of God in heaven, an ascending offering. By day and by night this sweet fragrant cloud ascended, and God was continually reminded of the fragrance of the coming Sacrifice of Golgotha, when His Son would give Himself "an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Ephesians 5. 2).

POTS TO TAKE AWAY ITS ASHES

The pots, shovels, basons, fleshhooks and firepans were made of copper. Pots were used when removing the ashes from the altar. The burnt offering was upon the altar all night until the morning; and the fire was kept burning thereon. The priest, clothed with his linen garment and linen breeches, came in the morning and took up the ashes whereto the fire had consumed the burnt offering, and put them beside the altar. He then changed his garments, and carried forth the ashes *without the camp* unto a *clean place* (see Leviticus 6. 9-11).

The shadow cast by the carrying forth of the ashes to a clean place will be readily traced by all who love the story of the death of the Lord Jesus. On that middle cross, with head bowed in death, we see the Antitype of the ashes to which the fire had reduced the burnt offering. Joseph, a councillor, a good and righteous man of Arimathæa, who was looking for the kingdom of God, went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. He took it down, wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury, and laid it in a new tomb, hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain. That *clean tomb* retained the body of the Saviour of men until the morning of the third day, when He arose from among the dead in triumph over Satan, sin and death. Like the place of the cross the tomb was *outside* the city. Thus morning by morning the type was

pointing onward to that which was witnessed not alone by the apostles, but also by certain of the women—"And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where He was laid" (Mark 15. 47).

ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS FOR EVER

The copper altar received fresh applications of blood daily from the innumerable victims slain by its side; the hearth was loaded day by day with bodies of the burnt offerings, and the fat and inwards of other sacrifices: the smoke ascended by day and by night, and the sweet savour reached the God of heaven, yet all was merely typical. No real satisfaction resulted from the continuous priestly work at an earthly altar. Those priests "offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect" (Hebrews 9. 9). These were "only carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation." "Every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10. 11, 12). "The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God," can "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." We can triumph in the assurance that "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

WE HAVE AN ALTAR

We glory in the once-for-all sacrifice, and rejoice in Him who offered Himself through the eternal Spirit, but let us not fail to exult in the sacred altar which has been provided for us. Christ is the *Offering*, the *Offerer*, and He is the *Altar*. To acknowledge a material altar today involves a mixing of the old with the new, of the material with the spiritual, and is quite foreign to the services of a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. As it is obviously wrong to regard the material building wherein people render religious service as the house of God, so it is equally wrong to regard a material structure, no matter how splendidly adorned, as the altar of God. No such material altar in the will of God exists today. But "we have an Altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (Hebrews 13. 10). This altar is Christ Himself. How true it is that "Christ is ALL, and in all" (Colossians 3. 11)!

The remembrance of the Lord, with the showing forth of His death, as set forth in the copper altar, is one of the most precious functions of the holy priesthood, and is proper to the house of God. Men today would take the altar away from the house, but we are called upon to remember where God has placed it. In the past the altar had its relation to the door of God's house, and we should be ready to recognize that He has only one house, and therefore the Antitype of the altar and its services should be found there.

G. PRASHER.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST :
The Present Work and Ministry of Christ in Heaven
(Continued from page 123)

THE LORD'S SHEPHERD CARE

The Lord called and gathered His own sheep from the fold of John, "He leadeth them out," "He goeth before them," "they know His voice" (John 10. 3, 4). Then He says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become *one flock, one Shepherd.*" Scripture never speaks of flocks, but flock, *one flock*, with reference to His gathered people. The words of Peter are pertinent; writing to the elders in the five provinces enumerated in 1 Peter 1 he says, "Tend the flock of God which is among you, . . . making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5. 2, 3). They could never tend that flock unless it was known, gathered, and accessible. They were to do this work of tending under the Chief Shepherd in heaven; it was His ministry to His gathered people through the under-shepherds, for there is but one flock, one Shepherd. It is His care, His guidance, His will the under-shepherds are to express, not their own, they are but under-shepherds, men under authority, called, fitted, and engaged in this work of expressing the desires of the only perfect Shepherd who is now in heaven. It is a work which springs from love toward the Chief Shepherd, and His voice should ever be heard in heart-searching power by them, "Lovest thou Me?" "Feed My lambs"; "Tend My sheep"; "Feed My sheep." Thus we see a ministry of shepherd-care directed from the resurrected Lord toward the flock of God through overseers or elders, and these are responsible to the Chief Shepherd for their work and actions; they are to be subject to Him who has entrusted them with this great work, and also to subject themselves, the younger to the elder, as instructed in 1 Peter 5. 5, as ensamples to the flock. They are to minister to the spiritual needs of God's people, to care for them, to guide, counsel, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering, remembering that the sheep are those for whom Christ died; they are *His* sheep. They are to feed with food convenient to the lambs and sheep of the flock by healthful Spirit-given ministry. With tender hand and loving heart they are to help the weak and feeble and encourage the fainthearted, and such work must be done with a single eye to God's glory and the blessing of His people. They are to be men of courage who will stand against the attacks of the Adversary, steadfast in their faith, prepared to spend and be spent, to defend the sheep, and stand in defence of the gospel, and of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, men who put God's people and God's honour first, and themselves last, men who can pray in truth as Solomon! "Give Thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this Thy great people?" (1 Kings 3. 9). Besides the Shepherd care and ministry

of the Lord through overseers to the flock, there is His present work as Son over God's house and also His work as Great Priest over the house of God.

CHRIST AS SON OVER GOD'S HOUSE

This subject is worthy of close attention as affecting the ecclesiastical position of all believers. Before we can appreciate the position which Christ has as Son over God's house, we must first define what the house of God is. It is a lamentable fact that of the vast numbers of believers in the world today comparatively few have any conception of this precious truth. Those who may have are often so bound up with tradition, friendships, or family relationships that they are unable to give expression to it. We freely admit that for a disciple of the Lord Jesus to take his or her place in the house of God may demand a sacrifice which perhaps few are prepared to make. The majority take the easy way and the popular path regardless of the word,

"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23. 23).

The house of God today is a spiritual house. During the life of the Lord Jesus on earth there was a material temple, and it is evident that the two could not exist as God's dwelling place at the same time. Indeed, the prophecy of Caiaphas makes it clear that

"Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God which are scattered abroad" (John 11. 52).

There was to be the commencement of a new thing after the death of Christ, and this the Lord had in view when He prayed that memorable prayer found in John 17:—

"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; . . . that the world may believe . . . that the world may know that Thou didst send Me."

It is quite clear from this that the Lord had before Him a visible oneness which was to be a witness of divine truth before the world, and so He prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth."

Concerning the material temple in Jerusalem He ultimately declared:—

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23. 38).

A dispensation was about to commence after the death of Christ, which, in contrast to the material things of the law, was to be spiritual in its character and manifestation. The cross was to be the means first of all of bringing men into eternal union with God, a union which can never be broken, for every believer stands perfect and complete in Christ. This is a union of life, of all who are sharers of a common salvation. This invisible union in Christ has been made by many the basis of church fellowship, though this has not the slightest foundation in Scripture. Believers are not gathered in testimony on the basis of their sanctification in Christ Jesus, but because of their sanctification in the truth, and this requires obedience to the truth.

F. McCORMICK.

(To be continued)

" BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT "

" Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you "
(Acts 1. 8).
" Be filled with the Spirit " (Ephesians 5. 8).

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the building of the Church which is the Body of Christ.

It is evident that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and this indwelling of the Spirit is the token that we are Christ's.

" If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His "
(Romans 8. 9).

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost brought power to the lives of the disciples, according to the word of the Lord. Before His coming, they were wavering and sometimes fearful. After His coming they were bold and confident. Not only did they receive the Spirit, but they were filled with the Spirit, and because of this, power was manifest in their lives and ministry. (See Acts 1. 8.)

Years later Paul urged the believers in the church in Ephesus to be " filled with the Spirit." Again the fulness of the Holy Spirit would be manifest in powerful living. Not this time in the working of miracles, but in singing and making melody to the Lord; in the giving of thanks to God; and in subjecting of themselves, one to another, in the fear of Christ. We should note the things which manifest the fulness of the Spirit. There is power in these!

The fulness of the Holy Spirit is essential for all spiritual power. Nothing can take His place. This is confirmed by Zechariah 4. 6.

" Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

No human power can be a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit. Both the knowledge of the word, and the gift of speaking it, are greatly to be desired, but without the fulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our gifts and our knowledge will remain fruitless. The gifts and the knowledge are ours, but

" Power belongeth unto God " (Psalm 62. 11).

The writer would suggest that there are three conditions essential for the fulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The first condition is prayer. So we read—

" When they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit " (Acts 4. 31).

So the Psalmist wrote—

*" Quicken Thou us, and we will call upon Thy Name,
Turn us again, O LORD of hosts;
Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved "* (Psalm 80. 18, 19).

The fulness of the Holy Spirit is not a once-for-all experience in the life of a believer, as is the baptism in the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. It is a day-by-day experience as the result of confession and prayer, and it is only as continuous as the prayer which brings it. But there is much prayer which does not bring the fulness of the Holy Spirit. "Much prayer—much power" is only partly true. Other conditions are necessary. The Holy Spirit can fill the emptied vessel only. He cannot fill the vessel that is already part-full of self. There must be the yielding of the whole man to God. No amount of prayer will bring the fulness of the Holy Spirit, if our lives are not yielded lives.

How foolish we are to think that we can use our lives better than God can! This is unbelief. "I beseech you," says Paul, "present your bodies" (Romans 6. 13, 12. 1). Yet many believers who will trust Christ for their eternal salvation will not trust Him to control and order their short lives now! All such believers lack the power and joy which can only come from the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

One other condition for the fulness of the Holy Spirit seems evident—He must dwell within us ungrieved.

We may pray much, but the power of the Holy Spirit will not be manifest in our lives if He is grieved within us. There must be cleansing from all bitterness and wrath, and from the unforgiving spirit. The vessel must not only be empty—it must be clean! We must be holy if we are to be acceptable to God. (See Ephesians 4. 30-32.)

The past of our lives must be gone over. Wrongs must be put right. Debts must be paid. Debts of love as well as of money! Forgiveness must be sought, where we have sinned against others. Forgiveness must be given—from the heart to those who seek it from us. Those who have sinned against us must be prayed for in love. Unclean habits must be corrected. Then—we can yield our bodies, holy acceptable to God. Then—we can pray, and the "fire" of the Lord will come down.

There is a price to be paid for the fulness and power of the Holy Spirit. Let us pay it gladly, so that we may see His mighty power in our lives, and in our day, as He has shown His power in other lives, and in other days.

G. JARVIE.

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JOTTINGS.

Acts 20 is a chapter of great importance for several reasons. First, it describes the journey of Paul from Ephesus to Greece after the fearful uproar in the city of Ephesus following the rioting by the silversmiths who were led by Demetrius and his fellows. Paul refers to this in 1 Corinthians 15. 32 as a time when, after the manner of men, he fought with beasts at Ephesus, and he again alludes to it in 2 Corinthians 1. 8. On his way to Greece he took the road through Macedonia, which was well known to him. On his return journey he intended to sail from Greece to Syria, embarking possibly at Cenchreae or Athens, but because of a Jewish plot he altered his plans and went back again by the route through Macedonia. On the journey a band of notable and faithful men accompanied him as far as the Roman province of Asia. Here we read of Sopater of Berea, where they examined the Scriptures daily (Acts 17. 11), Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe and Timothy, and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus, the latter was an Ephesian (Acts 21. 29), who, presumably, went all the way to Jerusalem with Paul. Of these seven valiant men who accompanied Paul, the best known to us is Timothy. They sailed, we are told, from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and reached Troas in five days. In these days of quick travel it seems a long time to take to cover the journey of about a hundred and fifty miles, but of course we do not know if the winds were contrary or if the travellers were becalmed, or again, if they called at an island on the way. Why does the Spirit tell us that they left Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and took five days to reach Troas? The Scriptures not only teach the doctrine of truth, but within their pages is the corrective to Satanic lies. There are those who believe in a yearly breaking of the bread, which they hold should take place at the time of the year in which the Lord instituted the Remembrance. We do not know whether they keep it on the Thursday evening or on the Lord's day. But if they keep it on the Lord's day on what is called Easter Sunday, why should they keep it on Easter Sunday and not on the Thursday evening prior to Easter Sunday when the Lord instituted the breaking of the bread?

Let us note carefully what we are told here, that it was after the days of unleavened bread when Paul and his companions left Philippi. Now the institution of the breaking of the bread and the Lord's death were on the day of the Passover, after which were the seven days of unleavened bread. Following this they were five days on the voyage. Then they were seven days in Troas, and at the end of these seven days was the first day of the week, without seeking to be exact as to a day, or attempting to define what hour or time the day began, whether at about six in the evening, as with the Jews in the Old Testament. (The Babylonians reckoned the day from sunrise to sunrise, the Umbrians from noon to noon, the Romans from midnight to midnight, like ourselves today, the Athenians from sunset to sunset, like the Jews.) We have a total of nineteen days, seven days of unleavened bread, the five days on the voyage, and the seven days of Paul's residence in Troas, from the day of the Passover on which the Lord died. Thus, Paul and his friends did not keep the breaking of the bread in Troas on Easter Sunday or any day of Easter week. This fact should be clear enough to all.

Then, verse 7 is of very great importance to us, as showing the day on which the breaking of the bread is to take place, as well as the habit of the Lord's disciples to break the bread on that day. They were gathered together with the Lord's disciples in the church of God in Troas to break the bread.

We have here also a custom of the disciples at the gathering for the breaking of the bread on the first day of the week and that then there was the ministry of the word of God. The fact is, that the announcement to us that the breaking of the bread took place on the first day of the week is incidental to the account that Paul discoursed at that gathering and that his speech was so long that it continued until midnight, and that during his speech an accident took place in that Eutyclus fell asleep and fell from the third story and was killed, but that Paul fell upon him and restored him to life. The accident and the miracle were exceptional events at such a gathering, but the breaking of the bread and the ministry were the normal practices of the disciples on the first day of the week.

J.M.

JOTTINGS.

After the breaking of the bread, and after the ministry of the word by Paul on that occasion at Troas and the miracle which he performed upon Eutyclus, whom he restored to life, Paul decided to walk from Troas to Assos, a distance of twenty or more miles, whilst the others who had gone before to the ship sailed round the promontory between the two places. Whatever made Paul walk that distance, whether to call upon certain of the Lord's people or for some other reason we know not, but one thing it does reveal, and that is, the untiring energy and zeal of the apostle. After a night of an extended speech and general conversation in which he had no sleep (Eutyclus slept but Paul did not), he set out on the long walk across country to the ship's next port of call.

Paul's hope was to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, which was just over thirty days ahead, so he sailed past Ephesus, so as not to be delayed in Ephesus and the Asian churches. He reached Miletus and from there he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of that church. When they came to him at Miletus he delivered to them one of his most remarkable addresses which Luke has recorded for us. He recounted to them his labours among them from the first day he set foot in Asia. Chapter 19 gives us Luke's account of that work. The events are tightly pressed together by Luke's pen in which we see the word of God streaming forth in mighty volume from Paul's lips, disciples were separated and divinely gathered, diseases cured, evil spirits fled before the triumphant Name of the Lord Jesus. The seven evil sons of evil Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, fled naked and wounded from the house where they were set upon by the man possessed by the evil spirit, and last of all we see the bonfire of the books of curious arts of the devil made by those who having heard God's voice in the Scriptures had no more need for the devil's arts. All these things march past before the mind as we pursue the reading of chapter 19, the events summed up as they are by Luke with the words, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (verse 20).

The devil could not allow all this to go on to a peaceful end. He kicked out violently in the rioting of Demetrius and his idolatrous fellow-silversmiths. So Paul left Ephesus.

Now in chapter 20 he reviews his labours, his service to the Lord, with lowliness of mind and tears, his trials, and all the while the Jews plotted his ruin and that of the work. Yet he shrank not from his task of preaching the gospel, of testifying to both Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He, like his Master, found that his course was set for him toward Jerusalem, guilty, unbelieving Jerusalem. Thither the Lord had gone and had been delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles to be mocked, and shamefully entreated, spit upon, scourged and killed, and thither too went Paul to imprisonment and later on, through the antagonism and persecution of the Jews, to death at the hands of the Romans, as his Master had experienced before him. The principles are alike, but the surrounding circumstances are different. The going of Paul to Jerusalem was according to the Lord's will though many sought to dissuade him from it, knowing that bonds and imprisonment awaited him there.

The ministry of Paul, according to his own words, was threefold, (1) the gospel of the grace of God to men in general, (2) the kingdom of God to God's people, and (3) the whole counsel of God by declaring which, he said, that he was free from the blood of all men.

His warning to the Ephesian elders contains an admonition for us all. He said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops (the A.V. is better here, which conveys the correct thought—"overseers"), to feed (or shepherd) the church of God (not "the Lord" as in R.V. marg.), which He purchased (acquired, R.V. marg.) with His own blood" (or more correctly "with the blood of His own"—meaning His Son). If the elders failed in their conduct to take heed to themselves, they would be ill suited to care for the flock in which the Holy Spirit has set or constituted them as overseers. Paul warned them of the apostasy of some of them, and of the grievous wolves who would enter in among them, men who would not spare the flock. In the light of what was coming he commended them to God and to the word of His grace, the only means by which they could be built up and the inheritance among the sanctified ones secured.—*J.M.*

THE TABERNACLE :

The laver of copper

This vessel stood on its base at the door of the tent of meeting. It was made of copper, and contained water for the cleansing of the priests.

It will perhaps be well for us to remark here that the brass in the text should really be copper, this we judge from the passage in Deuteronomy 8. 9, where we read concerning the land into which God was bringing His people, that it is "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." It is well known that brass is not digged out of the ground, but that it is a mixture or alloy, and that what is referred to is copper, the ore of which is digged from the ground. Hence our use of the word copper instead of brass.

The instructions for making the laver are found in Exodus 30. 17-21, and in 38. 8. This latter portion says, "And he made the laver of copper, and the base thereof of copper, of the mirrors of the serving women which served at the door of the tent of meeting."

Here honourable mention is made of the women, who are spoken of time and again by God in connexion with His work. Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye shewed toward His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Hebrews 6. 10). This must have proved an encouraging message to the Hebrew saints, and it should have similar encouragement to all who seek to render service, however small, out of love to the name of the Lord Jesus. "And we desire," says the writer, "that each one of you may shew the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end."

POLISHED COPPER MIRRORS.

That the laver was made from polished copper mirrors affords us an interesting lesson, and, we judge, the laver speaks of the word of God. "If any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1. 23-25).

This views the child of God as using the mirror of the word of God, wherein he can see himself. This word also reveals the condition of the unsaved, as, for example, in Romans 3. 23, and Titus 3. 3. This latter scripture says, "For we also were aforesaid foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." Here is a true reflection of the natural man and his activities.

The copper speaks of judgement, and reminds us that the laver is the place of self-judgement. The copper altar was the place of

divine judgement, since it was there that the judgement of God fell upon the spotless victim, but here at the laver the ever-failing servant of the Lord judges himself. "But let a man *prove* himself" (1 Corinthians 11. 28). *Dokimazō*, is to prove, test, examine, to decide upon after examination, and visualizes the worshipper at the mirror of the word for examination prior to engaging in the solemn service of the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. How true it is that "if we judged ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world!"

This self-examination in the presence of God as helped by the mirror of the word should not be confined to the Lord's Day, but should be a daily practice. It is only as we allow the mirror to reveal our state that we can be truly exercised about our condition before God, and it is only as we are exercised thus that we will be seeking the cleansing that is provided for in the laver with its water.

THE INITIAL USE OF THE LAVER.

There are two distinct uses of the laver—the initial use, and the day-by-day use. In the initial use the priests, Aaron and his sons, were washed all over by Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant (Leviticus 8. 6). This was at the time of the consecration of the priests. It was done once only, and was something done for them by another; so it reminds us that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, has bathed or washed every one who has truly believed on Him. He does not require to do this washing a second time, as the Preacher says, "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever."

This work of the Lord Jesus is referred to in Titus 3. 5, "According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing or laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." When the sinner believes on Christ at that moment he is regenerated, washed or bathed, and thoroughly cleansed by the Lord. Simon Peter said to the Lord, when He was about to wash his feet, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," and was answered by the Lord, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all" (John 13. 10). Judas Iscariot was there among them in his uncleanness, never having had the experience of being washed in the bath of regeneration.

We linger over the beautiful story of John 13. The teaching of the washing of the feet of the disciples has its relation to the ministry of the word of God, both in private and in public, and important truth is unfolded in the Master's words to Peter. Two words are used by the Lord, namely, *nīptō*, and *louō*, the former meaning to wash some part of the person, as distinguished from *louō*, the significance of which is to bathe the body, and not merely the hands and feet. The eleven apostles had been bathed (*louō*), while the feet of the twelve had been washed (*nīptō*). From this we glean how ineffectual is

partial washing, if one has not known the bathing of regeneration. Judas Iscariot's sad end is revealed in the words of Acts 1. 25, "That he might go to his own place." It may chance that some person who reads these lines has been trying to wash hands and feet, dropping off this bad habit and that, but if there has not been the new birth let such be assured this partial work will be unavailing in that terrible day when the Judge of all the earth will do right.

ETERNAL SANCTIFICATION IN THE BODY.

Ephesians 5. 26 shows that when the believer in Christ is cleansed by the washing of the water with the word he is sanctified or set apart in the Church which is the Body of Christ. This is eternal sanctification, and should be carefully noted as distinct from the progressive sanctification in the life of the believer, as see 1 Thessalonians 5. 23, which reads, "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Encouraging are the following lines, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it."

1 Corinthians 6. 11 may be noted here as containing both aspects of the truth of sanctification—that which is accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus, and the day by day cleansing wherein we have responsibility. "And such were some of you; but ye washed yourselves, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (R.V.M.). Some in the church in Corinth had been guilty of the sins mentioned in the previous verses, but they had been justified. This was the work of God in grace, "Being justified freely by His grace (Romans 3. 24); "being now justified by His blood" (5. 9) (Christ's work); "Being therefore justified by faith" (5. 1) (the believer's part). With this justification was sanctification, an eternal setting apart, eternally cleansed; and so these in Corinth who had known this work of God are said to have *washed themselves*. The marginal reading of the R.V. in this passage gives the correct rendering. We would not readily believe that a person was saved who continued in the old life of sin. There are things that accompany salvation.

NECESSARY FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE HOLIES.

The majesty of the Person of Christ, the efficacy of His work, and the glories of His offices, are the burden of the epistle to the Hebrews. These are fitly set forth by the Spirit of God ere the way of approach for the people of God as a holy priesthood is presented, and the exhortation given: "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water: let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised" (Hebrew 10. 22, 23). The washing of the body here has its type in Leviticus 8. 6, where we read: "And Moses brought Aaron and his

sons, and washed them with water." This, as we have already mentioned, was a once-for-all washing, and is performed for us by the Mediator, without which there can be no entering into the Holies in divine worship. Many, we fear, attempt to worship God without knowing this cleansing through the laver of regeneration, but all such, like Judas Iscariot, will have a rude awakening unless they are aroused to their need of cleansing, and avail themselves of the provision in Christ. Let us who know the cleansing exult in the greatness of the blessing.

*"Clean every whit! Thou saidst it, Lord!
Shall one suspicion lurk?
Thine, surely, is a faithful word,
And Thine a finished work."*

THE DAILY WASHING.

Aaron and his sons were commanded to wash their hands and their feet at the laver: "When they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto the LORD: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations." This, it will be observed, was a work they had to do for themselves. If acceptable service was to be rendered to God, their hands and feet must be cleansed from defilement. "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the LORD" (Isaiah 52. 11), is a word in agreement with this; and we are taught that to serve God aright the hands, indicating what we do, and the feet, indicating our walk, must be cleansed day by day with the water of the word of God.

An important reference to this is found in 1 Timothy 2. 8: "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." Here, we understand, those in the house of God are seen together in the prayers, lifting up holy hands. If hands that are holy or clean are to be lifted up in assembly exercises, then it must needs be that the laver of the word be used.

"He that hath clean hands" is part of the requirement which David mentions in Psalm 24, for the person that would ascend into the hill of the LORD. This was specially true of the Lord Jesus, whose hands were ever clean; but God would have us all who seek to serve Him attend to this requirement of His word, and serve Him with clean hands. "I will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass Thine altar, O LORD: that I may make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard, and tell of all Thy wondrous works" (Psalm 26. 6, 7), is in keeping with the truth of God relative to the cleansing of His servants.

Frequent reference is made to the feet, and we quote from Psalm 17. 4, 5, which seems most fitting here: "As for the works of men, by the words of Thy lips I have kept me from the ways of the violent.

My steps have held fast to Thy paths, my feet have not slipped." Then Psalm 119. 9 has a clear voice for us in this matter: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word."

*"Thy word is light; its beaming rays
Do cleanse and sanctify our ways,
Conforming us to Thy blest Son,
The undefiled, the Spotless One."*

THAT THEY DIE NOT.

Neglect of the provision of God in the laver with its water rendered the priest liable to death. "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering unto the LORD: so shall they wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations" (Exodus 30. 19-21).

This daily washing was *at* the laver, not *in* it. Little information is given us as to how the washing was done, but the base may have been used in connexion with the washing, while the laver itself may have been a receptacle for holding the water. No measurements are given for the size of the laver, but as it speaks of the word of God this may be the reason, since His "commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalm 119. 96). Those who are ruled by the Lord's commandments are not narrow-minded, but rather truly broadminded; though such are often spoken of as narrow because they cannot go beyond the things that are written. It is good to remember that it is what God thinks that matters, and not what men may think and say.

Some of the saints in the church in Corinth through failure to judge themselves came under the judgement of God. Some were weak and sickly, and not a few had slept, or died. This is a solemn matter, and should cause us deep exercise that we attend to the washings at the laver of the word of God day by day. To discern or judge ourselves in the light of the word of God is a healthy and profitable exercise. When it is others we are judging let us do it kindly, remembering the words: "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand." If peradventure we are using the water of the word to wash the feet of another, as it has been remarked, "Let us not use too hot water." "Let all that ye do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16. 14).

The use of the laver, it should be noted, is expressly in connexion with the services of the house of God. We fall short in our interpretation of the laver and its water if we assume that it only refers to cleansing in relation to the normal life of a believer without regard to the house of God.

G. PRASHER.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST :
The Present Work and Ministry of Christ in Heaven
(Continued from page 158)

CHRIST AS SON OVER GOD'S HOUSE.

The first example in scripture of a divinely called church which was "of God" clearly shews that its constitution was based upon acceptance and practice of and adherence to the truth.

"They then that received his word were baptized; . . . and . . . were added. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2. 41, 42).

Likewise, "The Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18. 8). They were called out (2 Corinthians 6. 17). They were also called in, "into the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1. 9). Thus they became "The church of God in Corinth," "God's building," "temple (sanctuary R.V.M.) of God" (1 Corinthians 3. 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6. 16). Consequently the obligations of collective responsibility rested upon them to cleanse the house or temple of which they formed a part according to the word, "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (1 Corinthians 5. 13). In God's house there is a correct standard of behaviour, even as Paul wrote to Timothy :

"That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground (stay R.V.M.) of the truth" (1 Timothy 3. 15).

Thus the pillar of witness is set up among those who are sanctified in the truth, such as hold and practice the truth relative to collective testimony and worship. From what we have said it should be quite clear that the house of God is not something based on life in Christ alone; knowledge of, adherence to, and practice of the truth as seen in the above scriptures are also necessary.

Having shown that the house of God is a conditional unity of obedient disciples of the Lord, we proceed to show that Christ is Son in authority over the house of God. In this "He hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses." Moses was indeed faithful in all God's house as a servant. He received divine instruction and never deviated from that word nor substituted his own will. "Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he." But Christ is the Originator and Builder of the house, being faithful to Him that appointed Him, though He uses men in this work of building, see Psalm 127. 1; Acts 7. 47. The material He procured by means of His cross-work He fashioned by His teaching of "the things concerning the kingdom of God" in resurrection. He commanded His disciples to preach, baptize, and teach whatsoever He had commanded them, and to enable them to do so, He promised they would be clothed with power from on high. On the day of

Pentecost Peter declared, "He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear," and thus the work of the risen Lord went on with reference to the preparation of a habitation for God.

The theme of Peter's preaching that day was the resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Christ, whom God hath made both Lord and Christ. Three thousand souls that day bowed to His claims and Lordship and were added to that divinely-recognised community found together in obedience to His word. They were those who had set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts, recognizing that God had given to Him all authority in heaven and on earth.

The Lord in heaven wrought by means of human instrumentality to accomplish His purposes, and disciples obeyed their absent and now glorified Lord. They wrought and walked by faith in the consciousness of His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (or consummation of the age, see R.V.M.) (Matthew 28. 20). The house was built; His people were gathered for whom He had died,

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 14).

Thus living stones were builded together into a spiritual house by coming to Him, the Stone rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious. That Stone is now laid in the heavenly Zion, possessed of all authority. He it is who rules as Son over God's house. As Son He has been placed over all. Being the Founder, Architect, and Builder of the house, He has more glory than the house. Would that believers today would recognize the place that God has given Him and take their place under Him in God's house which is composed of churches of God fitly framed together into a holy temple in the Lord" (see 1 Corinthians 3. 9 with Ephesians 2. 21).

In Revelation 1—3 we see the Lord walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, which are seven churches. As Son over God's house He is seen judging, rebuking, encouraging, warning, and promising, as He walks in the midst of the paths of judgement. He sees, He knows, not as an outward observer, but as One who possesses a perfect knowledge of the motives and intents of the heart. He is concerned with their inward spiritual condition as well as with the place they occupy as golden lampstands. Position and condition should go together, and with Him they cannot be divorced. May we ponder over His heart-searching words to those churches, so that we too may get us an heart of wisdom and be found among those who tremble at His word. He is our one and only Lord. He is absent and unseen by mortal eye now, but He has said—

*"Behold I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast"
"Hold fast till I come"*

(Revelation 3. 11; 2. 25).

F. McCORMICK.

A LIVING STONE

The object of a previous article (see July, page 107), was to show from the Lord's own words that He is the Rock upon which His church is founded (Matthew 16). This church is identical with "the Church which is His (Christ's) Body," of which Paul writes in Ephesians 1. 22, 23. Our present purpose is to draw attention to another important truth, namely, that the raised and glorified Christ is the foundation Stone, the chief corner Stone, upon which the House of God is established. God's dwelling place must rest upon a sound foundation. The tabernacle was a house made of curtains; it differed from other tents pitched on the desert sand, in that it rested on a foundation of solid silver sockets. In connexion with the Solomonian temple we read, "They hewed out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with wrought stone" (1 Kings 5. 17).

The word "church" is always used in the New Testament to describe a company who are called out and gathered together. The context gives guidance in deciding to which company reference is made. Two important uses of the word "church" can be seen by comparing the phrase "the Church which is His (Christ's) Body," (Ephesians 1. 22, 23), with the term "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1. 2). In these two passages the word "church" clearly describes churches which are not identical in constitution or extent. There is only one "Church which is His Body" (Ephesians 4. 4), but there are many cities besides Corinth where there were churches of God. In accordance with the command of the Lord Jesus to His apostles they had to begin their testimony at Jerusalem and this was the first city where a church of God was planted, the one that was persecuted by Saul of Tarsus (Gallatians 1. 13).

All who respond to the world-wide call to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are baptized by the Lord Himself "in one Spirit into one Body" (John 1. 33 R.V. mg.; 1 Corinthians 12. 13). But to be in a church of God it is necessary for those who seek to be therein to manifest a disciple spirit and to be baptized in water prior to being added, as we see from Acts 2. 41. Such are called into the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by God, a call to separation and service (1 Corinthians 1. 9).

"The Church which is His (Christ's) Body" is as to its composition for the most part, an invisible company of saints; it is heavenly and the membership thereof is absolutely unconditional. The churches of God together form the House of God, a visible, earthly unity; which is conditional upon holding "fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3. 6). As Christ is the "Head of the Body" exercising full control, so also His authority in regard to the divine dwelling place is seen in the fact that He is "Son over His (God's) house" (Hebrews 3. 6). Not only is He "the Head of the Body" and "Son over God's house," but both the Body and the house are founded on and by Him.

Towards the end of our Lord's public ministry He related to the rulers of Israel the parable of the householder and His vineyard (Matthew 21). The vineyard speaks of Israel ; God planted it with the choicest vine, and looked for fruit, but this He was denied. God's servants the prophets were shamefully treated. Lastly the Son was sent in the Father's name and they hurried Him to a cruel death outside the city. The application is to the leaders of the nation, who were the " miserable men." The chief priests and Pharisees knew this ; " they perceived that He spake the parable against them " (Mark 12. 12). They should have been building for God, but being out of touch with God's purposes they rejected the Messiah. Nevertheless, " The Stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the Head of the corner." The consequences of their action are described in the words, " The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof " (Matthew 21. 43).

The rejection of Christ by Israel was national, absolute and irrevocable. It is seen in the decision of the Jewish council and the verdict of the mob at Jerusalem. On more than one occasion the members of the Sanhedrim " took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill Him " (Matthew 26. 4). They employed Judas to betray the Master and He was brought from Gethsemane to the council chamber. False witnesses were easily bribed to speak against Him. The reply to the high priest's question, " What think ye ? " was unanimous, " He is worthy of death." Before Pilate's bar the proceedings were equally undignified. The governor left the issue with the multitude—Jesus or Barabbas ? They asked for the criminal rather than the Christ and they bore Him to Calvary. The rejection of Christ by Israel was complete, but His resurrection and ascension are the fulfilment of the words, " made the Head of the corner."

Passing now to a further use of this scripture by Peter when before the Sanhedrim in connexion with the healing of the impotent man, Peter lost no time in charging them with accountability for the death of Jesus of Nazareth, and in assuring them that He is raised from among the dead. " He is the Stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the Head of the corner " (Acts 4. 11). It is in His name that the invalid has been healed, and furthermore salvation is freely available to all through faith in His Person and work.

In the second chapter of his first epistle Peter makes further reference to the rejected Stone. The reference here is in relation to the house of God (a spiritual house, verse 5). The salvation associated with spiritual growth is from the power of sin in daily experience and with practical separation. It is essential that each individual believer should personally acknowledge the universal and sovereign lordship of Christ. It is an indisputable fact that " God hath made Him both Lord and Christ." The responsibility rests upon each saved person to own the lordship of Christ, to sanctify in the heart Christ as Lord

(1 Peter 3. 15). Such persons are seen coming to Him who is "a living Stone rejected indeed of men, but with God elect precious."

All believers, through the experience of the new birth, are living stones, but, alas, not all living stones are built up into God's spiritual house today. Indeed, many believers have not yet realized it is God's desire to have a dwelling-place on earth. Those who desire to give expression to the divine will are viewed as coming continually and collectively to Him whom God has placed in authority in Mount Zion, to be "built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2. 3-6). The raised and glorified Christ is the chief corner Stone in Zion and of God's house. This Stone is prominent in the foundation and gives strength and character to the whole structure. Other stones take their position by alignment to the chief corner Stone.

The house or temple of God is composed of churches of God. Paul describes the church of God in Corinth as "God's building" (1 Corinthians 3. 9). Each building is firmly established on the Foundation which is Jesus Christ. Men build on this foundation because the maintenance of God's house is a matter of human responsibility. This again is in contrast to the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, of which Christ is the sole Builder and Preserver.

All believers are eternally secure upon the Rock which is Christ, but few, alas, subject themselves to Him to whom God has given all authority and take their place with Him in His rejection by man. We stress the importance of knowing the Stone for a Foundation and taking and maintaining a place in the house of God.

DAVID T. HYLAND.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

There is no higher service that a believer can render to God, on earth, than the exercise of worship in His House. In a day long past, the garden of Eden was the nearest heavenly thing on earth, but in this our day the closest thing on earth to heaven is the House of God. It is the "gate of heaven" (Genesis 28. 17). I propose to look at many scriptures to find the attitude that God desires His saints to have towards His House, to stir up our affections for it, to deepen our love for those in it, to increase our longing for it, and to render acceptable service in it. God's House is not a nebulous thing, or something mystical to be relegated to the realms of fantasy. The House of God is composed of living stones, built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Certain specified conditions are given in Hebrews 3. 6, regarding God's House to which He expects His saints to be subject.

In Psalm 65. 4, there is a promise of rich blessings that cannot be found anywhere outside of God's House; that cannot be duplicated among meetings of believers by whom Christ is not owned as Lord. "*We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy House.*" Here is a wholesome experience that can only be enjoyed by those whom God has chosen, and caused to approach unto Him that they may dwell in His courts. We should not seek to be satisfied outside of God's House.

Many children of God, alas, know nothing of the satisfying goodness of His House, the holy place of His temple, where everything saith, "Glory" (Psalm 29. 9). Beloved young brother, young sister, and older ones too, do we appreciate God's choice of us to approach unto Him in His House? What is our attitude toward it? Have we a zeal for it? or, is it just so many meetings to be endured, so much ministry to be "sat out." Are we content just to come along to the gatherings at the appointed times to fill in time and leave it to others to worship and to exercise the various labours of love? Is it a case of "*Behold, what a weariness is it?*" (Malachi 1. 13). Are we absent from the prayer meetings when with just a little more effort we could be present? "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," is an exhortation addressed to believers in God's House that, perhaps, should not be necessary, but is put there for any whose affections for the place of the Name have waned.

"*My House shall be a house of prayer*" (Luke 19. 46). Some children of God, alas, have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, that can hold no water. "*We will not forsake the House of our God*" (Nehemiah 10. 39).

Only three chapters later in the same book, we find Nehemiah contending with the rulers saying: "Why is the House of God forsaken?" (Nehemiah 13. 11). In the House of God was the house of a man—Tobiah, an Ammonite. Israel's words were lightly spoken, and their hearts hasty to utter words before God! but Nehemiah appointed faithful men (verse 13). May our desire ever be to dwell in the House of the LORD for length of days (Psalm 23. 6).

David as a young man had fame and honour. He also had kingship, but, for him, these were not enough. It was more important for him to have a right attitude toward the House of the LORD. Let us read His inmost thoughts and intents in Psalm 27. 4. "*One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.*"

There is a within and a without in relation to God's House on earth. None can see the beauty of the LORD if he is not in it. What the saints within God's House see, depends to a very great extent upon their attitude toward it. The tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness, viewed from the outside, was not attractive, but inside it there was great beauty; the glory of the reflected light on the gold-covered

furniture ; on the gold-covered boards standing together upright in sockets of silver ; the glory of the veil, the overhanging curtains, the glory of the golden lampstand of highly skilled beaten work ; these were seen only within the tabernacle.

In Psalm 90 17, we read these words in Moses' prayer : "And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us : and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." The House of God today is unattractive to tens of thousands of believers. In fact they that are in God's House have become a reproach of them without, as it is written : "The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon Me" (Psalm 69. 9). Let us bear that reproach concerning God's House valiantly. "To inquire in His temple" : God's House is the place of inquiry ; all enquiries are answered within. If the word should be "consider" instead of "inquire" (R.V.M.), we are reminded of Psalm 48, of mount Zion, the city of the great King, verse 2. "Moreover also, . . . *I have set my affection to* (or "have taken pleasure in") the House of my God." David when he spake these words was dying, and dying men are not given to lying (1 Chronicles 29. 3).

He gave his own personal treasure of gold and silver, over and above that he had prepared for God's House. Where is our treasure ? There is ample scope given to all whose affections are set towards the House of God. We come now to a stronger word than affection—*love*. "LORD, *I love* the habitation of Thy House, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Psalm 26. 8). If we truly love the habitation and the place, we shall desire to be there. We shall be looking forward to the next Remembrance, the next Bible reading, the next ministry, prayers, etc. "The place where Thy glory dwelleth" : what is that glory ? It is God Himself, visible to the eye of faith. The God of the House of God dwells in the place of His Name.

An important attitude towards God's House is to be glad concerning it. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the House of the LORD" (Psalm 122. 1). This attitude requires patient cultivation, but yields rich rewards. Remember Jehoiada the priest. His appreciation of God's House was unexcelled, and while he lived, Israel flourished. "But Jehoiada waxed old and was full of days, and he died ; . . . and they buried him in the city of David *among the kings*, because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and His House." (2 Chronicles 24. 15, 16). This godly priest was honoured in death with burial among the kings in the city of David.

"*Help, Lord ; for the godly man ceaseth*" (Psalm 12. 1).

"*Them that honour Me, I will honour*" (1 Samuel 2. 30).

Are we glad when we awake on Lord's day morning, that in a few hours we shall remember Him ? Does the thought of the Bible class, prayer meeting, etc., gladden our hearts ? Let our attitude be one of gladness when we are with the church of God and we shall be abundantly blessed.

In Psalm **84. 2**, we have the expression : “ The living God.” The same expression is found in 1 Timothy **3. 15**. “ The church of the living God.” Both Scriptures refer to the House of God, the place of the Name to which the Psalmist longed, yea, even fainted for, the courts of the Lord. “ My heart and my flesh sing for joy unto the living God.” Both scriptures refer to the House of God, the place swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ” (Psalm **84. 2, 3**, R.V.M.). In another Psalm, his soul thirsted for God, for the living God. His soul was bowed down when they said, “ Where is thy God ? ” He desired an answer to his question : “ When shall I come and appear before God ? ” (Psalm **42. 2**).

If we really appreciate being in God’s House, we shall seek to offer acceptable praise unto Him, and the outcome of blessing is as certain as night follows day. In our praise, in worship, the value is not in how much we say, but it lies in the attitude of the heart. Young sisters, and older ones too, though divinely restrained from audible exercises, can no less behold the beauty, or pleasantness, of the Lord and be satisfied with the goodness of His House. God does not get His portion on the Lordly morning if we come empty. Let us store up in meditation, and so be able, as a holy priesthood, to place in the hands of our Great Priest (Hebrews **10. 21**), the Lord Jesus Christ, those offerings that please God, “ better than an ox, or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs ” (Psalm **69. 31**). “ I will come into Thy House with burnt offerings, I will pay my vows ” (Psalm **66. 13**).

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House ! therefore let our attitude to God’s House be such that we shall :—

- 1.—Be satisfied with its goodness (Psalm **65. 4**).
- 2.—Not forsake it (Hebrews **10. 25**).
- 3.—Make it our one object (Psalm **27. 4**).
- 4.—Have our affection upon it (1 Chronicles **29. 3**).
- 5.—Love it (Psalm **26. 8**).
- 6.—Be glad concerning it (Psalm **122. 1**).
- 7.—Do good towards, and for the sake of it (2 Chronicles **24. 16**).
- 8.—Long for, yea, even faint for it (Psalm **84. 2**).
- 9.—Engage willingly in joyful praise and worship (Psalm **84. 4**).

Sydney.

G. K. KENNEDY.

SECRET THINGS

“ The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him.” Thus wrote David in Psalm **25. 14**, in a sad and desolate day when he was bereft of earthly “counsel and friendship” (R.V.M.). But he had sweet communion with the LORD. His wise son, Solomon, also knew this truth, and had he bound it about his neck, as he counselled his son to do, his would have been a happier story ; for it is thus he wrote in Proverbs **3. 32**, “ His secret (counsel) is with the upright.” Amongst some of the last words of Moses, Israel’s greatest

leader, the same truth is recorded that "the secret things belong unto the LORD our God" (Deuteronomy 29. 29). Not only are there divine secrets, there is a secret place of the Most High, and he that dwelleth there "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91). Those who seek the counsel and fellowship of the Lord will have reason to bless the God of heaven, because He imparteth wisdom and knowledge, and revealeth the deep and secret things, as Daniel learned to his great joy. The turmoil of nations need not disturb the man of God, for his God can even change the times and the seasons, and remove kings and set up kings (Daniel 2. 17-23).

"Now the natural man (that is the unregenerate man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . because they are spiritually judged" (1 Corinthians 2. 14), but the Spirit Himself searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." This is He who was in the counsel chamber of a Triune God, who can take of the things of Christ, and declare them unto us. We have not been privileged to live in that day when Christ, the Image of the invisible God, was incarnate here on earth. In His day every one that heard from the Father came unto Him (John 6. 46), and every one that was blessed to know Him knew the Father also, and those that saw Him had seen the Father also (John 14). Believers in the Lord Jesus are indwelt by His blessed Holy Spirit and, if spiritually minded, may say, "we have the mind of Christ." Our lives would be more fruitful, our homes more lovely, and the assemblies of God more fertile, if it were more evident that we had the same mind in us "which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2).

These secret things are called in the New Testament "mysteries," deep things of God. In those early days of the history of the church of God in Colossæ disciples were being troubled with such things as meats and drinks and festive days, and were in danger of being subverted to various errors by vainly puffed-up men (see Colossians 2. 16-18). To them, and to us, Paul makes manifest the "mystery which hath been hid from all ages, . . . which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1. 26, 27). Well might Christians rejoice in the riches of the glory of this revealed "mystery"! A presence hidden to the world, but manifested to His own.

JAS. MARTIN.

(To be continued D.V.).

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JOTTINGS

It has often been discussed amongst students of the Holy Scriptures when and where Job lived. As to the land of Uz where he lived, the words of Lamentations 4. 21 are helpful.

“ Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.”

The land of Edom lay to the south of the Dead Sea, between that sea and the gulf of Akaba, the eastern arm of the Red sea. The gulf of Suez lies to the west beyond the Sinaitic peninsula. Thus Job lived either contiguous to or within the confines of the land of Edom. Possibly the descendants of Esau laid claim to the land of Uz when they took mount Seir. Edom or Uz seems to have formed the northern border of the land of Midian where Moses spent forty years of his life, between the ages of forty and eighty. We may therefore imagine, even if we are not able to conclude with definiteness, that Moses in Midian came into contact with Job, or with the record of his experiences and with the famous dialogue between him and his friends, concluding with the address of Elihu and the reasoning of Jehovah with His servant Job, ending with Job's confession, his reconciliation to his friends and the consequent blessing of the LORD upon him.

Who wrote the book of Job remains an unrevealed secret, one of the secret things which belong to the LORD, but that it is one of the inspired books of Scripture there is no doubt. Its language is poetical and majestic. The speakers are lavish with simile and parable, the meaning of which may not appear evident to us at our first reading, and may not be clear when we have read them many times. Often their knowledge is deep and profound, showing minds which had been exercised in divine things to a remarkable extent; and it is the more remarkable when we remember that these men were not of the chosen line of the seed of Abraham to whom God revealed, to some extent, Himself and His purposes.

When did Job live? There are one or two pointers which help us to arrive at this with some measure of accuracy. Job lived in the land of Uz. Who was Uz? He was the firstborn son of Nahor the brother of Abraham. Then we are told that Elihu was the son of Barachel the Buzite. Who was Buz? He was brother to Uz; both were the sons of Nahor (Genesis 22. 20, 21, Job 32. 2). The youngest son of Nahor's family was Bethuel, the father of Rebekah. Laban, who was Bethuel's son and Rebekah's brother, was the father of Leah and Rachel the wives of Jacob. We see from these facts how Nahor's family in the female line became intertwined in the family and seed of Abraham, and in the male line with the events in the book of Job. Then as to Job's friends; Eliphaz is called "the Temanite." Who was Teman? He was the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau by his wife Adah (Genesis 36. 8-11). Bildad the Shuhite was a descendant of Shuah, a son of Abraham by his wife Keturah (Genesis 25. 1, 2). Perhaps the strongest pointer as to the time when Job lived is found in the words of the LORD to Satan:

“ And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil ” (Job. 1. 8).

The words "there is none like him in the earth" would, I think, indicate that such men of outstanding uprightness and godfearingness as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were no longer alive. It is clear that Job could not have lived before Abraham, for he lived in the land of Uz, and Uz was the nephew of Abraham. I judge, therefore, that the experience of Job comes in during the time that intervened between Joseph and Moses, when Israel had sunk far down in their manner of life in the land of Egypt. Their idolatry in Egypt is indicated in the words of Joshua 24. 14:

“ Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River (Euphrates), and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.”

Though Israel had sunk in sin in Egypt, the book of Job shows that God did not leave Himself without a witness.—J.M.

JOTTINGS

A close study of Scriptures shows that the land of Uz where Job lived was contiguous to the land of Midian where Moses lived for forty years, also, that nearly all the actors in the book of Job were either descendants of Abraham, or Nahor, Abraham's brother. It is not difficult to see that Moses may have been acquainted with these men, and especially so while he dwelt in the land of Midian. On the other hand, it might well have been that during the time of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness Moses may have come in contact with Job; part of their pilgrimage was through or along the border of Edom, which was, or was in, the land of Uz (Lamentations 4. 21). We may also point out our conviction that the time of the book of Job comes between the days of Joseph and Moses.

The calamities which fell upon Job were not the result of any wickedness of which he had been guilty, as his three friends thought, but because God staked His honour upon him, that he would not renounce Him in adversity as he had honoured God in his prosperity.

We have here a proof of that word in Revelation 12. 10, where Satan is called, "the accuser of our brethren . . . which accuseth them before our God day and night." He laid the bitter accusation against the character of Job, that he feared God because God had been good to him. To prove that he was quite wrong God allowed Satan to sweep away by Sabceans and Chaldeans, by fire and by tempest, the whole of Job's substance and family. The report of tragedy after tragedy was hurled at God's dear servant, and with rent mantle and shaved head he fell down upon the ground and worshipped saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with foolishness" (Job 1. 21, 22). This is one of the most outstanding cases of resignation of a mere man to the will of God to be found in all the Scriptures.

The disaster that destroyed Job's family may have a voice for us as we think of what has befallen the families of some of God's servants. Though Satan may not be able to overcome and destroy God's servants, he may get at them through their families. Job was careful about his sons and daughters. Because of their father's wealth they were able to enjoy earth's good things to the full. It is often not an advantage for children to be brought up in the lap of luxury. It has frequently been that the best of men and women have been brought up on short rations and have known the biting blast of adversity in their early days. There was a round of feasting in Job's family, each son holding a feast in his house on his respective day, and their sisters also were invited to the festivities. But lest in these festal occasions his sons had sinned and renounced God in their hearts, it was Job's habit after the feasting was past to sanctify his sons and to offer a burnt offering for each to Him. Such was Job's godly care for his children. But despite it all calamity came. Job might have asked, as the LORD asked concerning Israel, "What could have been done more . . . , that I have not done" (Isaiah 5. 4).

Though through Satan's fell work Job was left a poor man and bereft of all his family, yet his trust in God and His goodness was as strong as ever. On a later day when the sons of God came again to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan too was among them to present himself before the LORD, the subject of Job came up between the LORD and Satan once more. The LORD told Satan, that despite all the destruction which had come upon Job, he still held fast his integrity. The LORD had found no defection in him. Satan again fired his accusation against Job. He said, "Put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce Thee to Thy face" (2. 5). The LORD allowed Satan to go forth and smite Job with boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Is it not a fact that some of God's great saints have been great sufferers from bodily affliction? Why? we ask. May not the experience of Job give the answer, at least in part? Does not Paul speak of his thorn in the flesh, which he calls, "a messenger of Satan to buffet me?" (2 Corinthians 12. 7). It may be that Paul died with his thorn, rejoicing in God's grace, but Job in time got rid of his boils.—J.M.

THE TABERNACLE :

The covering of Badgers' skins

The Tent of the Tabernacle had two coverings, the topmost of which, according to the Authorised Version, was of badgers' skins. See Exodus 26. 14 ; 36. 19.

The structure over which these coverings hung was fully ten cubits high, and so the outer covering would be much in the view of those who moved around ; yet its appearance would not be of an attractive kind—merely the rough exterior of the badgers' skins.

We think the Holy Spirit in this brings before us a view of Christ as He was seen by the natural man. Though possessed of surpassing beauties, and indeed the altogether lovely One, it is sad to find that He was plain and ordinary to the unregenerate person. This was due to the blindness of the sons of men, a blindness that is traceable to the evil work of an enemy, the god of this world, Satan.

Of the Lord Jesus we read, " He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not " (John 1. 10). What a testimony against this world ! and how successfully the enemy has done his work ! " The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider " (Isaiah 1. 3), was God's complaint against the Israel people ; and the enlightened soul can only grieve that the many continue in the darkness of unbelief, and in the blindness that ensues. Divine revelation is needed, of course, if we are to come to know Him who said : " I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in the darkness " (John 12. 46).

FORESHOWN IN PROPHECY

The shadow in the badgers' skins agrees with the prophetic outline given by Isaiah in chapter 53. There we read : " Who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the Arm of the LORD been revealed ? " The marginal reading of verse 1 is, "*that which we have heard,*" and reminds us that Isaiah, as Jehovah's servant, had been listening to the LORD. How very important this is ! May both writer and reader be helped to give the Lord our ear ! Then the Arm of the LORD is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Speaking reverently He is the strong Arm by means of which God in heaven has reached down to earth to effect deliverance for men. But please note the word *revealed*. Yes, a revelation of the Son is essential, for " no one knoweth the Son, save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him " (Matthew 11. 27).

This is further emphasized in Matthew 16. 17. The Lord Jesus had been inquiring of the disciples, " Who do men say that the Son of

Man is?" Then to the question, "But who say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This brought from the Lord the reply: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." The Son had been revealed to Peter by the Father.

Christ is the Wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1. 24), and the Mystery of God (Colossians 2. 2), and Paul says: "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery . . . which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory . . . But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Furthermore, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Isaiah continues, "For He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." We can appreciate the thought of Christ as a tender, fragrant plant in His growth before God, advancing in "wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Luke 2. 52). Then Isaiah adds, "and as a root out of a dry ground." He was the fulfilment of Isaiah 11. 1, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." The dry, barren ground of Judaism surrounded the root of Jesse, and yet in the Lord Jesus Christ we see a shoot which grew into a tender plant which delighted the heart of God.

After this we find words in Isaiah 53 which show how closely the prophetic utterances agree with the shadow of the badgers' skins. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as One from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Because men saw no beauty in Him they despised Him; and as the despised One they rejected Him; and as despised and rejected He had grief and sorrow.

The writer was standing in a crowd one day awaiting the arrival of their majesties King George V and Queen Mary. The royal train drew into the station, and very soon the royal cortege was passing along. What impressed him deeply was how every face was turned toward their majesties, and the words quoted above came forcibly to the mind. How sad that when the King Eternal was here on earth He should be as One from whom men hide their face! Surely they saw Him only as the badgers' skin covering!

Thus our thoughts turn to the grace of our Lord, and we would hear afresh the words: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8. 9). Fitting it is that we should say:

*“ Take Thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee ;
Thy willing servants, let us wear
The seal of love for ever there.”*

An instance of that which was shadowed forth in the badgers' skin covering appears in the historical account given in Mark 6. 1-6. There we are told of the Lord Jesus coming into His own country, followed by His disciples. “And when the sabbath was come, He began to teach in the synagogue : and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this Man these things ? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this Man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by His hands ? ” Knowledge, wisdom and power are here made manifest by the Son of God, even to the wonderment of many. Evidence was thus displayed to demonstrate His oft averment that He was the sent One of the Father. But how did those highly favoured people respond ? Immediately their minds reverted to earlier acquaintance with the One whose words and works now occasion astonishment. “ Is not this the Carpenter,” said they, “ the Son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon ? and are not His sisters here with us ? And they were offended in Him.” How very sad ! The Messiah Himself was caused to marvel because of their unbelief. “ Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me ” (Matthew 11. 6), were among the Lord's words to the messengers of John the Baptist. This blessedness the people of Nazareth failed to obtain that day. He had come so near to them, and had become so like unto them in everything but sin, that His mundane toil, and His human relationship, seemed to fill their minds to the exclusion of the all important facts that He came from God, and was the Son of God with power.

HIS OWN HOUSE

“A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” In His own house His brothers did not believe on Him. At the time of the feast of tabernacles His brethren said unto Him ; “ Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may behold Thy works which Thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou doest these things, manifest Thyself to the world. For even His brethren did not believe on Him ” (John 7. 3-5).

Great was their sin of unbelief ! We recall the special advantages they had in that they dwelt in the same home with Him who was perfect in His words and deeds. Besides, Mary their mother could never forget that which was communicated to her at the time of His birth. The angel's salutation was : “ Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, . . . and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father

David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end ” (Luke 1. 30-33). What she would possibly tell the brothers concerning Him was apparently ignored, and these guilty men went on in their unbelief. That they continued so right on to the time when the Lord was crucified seems possible from the fact that when on the cross the Lord Jesus committed His mother to the care of John the beloved disciple, as if this pointed to the solemn matter of these brothers being out of touch, and the scripture still true of the Lord : “ I am become a Stranger unto My brethren, and an Alien unto My mother’s children ” (Psalm 69. 8).

A brighter picture, however, is revealed before the curtain is drawn down and these men pass from view. Conversion became a reality with them, and it is wonderful to discover that it must have been quite near the time of the crucifixion, since in Acts 1. 14 we read, “ These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.” Here the brothers are seen in the upper room with the apostles and others, continuing in prayer and awaiting the promise of the Holy Spirit whom the Lord promised to send when He had ascended on high.

The Son had been revealed to them by the Father, and no longer do they regard the Lord Jesus as One beside Himself, or as One with false pretences. No longer is He seen by them as set forth in the badgers’ skin covering, for they have come to behold somewhat of His loveliness, as white and ruddy, the Chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

*“ The mention of Thy name shall bow
Our hearts to worship Thee ;
The Chiefest of ten thousand Thou !
The chief of sinners we.”*

The Lord Jesus was God manifest in flesh, and in His outward appearance He was despised. Men make the same error in these days relative to God’s dwelling place, inasmuch as the outward appearance thereof must have the same character as that of the Lord, there is no outward beauty that men should desire it, yet to those who are living stones in the House it partakes of the beauty of Christ.

G. PRASHER.

THE GLORIES AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

The Great Priest over the House of God

There is much confusion of thought generally, relative to the Lord’s ministry as priest, yet words could not be clearer than those found in Hebrews 10. 21, 22, “ Having a Great Priest over the house of God ; let us draw near.” There are some who think that each company or assembly of believers which comes together to break bread

is a house of God, in which case there would be numerous houses of God throughout the world. Scripture does not say that the Lord is Priest over the *houses* of God, but over the *house* (singular). Scripture teaches that there is only one house of God, composed of all churches of God. We would that all believers would search the Scriptures on these important issues. Where in the New Testament is any mention made of houses of God relative to God's together people? There are many churches of God, but only one house of God, and this should speak volumes to seekers after truth.

In Peter's first epistle those in the five provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, are described as being "built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 1 and 2. 5). No one could reasonably suppose that in such a large area there were not many churches of God, and these are in view in the exhortation to overseers, "Neither as lording it over *the charge allotted to you*" (1 Peter 5. 3), yet the whole together is spoken of as one thing, "a spiritual house," "a holy priesthood," "a holy nation." Peter indicates this when he says, "Ye also . . . are built up a spiritual house."

John, in writing to the seven churches in Asia says—

"And He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father" (Revelation 1. 6).

These seven churches were therefore in one kingdom, and John himself, who was in the Isle of Patmos, was a partaker with them in that kingdom (verse 9). In these scriptures we see the truth of one house, one kingdom and one priesthood. The same persons constitute the house, kingdom, and priesthood. In the typology of the past the same principles are seen,

"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19. 5, 6).

When Israel had solemnly undertaken to obey God's voice, saying "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do, and be obedient," then, upon these conditions, God took them into covenant relationship, recognized them as His people, and as a kingdom of priests, and made provision for them to fulfil their obligations and functions in association with the LORD's dwelling place, for He said,

"Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25. 8).

And again,

"See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8. 5).

God would not dwell in a tabernacle of human design, nor be served by men in a system of human origin. His will and way must be paramount. Let us learn the lesson.

The conditional character of the house, kingdom and priesthood was thus set forth, and so it is today, "Whose house are we, if we hold fast." Over the house of God Christ is both Son and Priest. As Son He imparts a glory and dignity to the house worthy of the One whose house it is. He is its great Exemplar, the supreme example and living exponent of godliness (1 Timothy 3. 16), hence the demands upon those in God's house to "follow after godliness." The standard of God's house is high, and human frailty is ever present, hence the need for a Priest over God's house.

There are two spheres of service associated with God's house : (1) manward in testimony, in connexion with which prayer is vital, and (2) Godward, in holy priesthood service in praise. In both spheres the Lord Jesus renders service as priest over God's house. In the epistle to the Hebrews He is seen bringing many sons to glory through a hostile world ; He is their princely Leader, and at the same time the High Priest of their confession. In the past, Israel's confession was bound up with the law given by Moses which they undertook to keep. Today it is bound up with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" which they are responsible to hold and contend for. It would have been utterly impossible for Israel to maintain their status as a peculiar people and a kingdom of priests apart from the work of the high priest of their confession, even Aaron. He stood between the people and God in his work of making atonement for the holy place, the tent of meeting, the altar, and for all the assembly of Israel, by which the relationship of a weak and failing people was maintained with God. So also our High Priest by the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice and acceptability as Priest is able to make propitiation for the sins of the people, i.e., God's together-people. (See Hebrews 2. 17). He maintains the sanctity and righteousness of God's holy throne in faithfulness, and is able also to meet the needs of a failing people in mercy. With true sympathy He can enter into the difficulties and temptations besetting the path of the sanctified and faithful, and "He is able to succour them that are tempted." Indeed, "He is able to save to the uttermost (completely R.V.M.) them that draw near to God through Him," otherwise, the wilderness of this world would be strewn with the spiritual wreckage of countless lives of God's saints. We cannot go on without Him ; He is our Hope in God's presence ; all our resources are in Him who is after the order of Melchizedek, of whom it is written that he was "priest of God Most High . . . possessor of heaven and earth," and He has gone into God's presence on our behalf. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul. If we fail to lay hold of this Hope we shall drift and fall away from the living God. May we know increasingly by experience the value of this wondrous ministry of our High Priest !

"Having then a Great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Hebrews 4. 14, 16).

The Lord Jesus is also Priest over God's house as they draw near as worshippers. In His incarnation He sought worshippers for His Father, in His resurrection as a Priest He is over the kingdom of priests. Aaron was over the kingdom of priests in the past, being divinely called and authorized to act on behalf of the nation in their Godward approach. No sacrifice could ever reach the divine presence apart from the ministry of the high priest, so also it is impossible for those in God's house to bring their offerings to God with acceptance apart from Him who is Priest over God's house.

In the law clear and precise instructions are given relative to the sacrifices which were to be brought, the place to which they were to be brought, and the manner of their presentation. In these matters Aaron the priest was to "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses," so that they should put a difference between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean (Leviticus 10. 10, 11).

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of Hosts"
(Malachi 2. 7).

The Great Priest over God's house is the Divine Instructor through the Holy Spirit. This may be implied in the words of Acts 1. 1, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus *began to do and to teach*," so that in resurrection He continues to do and also to teach, though He does so by the work of the Holy Spirit through men.

At this point it may be well to note the difference between the house of God and the holy place, or Holies. The house of God is composed of the Lord's obedient disciples in churches of God, such as the church of God in Corinth which could be "known and read of all men" and the church in Antioch which could be called together when so desired (see 2 Corinthians 3. 2; Acts 14. 27), or "may come together in the church" (1 Corinthians 11. 18); all this shows saints together on earth.

It was this people who were addressed collectively in Hebrews 10. 19, as "Having . . . boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus." The holy place therefore is not the house of God, nor is it the meeting room or hall where the church gathers. The holy place or holies is where a holy priesthood may enter "to offer up spiritual sacrifices." It is in heaven, where the High Priest is seen as "a minister of the sanctuary (or holy things, R.V.M.)." It is thither that we are exhorted to "draw near," "having a Great Priest over the house of God," and right of access by the blood of Jesus, to worship in spirit and in truth, and to fill the hands of our High Priest, for it is necessary that this High Priest also should have somewhat to offer. The way into the Holies has been secured by the

death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven, but in our entering in we must be in that right spiritual condition essential for such service, for

*“ Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD ?
And who shall stand in His holy place ?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart ”* (Psalm 24. 3, 4).

Let us cleanse ourselves then from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and,

“ Through Him . . . let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His Name ” (Hebrews 13. 15).

We know that whatever we may offer is imperfect by reason of our imperfect thought and apprehension, but we are assured that through Him who bears the iniquity of our holy things, and who is Himself the Leader of the praise in the great congregation, our praises are “ acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

F. McCORMICK.

PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most important subjects, and is also one of the most essential exercises in christian experience. The great men of the Scriptures were men of prayer. Such men prevailed with God and had power with men. The spirituality of men amongst the people of God can be gauged by their prayer-life. The Psalms for instance are the outcome of the experiences of men in touch with God, and many of them breathe the longings of such men in prayer. Examples of these longings are to be found in such Psalms as **5, 17, 86** and **142**. What a difference between the experiences of such men, and the mere repetition of prayers which the hypocrites performed ! (Matthew **6. 5**). The latter loved to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men. Such praying is vain.

It must have been a delight to listen to the Lord Jesus pray (Luke **11. 1**). On hearing Him pray one of His disciples was impelled to say, “ Lord, teach us to pray.” Obviously then there is a right way to pray. We confess that we know not how to pray as we should, because we are so blind and ignorant, but the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for us according to the will of God. The vital thing in praying is to know the will of God, or, at least, to be prepared to bow to His will when circumstances or experiences indicate to us what it is (Acts **16. 6-10**). Much anxiety would be avoided by beloved saints if they fully realized that they were in their Father’s care who has a bounteous hand and a loving heart.

We live in a unique dispensation in this respect, for the children of God have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John 2. 1). The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled" (John 16. 24). That is to say, that in our asking we have the authority and the power of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"Precious Name, oh how sweet,
Hope of earth, and joy of heaven!"*

This truth should cause us to be very careful *what* we ask, as well as *how* we ask, lest we be found in the position of those of whom it is said, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (James 4. 3).

Further help on the right kind of prayers is found in 1 John 3. 22, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." Such a word should send us to the Word of God to see if we are in the will of the Lord in what we ask. If we are positive that we are asking aright, then we have indeed the answers to our petitions. This can be a most blessed experience (1 John 5. 14, 15). Let us illustrate this point. The apostle James writes in chapter 1. 5, 6, "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith." Here the *known* will of God is made known for all who lack wisdom. Much foolishness would be avoided if we acted on this word, and God would indeed honour our faith. Let us reiterate the vital principles we have been seeking to impress on our hearts:—

- (1) The prayer of faith is the result of knowing the will of God (1 John 5. 14), "This is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us."
- (2) It is to the glory of God (John 14. 13), "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
- (3) It is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3. 20), "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the *power* that worketh in us."
- (4) It is according to the truth (John 15. 7), "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
- (5) Prayer should be interwoven with love and mercy (Mark 11. 25), "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

- (6) Prayer is joined with obedience (1 John 3. 22), "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."
- (7) Prayer should be in sincerity and importunity that it will not accept denial (Luke 11. 9), "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

The experience of praying is vital to our well-being, both individually and collectively. The apostle Paul spoke very highly of Epaphras in Colossians 4. 12, 13. Here was a brother who strove for others in his prayers. Prayer requires quietness,

(a) a quiet place, (b) a quiet hour, (c) a quiet heart.

It may not be within the reach of all to find a quiet place, but your Father knows. The Lord Jesus may on occasions have found it difficult to secure the privilege of solitude when He was at home in the carpenter's cottage in Nazareth, as there were possibly nine persons under the one roof. Besides Himself, there were Mary His mother, and Joseph, also four brothers, and two sisters. Yet morning by morning His ear was opened to hear His Father speaking to Him.

It is most difficult to find a quiet hour in these days of hurry and bustle. The Lord Jesus saw the necessity of withdrawing Himself into the deserts to pray (Luke 5. 16), how much more so His disciples! Beloved, let us find time to pray.

The most difficult exercise is to have a quiet heart. It is here we so much need the help of the Holy Spirit. George Müller confessed that often he could not pray until he had steadied his mind upon a text. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; My heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek" (Psalm 27. 8).

*"Let me my feebleness recline
On that eternal love of Thine,
And human thoughts forget.
Childlike attend what Thou wilt say,
Go forth and serve Thee while 'tis day,
Nor leave my sweet retreat."*

In connexion with large projects these days, we hear of the work of the backroom boys. These are the men who do so much behind the scenes, to bring success to a project. We are in constant need of devoted persons today in the house of God, that is, men and women who will spend much time with God in private. "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." Thus will the house of God become a house of prayer.

Do we stand in need of reviving as the people of God? If so, then it is because we as individuals need to know the quickening power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Living and walking in the Spirit is a present need, for unless we have this experience the lust of the flesh (to have), the lust of the eyes (to see), and the vain glory of life (to be something), will occupy our time and energies. If our treasure is here on earth and not in heaven then it will be to our present and eternal loss, "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12. 34).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20, 21).

G. S. WEBSTER.

A WORD TO SHEPHERDS

"Faithful is the word, if any stretches forward to overseership, he is desirous of a good work" (1 Timothy 3. 1. *Englishman's Greek New Testament*).

"Tend the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5. 2).

The work of the overseer, who is also a shepherd, is a good work, and it is one which, if it is well done, will one day be rewarded with the crown of glory. The overseer must remember that he is only an under-shepherd, and that he must give account to the Chief Shepherd, to whom the sheep (that is, disciples) belong. Simon Peter would never forget the morning by the lakeside, when the Master said to him, "Feed My lambs," "Tend My sheep," "Feed My sheep." They are His lambs and His sheep; and those also who as under-shepherds are caring for them must not forget this either.

The character of the work of the overseer is seen in the different names used—overseer, elder, shepherd. Overseers must lead the disciples according to the word of the Lord, correcting if it is necessary. They must be elders, that is, they must be mature men in the things of God, not novices, lest the devil trip them up. They must be shepherds, that is, they must love and care for the disciples, as a shepherd cares for his sheep. It needs the three names to describe fully the character of the men and their work.

In 1 Timothy 3. 2, we read that the overseer must be temperate, soberminded, orderly. He must not be quick-tempered, "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1. 20). A man who cannot control his own spirit is unfitted to be a shepherd of others. He must not be greedy of money, but rather given to hospitality.

He must rule well his own house, for unless he can do this, how can he care for the church of God? His life and testimony in the world must also be without reproach. Thus we see that in his private life, in his home life, and in his public life, the overseer must be blameless, because he is the Lord's steward.

In Titus 1. 9 we find that the overseer must be a man equipped with the word; able (that is, powerful) both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict those who teach wrong doctrine. He must hold to the faithful word.

In 1 Peter 5 the elders are exhorted to tend the flock of God. Peter exhorts them as one who is a fellow-elder, and who was a witness of the sufferings of Christ. He knew what it cost the Chief Shepherd to win the sheep, which were dear to Him. The love of the Chief Shepherd for His sheep must be in the hearts of the under-shepherds, if they would care for them aright. They must not lord it over the sheep, but must be ensamples to the flock. True humility of heart must characterize those who are shepherds. Younger shepherds (that is, the less experienced) should subject themselves (they should yield in matters of judgement) to the elder, the more experienced.

Shepherds must be sober and watchful, for the devil is ready to destroy the saints. This watchfulness will manifest itself in prayerfulness for the saints. The overseer must be a man of prayer. Much prayer in secret for the saints will manifest itself in much care for them openly. There will be visits to the homes of the saints, with the reading of the word and prayer, so that the saints will feel the warmth of the Chief Shepherd's care as they see it in His under-shepherds.

Another aspect of the work of the shepherd is seen in 1 Thessalonians 5. 14-22, which is evidently addressed to overseers. They must admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, and be long-suffering toward all. The shepherds must be wise men, free from partiality, and all kinds of favouritism; men who love the Lord and His people; free from the fear of man, standing for what is true in all their dealings with the saints.

The Spirit of God will work in the hearts of the disciples, and overseers must be quick to see His work, and careful that they do not quench it. As young men arise and stretch forward in the Lord's work, the work of the Spirit within them must be encouraged. The ministry of the gospel is a work for which young men especially are often fitted; besides, they may be freer in their minds than those who have the care of the saints. The shepherds will encourage them in this.

Shepherds must often ponder the words of the Chief Shepherd for whom they work. They must imitate Him in love and patience. They must draw the needed grace and power from God through prayer, so that their own souls are refreshed and renewed. Without

such refreshing and renewing they will inevitably become dry and powerless, and this will mar their work, and cause them to fail in their reward.

For such men, and for their work, all the disciples should pray. Much prayer should be made for the leaders and elders among God's people, knowing how much greater grace they have need of in caring both for their own souls, and for the souls of disciples in the churches of God, in the which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers.

G. JARVIE.

SECRET THINGS

(continued)

There is also the mystery of divine wisdom. To the Corinthian church Paul wrote, "Howbeit . . . we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been *hidden* . . . which none of the rulers of this world knoweth; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2. 6, 8). Blinded eyes never discerned in the Man of Nazareth, the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world, whose excellencies, by the grace of God, have filled unto glory so many of His redeemed. This was the striving and deep concern of Paul that the beloved converts in Colossæ might have all the wealth of assurance in the knowledge of the "mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge *hidden*" (Colossians 2. 2, 3). Here is a mine of untold wealth! There are *hidden* treasures in His blessed Person! What a secret! There are treasures in Him *hidden* that throw into insignificance the philosophy, the vain deceit, and the traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world. This source of wealth is inexhaustible.

One more secret is revealed to the Colossians—there is a *hidden* life. "Your life is *hid* with Christ in God" (Colossians 3. 3). It may mean a life hidden in the sense of being secluded or in privacy as far as the world is concerned: but it is the only life worth living. It is the life productive of the fruit which pleaseth the Lord Jesus, and of wealth, highly assessed in the currency of heaven. Lay hold on that life and it shall be thy joy and crown eternally. A hidden life, yes, but the day is fast approaching "when Christ, . . . our life, shall be manifested, *then* shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory" (Colossians 3. 4). We must not forget the word to the church of God in Rome, that the earnest expectation of the creation, throbbing with pain, awaits the revealing of the sons of God (see Romans 8. 18-25).

Meanwhile it is the privilege of the believer to search out these hidden treasures, make them his own, and go forth to show "the excellencies of Him" who called him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

JAS. MARTIN.

ERRATUM. November Issue, page 175, line 6 should read:—

living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the

THE OLD AND THE NEW

(Reflections on a journey through the Year)

I stood at the end of the road,
 And viewed all the way I had trod—
 Uphill, and then down by the stream,
 Where waters like crystal did gleam,
 A hard climb it was—steep and long—
 It seemed as if only the strong
 Would e'er reach the brow of the hill,
 So distantly far away still.

But strength by the way was supplied
 As oft to My Father I cried ;
 And oh ! what relief 'twas to know
 That, long though the road I must go,
 One walked by my side all the way ;
 Just there for my help day by day !
 He lifted me up when I fell,
 And taught me, with Him all was well.

Though many a sorrow I caused
 To Him as I wandered, nor paused
 To wait for His guidance and care,
 When gently He whispered, " Beware ! "
 He lovingly drew me away
 From dangers unseen in the way ;
 And brought me (oft trembling with fear)
 Along to the end of the year.

And now, as I come to the gate
 Which leads to the New Year, I wait,
 For His guidance divine, with my hand
 Placed firmly in His—thus I stand ;
 Not seeing the path I must go,
 Unable to trace it, or know,
 But, feeling His presence so near,
 I'll march by His side without fear.

And if 'tis His will I should tread
 The highway that stretches ahead,
 Through vale of the shadow of death,—
 Or by pleasant meadow or heath—
 Grant, Lord, I may walk all the way
 In fellowship sweet, ev'ry day
 With HIM who has promised to be
 A Friend and a Helper to me.

J. BELTON.

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