

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Edited by
W. G. TURNER

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To Our Readers,

It is with humble gratitude to God that we are permitted to complete yet another yearly volume of WORDS OF HELP. The encouragement of many readers at home and abroad as they assure us from time to time that WORDS OF HELP are words which really do help them; the ungrudging assistance of our valued contributors whose articles we feel deserve wider circulation than our pages can afford; the promptness and efficiency on the business side of our Printers and Publisher; these all call again for very grateful recognition of the goodness of God.

The prayers of our Christian readers are always needed and valued by

THE EDITOR

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Silent Before God

NOT in the tumult of the rending storm,
Not in the earthquake or devouring flame,
But in the hush that could all fear transform,
The still, small whisper to the Prophet came.

O Soul, keep silence in the mount of God,
Though cares and needs throb round thee like a sea;
From supplications and desires unshod,
Be still, and hear what God shall say to thee.

Behold the stars! with wonder overjoyed,
They sang creation's music clear and strong—
How do they listen, through the midnight void,
For the lost cadence of that Eden song!

All fellowship hath interludes of rest,
New strength maturing in each poise of power;
The sweetest Alleluias of the blest
Are silent for the space of half an hour.

O rest, in utter quietude of soul,
Abandon words, leave prayer and praise awhile,
Let thy whole being, hushed in His control,
Learn the full meaning of His voice and smile.

Not as an athlete wrestling for a crown,
Not taking heaven by violence of will,
But with thy FATHER as a child sit down,
And know the bliss that follows His "Be still!"

M. R. JARVIS.

WORDS OF HELP

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SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

A Major Message from a Minor Prophet

By THE EDITOR

MINOR prophets are only such in the sense that their books are shorter than those of the Major prophets. They were all Messengers of God. There is no distinction of rank in the company. So the term "Minor" permits of no disparagement of the prophet, nor any undervaluing of his message. He whose great message we are here considering, Habakkuk, is one of whom historically we possess no record. From his prophecy, however, we are able to discover the times in which he lived and the background of his message. He has been well called the "prophet of awe-filled faith" although doubt, depression and despondency, to some degree, mark the first chapter of his book, which seems more in the nature of a colloquy with God than a prophecy. "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see" opens what Dr. Alexander Whyte described as "this wonderful little book: a book little in size indeed but a book rich and great in divine substance, and in intellectual and spiritual power of every kind." The faith, prayer and song of Habakkuk which are all set before us here with great beauty and impressiveness, are the outcome of the spiritual exercises of this great prophet.

His burden was a heavy one indeed, a twofold burden. One part of it consisted of the great dishonour done to God by the condition of His people, and how His holy character seemed to be gravely compromised by His own action, or inaction in connection with it all. Perplexed and bewildered the puzzled prophet breaks out: "Thou wilt not hear; Thou wilt not save;

Thou holdest Thy tongue"—wilt not even speak. It is this freedom of speech which he permits himself to use to his **MAKER** that arrests attention at the outset, while Judah and Jerusalem were full of almost unpardonable wickedness. With craft, cruelty, pride and oppression everywhere rampant it seemed as though God were indifferent to, or unaware of, what was patent to everyone else. Yet the ancient words remained, "The righteous **LORD** loveth righteousness," and "Holiness becometh Thine house, O **LORD**, for ever." (Pss. xi. 7; xciii. 5); thus the sad failure of God's people became a heavy burden to His noble-hearted servant.

Consider now the conditions then prevailing in Judah and Jerusalem, the professed people of God, which form the background of Habakkuk's prophecy. The preceding half-century and more had been characterised by idolatry of a particularly gross character. The great revival under good King Hezekiah had now completely spent itself; a fearful reaction had followed; the worship of Baal with its obscene rites had been re-established; altars had actually been erected in the temple courts to the host of heaven, sun, moon and stars; while by the king's orders an idol had been placed in the very house of God. All this by the chosen people, whose very calling as a nation was to witness to the one true God, and utterly abhor all idolatry.

Things in Judah and Jerusalem were fast approaching the hopeless stage when "there was no remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16), and the only word of prophecy here addressed to the nation (in chapter i. 5-11) is of the imminent invasion by the Chaldeans. "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously; for I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe though it be told you. For, lo, I will raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs." As predicted, the warning fell upon deaf ears, the national conscience long having ceased to function.

To the prophet, however, this pronouncement of judgment upon the nation only increased his bewilderment by the using of a more wicked nation as the scourge of the people. He breaks out in what is a bold expostulation with God for His mysterious dealings.

“Art not Thou from everlasting, O LORD my GOD, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty GOD, Thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”

The abnormal state of the world has always been a sore puzzle to thinking men. Old Testament saints, thoughtful pagans, and modern Christians, each in turn have been perplexed by what we sometimes rather loosely term “mysterious providences” in life. The world today is full of very disturbing things as again one great nation of apparently endless resources, and full of cruel resoluteness, seeks to sweep little nations off the board, treating them simply as pawns in his game, or, to adopt our prophet’s words, as “fish for his nets,” exactly as the Chaldeans were then preparing to do. So it came about that Habakkuk’s perplexities and problems arose from the apparent contradictions in God’s known character and His present actions. He realises that it is not destruction but discipline so far as Judah is concerned, and says, “we shall not die.” “Thou hast appointed them for correction,” and here at least is just a foothold for faith. Faith even as a grain of mustard seed can work wonders.

Turning now from the immediate threat of the Chaldean invasion given in his short prophecy (verses 5 to 11 of chap. i.) we may note the expansion of the message as used by the Apostle Paul in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 41). There, no mention of Habakkuk or the threat of military invasion is found, the words quoted, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you,” being prefaced by the warning, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man [JESUS raised from the dead] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

But by Habakkuk the prophet, and Paul the apostle, the dread doom of the unbeliever is plainly stressed, for whether

the message be delivered by prophet, apostle, or gospel preacher of humbler rank, the same responsibility falls upon the hearer to give heed to the word of GOD.

The great work wrought by GOD through His SON for the salvation of man demands to-day the attention of all. For GOD *now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. The message with its offer of mercy is broadcast, with the warning to the unbeliever following hard in its train. The greater work of necessity gives a deeper character to the unbelief; and entails a darker doom than the temporal one threatened in Habakkuk's prophecy.

Christendom to-day embraces all the professedly Christian people; the people who are nominally the Church of GOD on earth; all the baptized who by their baptism have been brought into the public profession of Christianity. Some, alas, of these may only be nominal Christians, as our LORD said, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

As in the case of Judah in Habakkuk's day, the name of GOD is sadly compromised in this day of grace by the present condition of His professed church, the marks of love, unity, holiness and truth, seeming sometimes almost obliterated as

". . . with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed."

The scandal of a divided Christendom; the *world in the Church* instead of the *Church in the world*; extravagant and ridiculous titles eagerly sought for, and accepted, by professed servants of a rejected CHRIST; things quite contrary to His word not only allowed but even accredited in what purports to be the Church of GOD the pillar and ground of truth; and in the major portion of Christendom, actual idolatry is openly practised as relics of the saints, veneration of statues and images, not merely tolerated but openly advocated and practised by the head and chiefs of the most venerable, from the point of antiquity, of all nominal Christian bodies.

To the true-hearted believer, remembering that "holiness

becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever," all this is a burden as God's character, revealed in the Person, Work, and present position of CHRIST, is thus compromised by the spiritual wickedness of His professed people. What was the prophet's reaction? And what should ours be?

In the case of Habakkuk the situation produced astonishment and anxiety, causing him to adopt an attitude before God which he felt sure would bring some solution of his bewildering problem.

At first he is well nigh overwhelmed by the state of things, and exclaims, "O LORD, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear? Why dost Thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance?" "Wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue?" Out of the depths of an anguished heart he pours his bitter complaint before God. The knowledge that the condition of his own people called for dire chastisement for their well-nigh unpardonable sins weighed heavily upon the prophet's heart. But the, to him, unthinkable calamity was that an even worse nation than themselves should be God's rod for correction. True he cried out of violence and lawlessness on the part of Judah, only to be met by the surprising revelation that the Chaldeans, a nation bitter and hasty, filled with craft, cruelty, and pride, should be chosen by God to chastise His people. His very soul is filled with astonishment, as question after question arises in his mind, "O LORD, How? Why? Wherefore?"

But Habakkuk was not the first saint of God nor the last to feel such questions arising in his heart, and surging like a tempest through his soul. How often have we ourselves in the face of some strange providence, wondered at the turn things have been allowed to take, and been as Tennyson says like

"Children crying in the night,
Children crying for a light."

Indeed one great lesson for the pilgrim of faith to learn is that *faith's horizon is bounded by eternity*. The patriarch Job in the day of his affliction uttered the wise word that has re-echoed in the hearts of the godly from his day to ours: "Lo, these are parts of His ways." (Job xxvi. 14), the fringes, or the borders only; and James, in his epistle, completes the

story, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the LORD [of the LORD's ways with him] that the LORD is very pitiful and of tender mercy." (James v. 11). "What I do thou knowest not now" is followed by "but thou shalt know hereafter." (St. John xiii. 7). Again, in that classic passage already referred to in Hebrews xii. 11, dealing with God's fatherly correction, "Afterwards" is the hinge upon which the door of mercy and blessing turns.

(*To be continued, D.V.*)

"Wait on the Lord"

(*Psalm xxvii. 14.*)

DAVID was a "man of war," and his psalms have much to do with deliverance from and victory over his enemies. But the Book of Psalms has been the hymn-book and the heart-book of the godly in every age. And we Christian believers lift their inspired sentences out of their setting in ancient Hebrew national life and the perils of a Hebrew warrior, and apply them to our own temporal and spiritual needs.

"Wait on the LORD." Precious phrase! It speaks of a surrendered will and a humble readiness to obey. It is as the LORD controls that He frees; He liberates as He dominates. Many have been blessed through that golden sentence, Romans chapter xii. verse 1, an injunction which the SPIRIT of CHRIST in the believer urges him to obey.

And the phrase in David's psalm speaks too of the desire for God, of love of communion with our Almighty Friend, and suggests Mary of Bethany sitting at the Master's feet and receiving His word. And His commendation of Mary and His gentle rebuke of her sister serve to remind us in these materialistic days that spiritual intelligence and devotion are more important than fretful concern with the domesticities.

A few moments of openness of soul before the LORD may bring in a jewel of truth. Much grace comes to us when some seed-thought from the Divine word is dropped into the mind and heart, and brooded over. We are on the way to blessing when God starts us thinking. Meditation fits us for supplica-

tion. Meditation in our noisy machine age is not easy, but to neglect it must mean serious loss. God may speak more loudly in the silence of solitude than in the message of spoken words. In true Christianity the real experts are not the ecclesiastics nor the theologians, but the saints.

It is precious to speak to the LORD; it is more precious still to hear Him speaking to us. "Listening in" is a vital part of real prayer. Do we watch for the leadings of His SPIRIT, or are we so busy that the "still, small voice" is drowned in the clamour of our own business and that of the world around.

David expected Divine help and blessing. It is the prayer of faith that obtains the answer desired. The psalmist could trust and hope in the face of danger. And we today, in the midst of the difficulties and frustrations—and sometimes perils—of our mechanised civilisation, by carrying out his repeated exhortation to "wait on the LORD" will prove that we have an antidote to a puzzled, fretful and anxious mind.

E. ADAMS.

The "Sent" One

IN the Gospel of John there is the wonderful declaration by the SON OF GOD of GOD THE FATHER: "No man hath seen GOD at any time; the only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, HE hath declared HIM." Such is the record of the Apostle John (chap. i. 18).

In that Gospel there are over forty references to the SON as the *sent* ONE; nearly the whole of them from the lips of the SON HIMSELF.

For the help of those who have not the "spare" time to search them out, the references may be found as follow:—chap. iii. 17 & 34 (this latter by John Baptist); iv. 34; v. 23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; vi. 29, 38, 39, 40, 44, 57; vii. 16, 18, 28, 29, 33; viii. 16, 18, 26, 29, 42; ix. 4; x. 36; xi. 42; xii. 44, 45, 49; xiii. 20; xiv. 24; xv. 21; xvi. 5; xvii. 3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; xx. 21.

The first reference to the SON being the *sent* ONE was made to a sincere enquirer (Nicodemus); but, although thus made to an individual, formed part of what may, in today's parlance, be termed a broadcast to the whole world. Immediately following this announcement, the hearers are divided into two classes: those who believe; and those who believe not.

Of the remainder of the references, sixteen were spoken to, or in regard to, the believing hearers; eighteen to the unbelieving class (though very religious); and seven to the mixed company.

Commentators have varied in their apprehensions of the significance of the many-times repeated reference by the SON to HIMSELF as the *sent* ONE. ("Let the prophets speak; . . . let the other judge.")

Howbeit, the following thoughts gathered from these references are here submitted, in the hope that they may be helpful and to edification. ("Despise not prophesying"—do not cast it aside thoughtlessly; but, "Prove all things"; and "Hold fast that which is good"; and, may it be added, reject that which is not good).

In a preceding paragraph mention has been made of three groups of hearers of these references to or of the *sent* ONE.

To that group of disciples (believers; and with them must be linked "them also which shall believe on ME through their word"), how blessed, how precious, to be so repeatedly reminded by the SON HIMSELF that it was the FATHER WHO *sent* HIM; and *sent* HIM as the manifestation of HIS (God's) love.

The Apostle John, though writing with a different end in mind, gives expression thus: "In this was manifested the love of GOD toward us, because that GOD *sent* His only begotten SON into the world, that we might live through HIM. Herein is love, not that we loved GOD, but that HE loved us, and *sent* His SON, to be the propitiation for our sins."

The frequent repetition by the SON that HE was *sent* by the FATHER, GOD, appears also to have been much needed, and graciously conceded, on account of the dullness of apprehension on the part of the hearers. It was only at the close of the SON'S ministry, just prior to HIS going out to the cross, and only after HE had spoken to them "plainly" of the FATHER, that the declaration was made by the disciples, "Now are we sure that THOU knowest all things, and needest not that any should ask THEE: by this we believe that THOU camest forth from GOD."

This awakening of their apprehension of what HE had so repeatedly brought before them would doubtless be a great cheer to them when they were realising that they were in a world where they would have tribulation (John xvi. 33). May

it not reasonably be assumed that the declaration by His disciples would be a comfort and joy to JESUS HIMSELF on the eve of His rejection. Is there not a reflex of this in His words to His FATHER concerning them: "Now they have known that all things whatsoever THOU hast given ME are of THEE. For I have given unto them the words which THOU gavest ME; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from THEE, and they have believed that THOU didst send ME" (John xvii. 7-8).

The manifestation of His love, and the declaration of HIMSELF as FATHER, GOD has shown in no less a manner than in the *sending* of His only begotten and well-beloved SON. Surely, these repeated reminders should awaken worship, adoration, and praise in the heart of every believer.

As to the second group of hearers alluded to above it was outwardly religious: a group of religious unbelievers. It is possible for some reader of this article to be one of such a group to-day. Think of the gravity in being found a rejecter after being reminded so many times by the ONE who was *sent* that the words HE spake, and the works HE wrought, were those of HIM that *sent* HIM. Let the words of the "SENT ONE" HIMSELF pronounce the verdict: "He that rejecteth ME, and receiveth not MY words, hath ONE that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of (from) MYSELF; but the FATHER which sent ME, HE gave ME a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (xii. 48, 49).

As regards the third group, the following thought is submitted for the consideration of bible students; but not pressed.

Consequent to the "showing unto Israel" of John Baptist; John's testimony to JESUS as the SON OF GOD; and the manifestation by JESUS of His glory by the miracles which HE did, there arose a good deal of enquiry among the Jews, and especially among the religious section, as to JESUS. Some were sincere, although spiritually blind and ignorant. Nicodemus was one such; but, notwithstanding that he came to JESUS alone, and that by night, his address to JESUS was in the plural, thereby associating others with himself. Note his opening words: "Rabbi, *we* know that Thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."

“Come from God.” Is it not very suggestive that, according to John, the words and works of Jesus were an oft-repeated affirmation that HE *had* “come from God”? It was in His reply to Nicodemus that (as recorded in John) JESUS first spoke of HIMSELF as the SON OF GOD *sent* into the world; and the reiteration of being *sent* was a complete answer to what was in the minds of Nicodemus and his followers. That answer, if slowly and dimly, was evidently apprehended by Nicodemus and other of the chief rulers (xii. 41). Howsoever feebly confessed, they were numbered with those who could say, “We believe that THOU camest forth from God;” and of the company of those who “have believed that THOU didst *send* ME.”

“The FATHER *sent* the SON to be (or) (as) the SAVIOUR of the world.” Perfect manifestation of love!

The SON *came* to declare the FATHER. “He that hath seen ME hath seen the FATHER.” Perfect manifestation of the FATHER!

H. SAMBROOK.

The Millennium

MILLENNIUM is a Latin word meaning a thousand years. In the first century the Greek equivalent, *chiliasm*, was employed for the same period, but the Latin word has since predominated. By saying *The Millennium* a particular meaning is given to it, and anyone acquainted with the text of the Revelation recognises it as the thousand years' reign of CHRIST, mentioned in Revelation xx. 4-6.

The imaginations of men's hearts have confounded it with the wonderland of fairy tales, and given it a correspondingly fantastic meaning, as many unorthodox ancient writings show, but the believer who takes a stand on the inspiration of the Bible, is able to gain an insight into its meaning that unbelief cannot get.

The subject is an immense one, and the establishment of the kingdom in which “A King shall reign in righteousness,

and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isaiah xxxii. 1-3) is the climax of God's dealings with this world, before its final replacement by a new earth (Rev. xxi. 1).

The creation of the earth and its preparation for habitation by man, together with the accomplishment of the purpose for which man was created, form the subject of the whole Bible, and a knowledge of the whole Bible is needed for anything like a complete understanding of this immense subject.

The last words of David (2 Samuel xxiii. 3, 4) include the significant statement that "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." These words could only apply in their fullness to the LORD JESUS CHRIST as King, and the things that mark such a kingdom are unfolded in Isaiah xxxii. 1-18.

The millennium itself is an earthly scene, though of course there is a heavenly aspect connected with it, but is it not significant that one has to turn to the Old Testament Scriptures for a detailed description of it? Read Isaiah lxxv. 17-25. Verse 17 looks beyond the kingdom to the new heavens and the new earth but verses 18-25 describe the kingdom age. The curse will be removed, and the things that unbelief ridicules will actually take place (Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2, 6, 7-10) when the LORD puts His hand upon the face of creation in that day. Look at Amos ix. 13-15, and compare verse 15 with Psalm lxxvii. 6. The animal kingdom undergoes a radical change and Isaiah xi. gives a glowing picture of the Millennial Reign of Israel's Messiah.

Jerusalem will be the world's metropolis (Isaiah lix. 19, 20, lx. 1-5; 10-13; 18-20; lxii. 1-7; Zeph. iii. 16-20). The Temple will be rebuilt, and its service restored with great magnificence (Ezek. xl-xlvi.). The Old Testament sacrifices were anticipatory, while those of the millennium will be commemorative. Israel's salvation, like ours, is based on the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Jerusalem then becomes the centre of the earth's worship (Isaiah ii. 1-3; Zech. xiv. 16-19). The feast of the passover and of tabernacles will be kept, but not the feast of weeks, whose fulfilment was absorbed when the HOLY GHOST came down at Pentecost.

The King has already been here in person, only to be rejected by those who ought to have been His willing subjects,

but while here He did not speak of Himself as King, except in Matthew xxv., where He speaks of the King saying to those on His right hand "Come ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is not as King that the believer knows Him now. The King of saints in Rev. xv. 3 should read the King of Nations, as the margin gives it. When the LORD JESUS was upon earth He was a prophet, now He is the great High Priest, interceding before GOD, but in the day to come He is to be a King, and His Church will be associated with Him in His kingdom.

The conversation which took place between the LORD JESUS and Pilate is very significant. Pilate said, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" JESUS answered, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Then Pilate said, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee to me: what hast Thou done?" JESUS answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence." Then to Pilate's question, "Art Thou a king then?" JESUS answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,* that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John xviii. 53-57).

Pilate, no doubt, would have liked to release JESUS, as one in whom he could find no fault, but the Jews cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar," and so after saying to them, "Behold your king," and asking them the question, "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." This settled Pilate and he submitted to their will and crucified Him, with a label attached to His cross, written in the three current languages of the time, a label that was evidently intended to express his contempt for the whole nation and to exonerate himself. This crucified One is the King Who will reign in righteousness for the duration of the millennium, and all who believe in Him will be with Him when He reigns over the earth.

G. S. PURNELL.

Malachi iii. 16

AS we consider these who "feared the LORD and thought upon His Name," it is well to remember that though only composing a remnant of the original testimony planted by God's favour in the world, it was through this pious and exercised remnant the light steadily shone amid prevailing and increasing darkness; it was by them witness was still given to the great truths and principles of that Divine government upon which God ever blesses His faithful people, making them in turn to become a blessing.

No bond of human organisation united them, no creed of human construction kept them together, but "the fear of the LORD" and the value they found in His Name, with their delight in speaking often one to another as they thought upon this great treasure. Their witness continued *till He came*, as they held fast what they had. Zacharias, Elisabeth, the blessed Mother of the LORD, Joseph, the Shepherds, Simeon and Anna, the latter of whom "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel," "together with Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which "also waited for the Kingdom of God" formed a blessed succession of high and low, rich and poor. The mention of these names reveals some who held fast what they had in days when the public testimony had become well nigh obliterated by the traditions of men, worldly-mindedness, and the active opposition of the tireless enemy of God and His chosen people. May *we*, in our day, emulate their constancy and faithfulness.

Sparkling Gems

When we draw near and listen to Him, the only proper attitude is to bow and worship.

He loves us individually.

Under the law God is rather a *receiver*; He asks, demands, insists that the creature render Him the honour due to His majesty. In the *gospel*, God is the *giver* of His own SON.

It is well to bethink ourselves of the preciousness of every saint as such. Show me the very weakest and most trying of them all; yet we may and ought to cultivate a real, genuine respect for such as God's children.

If we had before us in others, not their failure, but CHRIST'S love to and His life in them and the glory to which they belong, what would be the effect? "Love unto all the saints."

On the contrary, in thinking of ourselves, ought we not to feel how much there is that is unlike CHRIST?

May we ever be specially alive to that in which we break down and grieve the SPIRIT OF GOD! This would have the effect of lowering and putting down our own self-esteem.

God would lay upon our hearts all the saints. He has them all upon His own heart and He will have us to cultivate this largeness of family affection.

A Christian must act upon heavenly principles, in order to act well in a natural relationship.

There is always blessing and power in believing the word of God.

We can never pray too much for the church; but it is another thing to be troubling our minds as if the LORD forgot her and was not taking adequate care of the saints in their need and sorrow. The LORD will never fail!

(Selected by C. A. Hammond).

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.

FEBRUARY, 1951

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Trust and Distrust

DISTRUST thyself, but trust His grace;
It is enough for thee!
In every trial thou shalt trace
Its all-sufficiency.

Distrust thyself, but trust His love;
In Him thou shalt be strong:
His weakest ones may learn at length
A daily triumph-song.

Distrust thyself but trust His love;
Rest in its changeless glow:
And life or death shall only prove
Its everlasting flow.

Distrust thyself, but trust alone
In Him, for all—for ever!
And joyously thy heart shall own
That JESUS faileth never.

MISS FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

A Major Message from a Minor Prophet

(Continued from page 6)

THE VOICE AND THE VISION

BY THE EDITOR

THE astonishment and anxiety which possess the prophet now lead him to feel that he has said more than he should, and so communing with his own heart he says, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved."

This is the right attitude to take in the face of disturbing things in the world, disquieting things among the professed people of God, and our distracting thoughts caused thereby. For "God is, and He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." So, on to the watch tower, to the high place where alone with God he can be above distractions and worldly cares, the prophet takes his way. Literally "I will stand" is "I would stand now" (as a servant awaiting his master) "upon my watch, and set me (that is plant myself firmly) upon the tower (lit. fenced place, one straitened and hemmed in), and will watch [as a 'watchman'—title of prophets as espying, by God's enabling, things beyond human ken]; and will watch (as to see a long way off, to see with the inward eye) what He will say unto (in) me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved."

From that lofty place he would wait the answer not only for himself but for others also exercised, and maybe for times then, and still, long distant. For no prophecy is of private, special or merely local interpretation. There he learns the need of viewing time against the background of eternity. There he learns that the present holds the promise of the future. There he learns that faith and patience are the hallmark of the spiritual life. For in the watch tower, the place apart, the true position of the strengthening of faith by the vision and voice of God, he hears the great principle for faith, "The just shall live by faith." And still the same counsel and comforting assurance keeps on being given and

confirmed to all dwellers in their lonely watch towers. It was the word of the LORD to Habakkuk, by the SPIRIT to Paul, through him to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, and by the Scriptures to ourselves today, "*Now the just shall live by faith.*"

"If thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God," said our LORD to the mourning sisters at Bethany, enunciating what ever had been, and what all the time of our earthly pilgrimage ever must be, the attitude of Faith. Outward *retirement* from the noise, bustle, confusion and distracting things; inward *meditation* as the soul waits only upon GOD; and earnest *expectation*, for He will speak to the waiting heart—these are indispensable to the Vision being seen and the Voice being heard.

Then Habukkuk was reminded that the vision was "for an appointed time—" GOD's time; "that it will surely come"—not tarry indefinitely, and that "the just shall live by faith."

The permanent message of chapter i is clearly that in spite of disturbing things in the world, disquieting things among the professed people of GOD, and the distracting thoughts occasioned thereby, the line for the exercised heart at all times is that indicated and taken both by Asaph the Psalmist, and Habukkuk the Prophet in their perplexity, "I went into the Sanctuary." "I will stand upon my watch."

"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith."

The Voice and the Vision brought both light and correction to the prophet as he waited in solitary retirement upon GOD in his watch tower. But the vision with its answer to his perplexities was not for himself alone. It was to be written so plainly by him that others might also see and read it for the quickening of faith and the patience of hope. "*That he may run that readeth it.*" Plainly and permanently recorded, it held a message for every generation of GOD's people until it should be perfectly fulfilled. As another has truly said, "Tradition is uncertain, and may be corrupted. Philosophy

is insufficient, and human reason is delusive. The testimony of men would continually perplex and mislead. But the word of GOD stands for ever, an assurance and guide to all generations."

Now let us consider what the vision revealed to Habakkuk. It was a vision of gloom and glory with an assurance that "the just shall live by his faith" whatever the future held in store for the nation. It was a vision which had a two-fold application, one near and the other much more distant. It was a stirring vision of a five-fold woe and of universal blessing. The destiny of Israel as well as the doom of their oppressors being involved in the purport of the vision, it was desirable that all should become well acquainted with its message. Habakkuk was therefore directed by the Voice to write the vision, and set it out in the boldest and most impressive form, so that even the most heedless and negligent might be arrested.

The centre, the core so to speak, of the vision expressed the contrast between the man who is puffed up with self-confidence, and the man whose whole confidence is in GOD. Whether Jews, Chaldeans, or ourselves as individuals, the plain truth is—"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him": but "the just shall live by faith."

That man, or race of men, which exalts itself against GOD will have a crooked, uneasy, restless soul here, with a fearful reckoning to face hereafter. But he who confides in GOD when things are at their worst and darkest, who trusts when it seems impossible to trace His workings, will live in the fullest, the highest, sense of the term, and be vindicated at the end. The story of "the end of the LORD" in the history of Job is given to confirm this.

The vision of gloom is the five-fold woe pronounced upon the haughty despoilers and oppressors who, in ignorance that they are only instruments in GOD's hands for the correction of His people, reveal their real character.

"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built . . . by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" exclaims the first great Chaldean king; "ye shall worship the golden image which I have set up" he also commands with his soul swollen with pride. What brought down this empire

within some ninety years only of its establishment were just the things enumerated in the vision, namely pride, rapacity, covetousness, craftiness, idolatry and drunkenness. It was also at an idolatrous drunken debauch that the kingdom collapsed—and this forms part of the vision of gloom, which however still awaits its extended fulfilment.

The vision of glory is summed up in verse 14—"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Of this glorious time an earlier prophet had spoken (Isaiah xi. 7) giving fuller details as to when it would be; and surely if ever such an inspiring vision was needed by the Jewish people it was just when Habukkuk was given the same message in an altogether different setting.

This vision dispels the bewilderment and perplexity which had filled the prophet's soul; and now he knows that God's chastisement is inevitable for the almost unpardonable evils and sins which have so evilly compromised His Holy Name among other nations.

No longer now will it even appear as though He were indifferent to the mighty sins and manifold transgressions of His people. "Judgment must begin at the house of God," since "Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever." Yet beyond the storm of trouble which the invasion by the pitiless Chaldean enemy will bring upon his beloved country, the prophet has now seen that God's purpose for His Own people abides, and will one day be fulfilled. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Its perfect fulfilment awaits the time when "the Kingdom of the world of our LORD and of His CHRIST has come" Rev. xi. 15 (New Trans.), the Vision being one of final glory whatever the intermediate gloom.

So the raging storm in the prophet's heart is stilled by the Voice and the Vision. The human spirit has become hushed and awe-filled as upon it the truth sung by an earlier Psalmist has come: "Thou art from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their waves. The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

In the earlier anguish of spirit the puzzled prophet had, as it were, challenged God with "Art not Thou from everlasting, O LORD, my God?" but now in the sanctuary of His realised presence the unerring wisdom and unfailing care for His people becomes clearer and clearer through the Voice and the Vision. "The LORD answered me," says the prophet. It was JEHOVAH, the REDEEMER—GOD, known in unchanging relation to His people who had spoken; and they, in any age (He being what He is and now fully revealed in the LORD JESUS), as His people may therefore confidently say:—

"His love in times past forbids us to think
He'll leave us at last in trouble to sink."

Discipline?—Yes. Destruction?—No, "for His Name's sake."

The vision of gloomy woe and of a glorious future of universal blessing is followed by a word suited at all times. "But the LORD is in His Holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." In troublous times at a much earlier date, the royal Psalmist had realised and recorded the importance, necessity, and value of similar advice. "The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men." There were men then who were even asking "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The confidence of the tried heart was found in the abiding fact that while there are things which can be shaken, there are "things which cannot be shaken," and so, like Asaph of old, could say "my flesh and my heart faileth; but GOD is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever . . . and it is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the LORD GOD." In His presence all mysteries are solved. "Let all the earth keep silence before Him," literally, "hush before Him all the earth"; waiting from Him in hushed stillness the issue of this tangled state of being. For as at the commencement of the chapter so at the end, it is to the hushed soul, silent to itself and to its own thoughts, hushed and silent in awe of His Majesty and His realised Presence, that GOD speaks.

One clear message from this chapter of Voice and Vision is that in spite of appearances GOD still *is*, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The prosperity

of the wicked, the apparent immunity of the evildoer are seen in true perspective when like the Psalmist we go into the sanctuary, when like the Prophet we wait in silence upon God, communing with our own hearts in His presence. Also the golden age will come; the day of universal blessing will dawn; for "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" indefinitely. God makes the promise; faith believes it; hope anticipates it; patience quietly waits for it. God's character is vindicated alike by His judgments, and by the patience of faith.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Speakers and Hearers

A RESPONSIBILITY rests upon both. Therefore, it behoves the speaker to be careful as to what or how he speaks (or writes); and the hearer as to how or what he receives or rejects. This is important as regards natural or temporal things; how much more so with regard to things spiritual and eternal.

Consider, first, the preaching of the gospel. The man called to "do the work of an evangelist" (as was Timothy), is also enjoined to "preach the word." Here lies his responsibility. He is to "be instant in season, out of season;" he is to "buy up the opportunity;" in the morning he is to sow the seed, and not to withhold his hand in the evening. The responsibility of the preacher (speaker) is the sowing of the seed. This done, as regards *this* service, he may take his sleep; leaving the results with God (read Mark iv., verses 21 to 32; particularly verses 26 to 29).

These remarks are not intended to encourage indolence; but rather to warn against impatience. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient" (James v. 7, 8)

The evangelist, and quite naturally, desires to see fruit from his labours; but it is wiser to allow the seed (the word) to take its proper course, than to make a "forced" growth, resulting in a weak and sickly plant.

But what of the hearers? Turn again to Mark iv. and read the reiteration by the "Chief Sower" of the responsibility of the several classes of those who hear: "The sower soweth the word" (verse 14). "And these are they . . . ; but when they have heard" (15). "And these are they likewise . . . ; who, when they have heard" (16). "And these are they . . . ; such as hear the word" (18). "And these are they . . . ; such as hear the word" (20). The context in each instance gives the result.

So much as to the responsibilities of the speakers and hearers of the gospel. What of those who minister (speak) the word to the saints; and what of those who listen to that ministry? Undoubtedly, responsibility rests upon both. "Let the prophets speak . . . let the other judge" (1 Cor. xiv. 29).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter iv. 11). What a responsibility, but withal a holy privilege! With such a word in mind, how careful a speaker (or writer) should be that what he seeks to minister is in accord with the revealed word of God. What damage may be, and has been, wrought by overstepping what has been revealed and recorded in the "Scripture of Truth." A speaker in the course of ministry may give expression to what he himself apprehends as to a scripture or subject about which there is no clear and simple scriptural definition; but he should be careful to do so as his own apprehension, and not enforce it as a dogma.

The Apostle Paul was very careful to do so. None could speak with greater certainty or insistence on what had been revealed. He, like the Apostle Peter, could speak, or write, "as the oracles of God." But Paul made it quite clear that there is a distinction in ministry as regards the revealed word, or commandment, of the LORD and the apprehension (though a godly and truly-felt apprehension) of even an Apostle. In 1 Cor. vii. he writes with definiteness as to what was the word or commandment of the LORD; and then sets forth his own apprehension of the subject under consideration: "But to the rest speak I, not the LORD." He then sets forth at some length what he apprehends to be the truth, and concludes with the words "and I think also that I have the SPIRIT OF GOD." He writes with a consciousness of his responsibility, but also with a conviction that what he writes he can submit

to wise judgment. A little further on in this same letter Paul writes, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. x. 15).

So much as to the responsibility of the prophets. What of the hearers? "Let the prophets speak . . . and let the other judge."

The hearers' responsibility, then, is to judge: to consider; to seek to rightly apprehend; to appraise; what is spoken by the prophets. Where the ministry is clear and simple there is none occasion for difficulty on the part of even the youngest hearers. Good! "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter ii. 2). But sometimes, at the close of a meeting for the ministry of the word, the remark is made, "Yes, it was a good address; but he (the speaker) was speaking over our heads." Do not such cases call for the *self-examination of the hearer*, rather than the condemnation of the speaker?

Ministry is not solely for the feeding of the babes with the milk of the word, that they may grow thereby; but for the stimulating of that growth and bringing on to maturity; and even then feeding with convenient (suitable) food.

Ministers (speakers) ought not, and cannot, stop at "spoon-feeding" their hearers as babes (necessary as that is for infants); and surely, if in a healthy condition, hearers ought not to be satisfied and contented so to be fed.

Read what another writer to those early Hebrew-Christians had to say as to this (Heb. v. 11-14), and then follow on with the opening verses of chapter vi.: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of CHRIST, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation," etc. "Leaving the principles" does not imply discarding them; but, not stopping at the starting-point, "let us go on to perfection;" (to what belongs to full growth). "And this will we do, if GOD permit."

To sum up: The seed of the word is sown. The hearers who receive (believe) it are elsewhere spoken of as "being born again . . . by the word of GOD." As such, they should, "as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye (they) may grow thereby." As they grow they "become such as have need . . . of strong meat." As to these things lies the responsibility alike of "speakers and hearers."

H. SAMBROOK

Proud Incredulity

AS active as man's spirit in its hope
 To climb on top of all that can be seen;
 Things tangible and visible, whose scope
 Is only temporal, have always been
 In opposition to those unseen things
 Whose import through eternal ages rings!

No merely mortal man has GOD beheld
 Except as He Himself is now revealed
 In JESUS CHRIST, His SON, Who has excelled
 All mortal men in every human field.
 He came from the invisible to show
 The import of what it is life to know!

GOD's creature, man, enamoured of himself,
 Has challenged his CREATOR to contend
 With him in his defence of trusted self;
 Why must he on his MAKER's will depend?
 Why may he not his own will carry out,
 And himself crown with one triumphant shout?

To what in even earthly things is true,
 In proud and independent self-esteem
 Man shuts his eyes in order to eschew
 The light that shine's in GOD's revealing gleam:
 To see GOD's kingdom man must be reborn,
 And through his newborn eyes behold its dawn!

Have you been born again, or are you still
 In nature's darkness with no other aim
 Than your own happy dreaming to fulfil,
 Born of the flesh, with all that flesh can claim?
 GOD's SPIRIT, brooding o'er your darkness, can
 Give you eternal life:—GOD's grace's plan!

G. S. PURNELL.

The Lord's Body and the Body of Christ

(*St. Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. x. 17*)

THERE is no symbolic "use" of the loaf apart from the practical one enjoined by the LORD when He said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you." For it is a loaf—a loaf of bread a symbol deliberately chosen by the LORD to describe his Incarnation, and its purpose. To this He alludes in the synagogue in Capernaum (not referring to the LORD'S SUPPER but to what that now symbolises) "The bread of GOD is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world . . . I am the bread of life . . . I am the living bread . . . the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." It is this giving, however, which the Supper symbolises.

Now as to the point raised this seems due to an overbalancing of one truth against another, or a supposing that one Scripture cancels out another, which it never does save in our imagination.

That the loaf does symbolise what for distinction we may call the mystical body of CHRIST is, of course, true (1 Cor. x. 17). But that is not the primary significance of it, *for the mystical body did not exist* when the LORD instituted the Supper and said, "This is My body." Moreover, upon considering the account in St. Luke of the word, "This is My body which is given for you," one may enquire, in what way could that mystical body, of which we are members, ever be said, in the past, present or future sense of the words, to be "given for you."

No! the truth is inescapable; it was the BLESSED LORD'S own human body that He was setting forth in the loaf He had taken into His hands to break and give to the disciples then in the Upper Room. The body prepared for Him (Heb. x. 5) so that He could as a real and perfect man give Himself a ransom for many. Faith responds to this with "The SON OF GOD Who loved me; and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20; Rev. i. 5).

Referring to the later symbol (1 Cor. x.) we learn that the one body of many members there spoken of is expressed by our partaking of the one that sets forth the LORD in His death. For, explains the Apostle, "we are one loaf and one body" (the mystical body) "for we are all partakers of that one bread the loaf which sets forth the LORD's own body broken for us. We all, in partaking thereof, confess our participation in the blessings provided and forever secured by the LORD's death. Thus the new unity, formed and sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT, is expressed; for the partaking of the LORD'S SUPPER is the practical expression of the unity of the mystical body of CHRIST and of mutual fellowship. The bread and the wine setting forth His death "till He come" is a continual reminder that without the One Who was sacrificed for us there could have been no gathering together of the children of GOD (John xi. 51, 52); no "one flock" had not the GOOD SHEPHERD died for it (John x. 15-17); no "church" had not CHRIST loved it and given Himself for it (Eph. v. 25).

These two aspects of truth as to "the LORD's body" (1 Cor. xi. 29) and "the body of CHRIST" (1 Cor. xii. 27) respectively, are clearly but briefly set out in the words of a well-known hymn.

The primary—"the LORD's Body"—in the verse.

"The broken loaf, the cup we share,
Thy flesh, Thy blood express;
Thy body, LORD, discerning there,
Thy precious Name we bless."

The secondary, resultant "body of CHRIST"—with its responsibility is shown as we confess,

"Called in one body to declare
Our fellowship with Thee,
LORD, Thy rejection we would share
Till we Thy glory see."

C. Moss.

Sparkling Gems

No man is his own master; he is either governed by CHRIST or governed by Satan.

* * *

When CHRIST commanded the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth, the man might naturally have said, "How can I stretch forth an arm which hangs dead by my side?" But he did not raise any question whatever, for with the command, and from the same source, came the power to obey.

* * *

When the soul is wholly occupied with God, it is enabled to launch out into all the fullness of His grace, to bask in the sunshine of His countenance, and delight itself in the rich abundance of His mercy and lovingkindness.

* * *

Oh! that we may all be in deeper communion with the mind of God, in reference to self and all that pertains thereto.

* * *

The heart is deceitful and the enemy is crafty; hence there is great need to hearken to the word of exhortation, "be sober, be vigilant."

* * *

It is when we begin, continue and end our work at the MASTER'S feet, that our service will be of the right kind.

* * *

What a mercy to be called to walk in companionship with One Who bears such a Name as this! "I Am."

* * *

A risen CHRIST is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption; and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality.

* * *

Yesterday's manna will not do for today, nor today's for tomorrow.

* * *

Here are the questions of the wilderness, "What?" "Where?" "How?" Faith has a brief but comprehensive answer to all the three, namely, God! Precious, perfect answer!

(Selected by C. A. Hammond).

The Christian's Citizenship

EVERY man, woman and child in this world is a passer-through. All must move along life's busy highway until they pass into the Silent Land.

The godly in every age have looked for a better country beyond the valley, where the soul's truest life will find its complete fulfilment.

We, Christian pilgrims to the City of God, have an upward calling, and are a colony of Heaven on earth. Our spiritual life is governed by the laws of Heaven. Our highest interests and blessings belong to the realm of the unseen and eternal realities. Our truest life is beyond human sight and the reach of accident and death, and resides in the depths of its union with the life of CHRIST. We are away from our final home, in a world that is unfriendly to the Kingdom of God.

But all this does not mean that we do not enjoy the journey during life's march from dusk to dawn. Abraham the pilgrim was a wealthy man of affairs; and we Christians, like him, are not anxious to die.

We owe allegiance to an earthly government; but *absolute* obedience is due alone to CHRIST Whose subjects we are, and Whose authority is supreme.

“How sweet the prospect is!
It cheers the pilgrim's breast;
We're journeying through the wilderness,
But soon shall gain our rest:
Hallelujah!
We are on our way to God.

E. ADAMS.

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MARCH, 1951

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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DR. S. P. TREGELLES says, "The *fact* of inspiration, which we have to uphold, irrespective of all *theory*, is, that it is *plenary* in character, so that the *ideas* are from God, though written by men, that the phraseology in which the ideas are clothed is precisely what He *intended* it should be, and that the words, as written by His inspired servants, may be rested on as fully as being the exponents of His mind and of the ideas which He wished to convey, as those of a mere human author are of His *own* sentiments." The late Canon A. R. Fausset, one of the authors of Jameson, Fausset and Brown's commentary, in his preface to the third volume says, "Once for all, let me state my unhesitating conviction of the plenary and verbal inspiration of 'all Scripture,' and of Holy Scripture *alone*."

"The view which I maintain is that every book, and chapter, and verse, and syllable, of the Bible was originally given by the inspiration of God. I hold that not only the substance of the Bible, but its language—not only the ideas of the Bible, but its words—not only certain parts of the Bible, but every chapter of the book—that all and each are of Divine Authority. I hold that the Scripture not only *contains* the Word of God, but *is* the Word of God."

Bp. J. C. Ryle.

The Major Message

(Continued from page 18)

BY THE EDITOR

BUT the just shall live by his faith." Here the message is one of sure hope for the individual however bad the times in which his lot may be cast. Job, in an earlier day, gave expression to the same conviction and certainty when he exclaimed, "But the righteous shall hold on his way." It is this perseverance amidst trying and difficult times, when there is much to depress the spirit, and little outwardly to cheer, that marks the righteous in a world of unrighteousness. Since faith is the link between God's fullness and strength and our emptiness and weakness, the importance of faith is emphasised in Scripture for "without faith it is impossible to please God," or to hold communion with Him.

Now it pleased God that this word to Habakkuk as part of the vision should be explained and expounded by the HOLY SPIRIT through the Apostle Paul. But when it was first given to be written and recorded plainly "that he may run that readeth it", some six centuries before CHRIST, and in the trying days which followed, it became, so to say, a proverb, that is a short familiar sentence expressing a great truth, which could be easily committed to memory, and become a kind of spiritual tonic to drooping hearts as it was repeated among the godly when they met. As time went on and darkness deepened and difficulties multiplied, it would be a secret encouragement to the faithful few in the nation who still treasured God's word. Then as passed on from one to another in simple faith and confident hope it would be recognised as a doctrine, a thing firmly believed and taught, that "the just shall live by his faith," that the righteous should hold on his way. Finally it would shine as a sure star of hope gleaming brightly as the dawn approached. This is no mere fancy, but exactly how such a great word would reveal its comfort to all who trembled at the word of God. The actual words occur four times in Scripture, once here in our prophet's vision, and three times in St. Paul's epistles. In the first and last mention the word

“faith” has not only the meaning usually given to it, but also the idea of faithfulness or fidelity. It is the persevering quality that holds on its way, for “the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry wait for it.”

The Chaldean invasion with all its horrors would create a situation calling for deep real confidence in God’s purpose of final deliverance and blessing. Daniel was one of those who lived by faith then through most trying circumstances. He was a righteous man against whom even his bitter enemies could bring no charge except of devotion to his God. And in the last mention of “the just shall live by his faith” in Hebrews x. 28, the emphasis is on *live*, hold on, for “He that shall come will come, and not tarry.”

In the three great epistles for which St. Paul takes this message of our prophet as his text, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, he shows that besides the general principle that “the just shall live by his faith,” and the personal application to individuals, there is a practical outcome of first-class importance. This will appear if we note how the great words “just,” “live,” “faith,” are emphasised in his expositions. In Romans i. 17, “The *just* shall live by faith” when fully expounded by the Apostle leads to a clear statement of how a man may *become just* in the sight of God. In Galatians iii. 2, that “the just shall live by *faith*,” not by works of law, but by faith of JESUS CHRIST is plainly shown. In Hebrews x. 38, “the just shall *live* by faith,” for “yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry,” and the righteous shall hold on his way, shows the persevering character of this faith as in Habakkuk’s time, when it was first spoken.

Indeed the whole course of a Christian believer today is covered by this great word, and this we must now look at in more detail.

In Romans the great subject is the righteousness of God, for man has no righteousness in which to appear before God. So the case is clearly stated, “there is none righteous, no, not one. For all have sinned and come short [do come short] of the glory of God.”

But the righteousness of GOD is now revealed in the gospel concerning His SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD. The gospel is the good news by faith of JESUS CHRIST, going out unto all, and upon all that believe, namely that GOD has found a ransom, an atonement by the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS "Whom GOD set forth to be a propiation through faith in His blood, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in JESUS."

Here is indeed the way one becomes righteous, or just, before GOD. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." As a Psalmist puts it in another connection, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "For GOD commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us."

When one believes on Him that raised up JESUS our LORD from the dead, JESUS "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," one is justified on the principle of faith, and so enjoys peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. His faith in CHRIST is reckoned to him for righteousness, and he becomes in the sight of GOD a righteous, or just; man. He "lives by faith of the SON of GOD who loved me and gave Himself for me."

In the Galatian exposition of the message it may be better read, "the just by faith shall live." A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST (literally "in JESUS CHRIST") and we have believed in JESUS CHRIST, that we might be justified by the faith of CHRIST, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. "By grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD: not of works lest any man should boast." Could it be stated in clearer language that it is by *faith* the just shall *live*?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the HOLY SPIRIT leads the writer to a development of this text. Habakkuk reads the vision and writes the record, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Here in the *first* mention "*it* will surely come, *it* will not tarry," but in Hebrews the last mention of "the just

shall live by *his* faith" it is changed to "*He* that shall come will come and will not tarry." The light is clearer, the vision of hope more distinct, not "*it*" but "*He*," a Person, fills the picture. He by Whose atoning sacrifice ungodly sinners, once dead in sins, may through believing be made just before God: He Whose coming for, and appearing with, His saints, will solve earth's problems for ever, it is *He* Who will come and will not tarry. So the just shall live by his faith, and the righteous shall hold on his way till the perfect day for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

In the same chapter in Hebrews the Will of God accomplished by the work of CHRIST, and its value and completeness witnessed to by the HOLY SPIRIT brings faith, hope, and love into holy exercise encouraging the readers to steadiness, fidelity, confidence and patience that having done the Will of God ye might receive the promise. "For yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back into perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." For our encouragement in the hard toilsome way, always uphill, that fronts the people of God, we have as our File Leader the *Author and Completer of the life of faith*. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself: He has been tempted in all points as we are, sin apart; He has entered in as our *Forerunner*, and upon His sympathy, succour, and unfailing interest we may confidently count all the days of our pilgrimage. Looking off unto Him we *live* by faith.

As a writer of a bygone generation beautifully expresses it, "We are too apt to derive ourselves of the lofty consolations and mysterious inflowings of power which we are meant to possess, by not opening our eyes to see, and our hearts to receive, what is really the central blessing which CHRIST gives, the communication of actual Divine life, which is meant to dwell in, and manifest itself triumphantly through our weakness, till with the Apostle we can truly and experimentally affirm, 'I can do all things through CHRIST Who strengtheneth me.'"

So with the prophet's vision, and the Apostle's expositions, his stirring exhortation comes ringing in our ears, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward," for "*the just shall live by his faith.*"

(*To be continued, D.V.*)

Unprofitable Servants

(*Luke xii. 6-19*)

IT is possible for us to repeat rather glibly our LORD's words and to say "We are unprofitable servants" without remembering or pausing to consider the first part of the sentence, "So likewise ye, when ye *shall have done all those things which are commanded you . . .*" That standard of obedience is a high one, and suggests no failure in the carrying out of that which has been required, but even *then* "We are unprofitable servants—we have done that which was our duty to do."

Luke, writing by the HOLY SPIRIT, does not, it would seem, attempt an historic sequence in that which he records, but rather sets forth the truth in a moral order or design, and so it is that immediately after the above passage we get the account of our LORD meeting the ten lepers; they stand afar off and cry "JESUS, MASTER, have mercy on us." The SAVIOUR'S response is "Go, shew yourselves unto the priests." This was the command of One whom they had acknowledged as MASTER, will they obey? "And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed." Nine at least obey, it would seem, to the letter, but one, a Samaritan, feels that something deeper is called for than the spirit of legal obedience to a command. We read:—

- (1) He turned back and with a loud voice glorified God.
- (2) He fell down on his face at His feet.
- (3) He gave thanks.

What sort of comparison shall we draw between the nine and this one Samaritan? They, the nine, did what they were commanded, and were satisfied so to do, but we surely cannot include them among the profitable servants of the MASTER upon whom they had called. No mere legal obedience would

satisfy the Samaritan, he gives all the glory to God, and that with a voice that others can hear; he falls down on his face at the LORD's feet, an act of homage to, and recognition of, the Person (however feeble his apprehension) in Whose presence he was and to Whom he owed his cleansing, and he gives thanks. There was no word of command for all this, it was entirely beyond a legal requirement, it was a spontaneous act of worship, homage and thanksgiving.

Do not let us be content to settle into a legal mind. We probably think lightly of the nine, and then all unconsciously follow them, being well satisfied that we are doing, or trying to do, what we have been commanded. A desire to really glorify God; a sense of what becomes us in His presence Whom we know, through grace, as our LORD and SAVIOUR; a purpose to offer the sacrifice of praise, even "the fruit of our lips giving thanks unto His Name," will give a character to our lives and service which we may well covet.

Where are the nine? Shall we say, Obedient but unprofitable servants?
S. G. SCALES.

The Bride, The Lamb's Wife

"IT is not good for man to be alone,"—

First human-welfare comment ever made:
An utterance of God upon His Own

Creation, where His image is displayed,
Though marred by one who never homage paid
To his CREATOR, but, instead, designed
His might's supremacy to dare invade, —
And wreck with spite, wherever he could find
A choice expression of God's grace's heart and mind!

The first man, Adam, made a living soul,
His help-meet, from him taken, in his sleep,
Given the name of woman, as the whole
Expression of her origin, though deep
Within the mind and heart of GOD, there steep
A mystery, long after to reveal.

The SECOND MAN, the LORD from heaven, keep
For ever in the mind, through woe or weal,
A SPIRIT, all to quicken who to Him appeal!

The woman, when created, thus foretold
 What would emerge by divine will and might,
 When the last Adam of His rights took hold;
 He slept the sleep of death, the foe to fight,
 And out of darkness to bring forth a light,
 That, like Himself, would shine for evermore,
 With glories that transcend all jewels bright.
 Death's Victor's resurrection can restore
 The glory of God's image, conceived long before!

The SECOND MAN will never be alone,
 But, linked with Him in His Own image bright,
 His bride, one mind with Him, knowing as known,
 Joint-heiress with Him of whatever right
 He has secured by His intrinsic might,
 The sharer of His royal throne o'er all.
 In His Own vesture evermore bedight,
 God's glory in accomplishing withal
 That which alone His mercy, grace and love install.

What interest have I in His Own throne?—
 I am by faith a portion of His bride,
 And, seated by Him, as bone of His bone,
 One of the company for which He died.
 His grace has made for me a place beside
 Himself, when He in glory is displayed.
 Oh! who can gauge how long, deep, high and wide
 The love that by and like Himself arrayed
 His bride, beloved, for whom so great a price He paid?

G. S. PURNELL.

“Obey your leaders and submit.” How often a real guide
 can point out what a perplexed saint saw not before it was
 set before him, but when so set at once perceives it to be
 of God.

* * *

He knows how to keep and hold the least steadfast of saints
 that wait on Him.

Tent and Altar

(*Gen. xii. 1, 5-8; Acts vii. 2; 1 Pet. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 10*)

THE history of a saint of old such as Abraham throws light on New Testament teachings. It is GOD's very gracious provision to bring before us living pictures of these doctrines. For what we have in the Apostles' writings is intended to shape our ways: it is not merely matter for the head, but rather for the heart and walk. We can be encouraged, therefore, to trace the ways of a man of like passions as ourselves, that we also may walk according to the principles that directed him.

There is an intimate entwining of the thought of the *tent* and the *altar* in Abraham's life, and it may give us light for our ways if we trace through these few verses of his history. We have first of all the *call* of GOD. Abraham was to leave all that he was connected with and to go out, not knowing whither he went, but only that the LORD had called him to an unseen inheritance. In these verses the call is followed by the simple statement that he answered, and that he arrived. But we do know from other passages that it was not quite as simple as that in practice. He left his country, but he did not leave his kindred, and we find him waiting on the border of the land until his father died. Then, too, when in the land, it was not until Lot was separated from him that the LORD was able to speak freely of what was to be done for him. But the CALL of GOD had sufficed in principle to break the ties of his former existence beyond the flood, and to bring him as a pilgrim and a stranger, a tent dweller, to walk through Canaan. According to the measure of his obedience, so he learnt the fullness of GOD's thoughts for him, and the extent of his inheritance.

Peter speaks to, and about, us. If it was the GOD of glory who appeared to the father of the faithful, it is the GOD of grace who calls us, in our turn, to His glory. The answer that Abraham made to his call was dependent upon a faith able to turn promise into reality. His future was unseen, but none the less real to his faith, and this sense of reality broke his old ties, and enabled him to live by that faith. What about

ourselves? We may know our salvation, but do we know our calling? How *real* is the glory to us, the glory to which we are called—is it real enough to sever the ties that bind us here, to detach our hearts from this world, and to fill them with what is unseen? Our future is linked both with the glory of GOD—we rejoice in hope of it—and with the One Who is there, Who fills it, and Who is the fullest expression of it. If our hearts are drawn after the LORD, then we know Him as the One Who came down here, and was cast out, to be received by the glory. There is no place for Him here, but do we find a place here? The glory is full of Him—do we find our home there?

There are many varied aspects of the glory, for after judgment has fallen it will fill both heaven and earth, and we are not doing well if we concentrate upon one aspect of it to the exclusion of others. The heavenlies are even now our spiritual home, but we may well search out their varied aspects to accustom our hearts to their fullness, just as Abraham walked through his land of promise. Pre-eminently, of course, they are the place where the LORD Himself is, the One Who has washed us in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his GOD and FATHER. We wait to be with Him, to behold the LAMB as it had been slain. Above all things else, the glory consists of His excellence and exaltation, and surely there is no force so magnetic as the fervent love for His blessed excellent Person that He implants within us. Well, He patiently waits His time of manifested glory, not merely unknown, but unwanted in this world. And if our hearts are directed into His patience, then we too long for the place where:

“The LAMB is there, my soul;
 There, GOD Himself doth rest,
 In love divine diffused through all
 With Him supremely blest.”

But the glory is also the FATHER'S house, where there is the full experience of the love that we have known in JESUS. The glory is the antechamber to the kingdom come in power, when we shall worship because of the judgments poured out on the earth. And the same glory shall yet cover this scene, while we shall reign with Him, if we have suffered with Him here

below. Then faithful service here shall be rewarded, and we shall witness the culmination of His faithful stewardship. The glory, too, shall contemplate the marriage of the LAMB, and the peaceful wonders of that time when GOD shall be all in all. All these aspects, and others too, doubtless, not only have their attraction for our hearts—yet how little we speak of them—but their truths *are* designed to act in power in us, directing our walk and ways, and teaching us something of our responsibility in a scene where all things are to be dissolved. In brief, they detach us from this scene, to make us pilgrims and strangers here, by attracting our hearts increasingly to the land of our inheritance.

Now Abraham erects an *altar* after the LORD has appeared to him. The call brought him out, the revelation made him a worshipper. Doubtless he had been so since he left Ur, but not until now does GOD the SPIRIT notice it. So that we may judge that Abraham was now closer to GOD's thoughts for him, than he had been before. He was passing through the land a pilgrim and a stranger. He built an altar to the LORD Who had appeared to him, and then subsequently called on the name of the LORD.

This is full of instruction for us, for we too have an altar. There has been a blessed and full revelation of the FATHER who seeks worshippers, a revelation in the LORD JESUS CHRIST so perfect that He could say that "he that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER" (John xiv. 9). And our hearts have rejoiced in that revelation, for we have seen all our sins put away by the gift of the FATHER's love, and have known our fitness in CHRIST to draw near, bringing our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. These are acceptable as offered in association with the offering of CHRIST. For in the Cross of CHRIST, as in Israel's altar, there is both the display of the righteous requirements of a holy GOD, and also the perfection of the sacrifice which meets those claims. That altar was firstly the altar of burnt offering, where propitiation was made; but also associated with either the altar or the offering, are the sin and peace offerings, of which we are made partakers. Now there was, says the Apostle, even in those days, a picture of the time when CHRIST should be offered up, and as a result, a new centre of gathering found outside the camp. Of this altar they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

It is not our altar, but GOD's. These are His conditions which apply to it, not ours. Its value is the value of its sacrifice—CHRIST JESUS, Who has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD of a sweet smelling savour. Here is the basis of our approach to GOD, of our acceptable worship. There is surely no privilege, no position to equal this one, that with all the claims of that brasen altar answered, we, who were sinners, should be able to worship the FATHER. He sought worshippers, and that gift was what it cost Him, so,—

Responsive to the FATHER's heart
In worship we would bow.

One cannot help but wonder how much we value these precious things. The revelation of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST — has this made us pilgrims and strangers? Our answer lies not at all in an intellectual assent to the wonders of GOD's grace and mercy, but in a practical response in separating from this world, and all that would identify us with it. If this revelation does not make us to differ, not in what we *hold* but in what we are from our neighbours around us, we clearly are not found walking in the steps of faithful Abraham. If we find no opposition in this world, no tribulation or suffering for CHRIST's sake, the inference might well be that we were more occupied with this scene than with the glory. May we indeed be conscious of the light of the knowledge of that glory so shining in our hearts that we may walk worthy of the calling on high that is ours. And when we are walking after this fashion, as obedient children, then there is sincerity in our worship, for we know the separative power of the Cross of CHRIST which was raised outside the camp. The blood in the holiest has spoken for our sin, and sanctifies us. JESUS suffered outside the gate, and is still outside. It is there He leads our praises, it is by Him our sacrifices ascend—let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. As we respond to this, in practice and in spirit, the FATHER will be glorified by a worship which answers in character more fully to His mind, as revealed in this part of Abraham's history.

D.E.B.

Joy and Peace in Believing

ON the resurrection day Thomas was not present when JESUS came. Slow of heart to believe, he missed the early taste of the blessing, and abode in the darkness of his own unbelief, whilst the rest of his fellow disciples were filled with gladness. And as the day of the brightest spring week that had ever dawned, passed, Thomas nursed his grief in solitude and misery. The others with their joyous tale of the resurrection of the LORD on their lips simply irritated him by their assurance. "We have seen the LORD," they said; to which his only reply was, "Except I shall see the print of the nails in His hands, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." So day by day the obstinate man deepens the gloom within him.

Yet all that miserable week the Risen LORD had kept His unbelieving disciple in mind, as indeed He never forgets us though Himself often forgotten by us. The moody man in his self-chosen solitude is still an object of loving interest to the LORD. He is being led into deeper depths than the other disciples, but will rise to higher heights of apprehension of the Person of his Risen MASTER when Sunday comes again.

The grace of CHRIST in dealing with Thomas then, and with ourselves now, is that He does not leave him comfortless but comes to dispel the gloom which surrounds him; and to fill him with a *joy and peace in believing* which leads him to the heights of adoration and worship. "My LORD and my GOD" expresses this.

W.G.T.

Sparkling Gems

To look to Him, depend on Him, delight our souls in Him, follow Him, is an immense safeguard.

* * *

How blessed for the believer that as grace saved, so it abides; not in the least to hinder the moral government of GOD, but to bind up inseparably His holy watchful oversight and discipline of our souls with His unfailing love!

* * *

How often His action which calls us to suffer is to guard us from what would grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, rather than because we have sinned! And it is happy for us when it is so.

* * *

He never causes a needless tear; He acts towards us in perfect love.

* * *

The type of redemption was not complete till the passage of the Red Sea was added to the Passover. Many stop short at the Passover and lose consequently the assurance of GOD *for them*.

* * *

A sense of the need of souls; a Christlike love in the heart; a consciousness of personal impotence; faith in the power of prayer; courage to persevere in spite of refusal; and the assurance of an abundant reward; these are the dispositions that constitute the beauty and the health of the Christian life, that fit one for being a blessing in the world, that make him a true Christian worker and one who does indeed get from GOD the bread of heaven to dispense to the hungry.

* * *

Nothing but intense believing prayer can meet the intense spirit of worldliness, of which complaint is everywhere made.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond).

By the Editor

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Sublime Tranquillity

THE morning breaks, my heart awakes,
And many thoughts come crowding o'er me—
What hopes or fears, what smiles or tears,
Are waiting in that path before me?

Am I to roam, afar from home,
By Babel's streams, in gloom despondent?
On sorrow's tree must my harp be,
To grief's sad gusts alone respondent?

The mists hang dank, on front and flank,
My straining eye can naught discover;
But well I know that many a foe
Around my narrow path does hover.

Not this alone would make me groan,
Alas, a traitor dwells within me;
With hollow smile, and heart of guile,
The world without, too, plots to win me.

Thus I'm beset with foes, and yet
I would not miss a single danger;
Each foe's a friend, that makes me wend
My homeward way—on earth a stranger.

(Continued on page 3 cover)

The Major Message

(Continued from page 29)

BY THE EDITOR

THE Voice and the Vision (ch. ii.) merge into the great psalm (ch. iii.) with the unusual title "Shigionoth" which occurs only in one other place in the Psalter. That great Hebraist, Dr. Pusey, gives the meaning of this title as. "Set to music of psalms of this sort"—a real gem of thought as our consideration of it will show.

"Psalms of this sort" still ascend to God from the hearts of His people in days of deep trial and sore perplexity. For as in Habakkuk's own case prayer merges into exulting praise, and rises to a joy independent of all circumstances. So the prophet sends the words of this song of triumphant faith to the Director of the temple music. "To the Chief Musician. On my stringed instruments. Shigionoth."

A mere professional musician or formal religionist, who has never cried "out of the depth" would quite possibly mark the metre P.M. or Irregular, and be somewhat critical of it.

In tones of reverential awe-filled faith, Habakkuk addresses God: "I heard . . . I feared. O LORD, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Then he recalls the history of the nation, and how this HOLY ONE whose majesty and holiness fill his soul with awe has often acted on behalf of His rebellious people. So his psalm commences, "God came from Teman, and the HOLY ONE from Paran," the two boundaries of Israel's wilderness journeyings; and their whole history as a people was a record of His lovingkindness and providence. He had led them, fed them, guided them, protected them, and preserved them. The chaos and contradiction of present circumstances had not arisen from any lack of care on His part. His purpose of blessing, too, through them, still stood, and would one day be realised in the world. "For the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Even now, sings the psalmist here, "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise," and he proceeds to celebrate the awe-inspiring brightness and power of the HOLY ONE as He dealt in mercy with His people, and in judgment on their enemies.

As in Christendom now, so in Judaism then, it was forgetfulness that "holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever" which led to their present sorrowful plight. But whatever the days in which his lot is cast, "*The just shall live by his faith*" and "*the righteous shall hold on his way.*" The word through Moses still holds good, that "As thy day so shall thy strength be," which may equally well be translated, "As thy day so shall thy security be," or again, "As thy day so shall thy rest be." To the just who live by faith, strength, security and rest are assured, for the LORD is faithful.

Hence we find our prophet-psalmist, taught and inspired by the SPIRIT of GOD, is lifted by faith above present difficulties and troubles, and sends his song of triumph to the Director of the temple music, saying at the same time that he, the writer, would also be taking part with his stringed instruments in the performance of the song of praise.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet, I will rejoice in the LORD; I will joy in the GOD of my salvation. The LORD GOD is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me walk upon mine high places."

Like a triumphal ode for some great victory, this beautiful and sublime outburst of prayer, praise, remembrance, and exultant confidence in GOD, is to be rendered to the LORD Who is ever in His holy temple.

"There is nothing finer," says J. N. Darby, "than this development of the thoughts of the SPIRIT of GOD, the sorrows and anxieties produced by Him, the answer of GOD to give understanding and strengthen faith, in order that the heart may be in full communion with Himself. In sum, in this prophet we have (for the comfort of the faithful heart, which loves GOD's people because they are His, and hence is distressed by the wickedness found among them, and still more by the judgment which falls upon them) the answer of GOD, explaining His ways to faith, and His sure faithfulness to His promises. He knows the oppressor, but 'the just must live by faith.'"

So the witness of the past in this chapter, and the promise of the future in one solitary verse in chapter two, lead to present enjoyment of a joy independent of circumstances.

Watchman! What of the Night?

AS we started the second half of the twentieth century we may have looked back at what had transpired during the past fifty years. Some great changes had taken place during that period. The Turks had been ejected from Palestine; under a British Mandate Jerusalem had been developed as a truly wonderful city; Israel had assumed national status, with Jewish emigrants returning to the land at the rate of about a quarter of a million per annum; Egypt had attained her independence; Russia had absorbed the Eastern half of Germany and taken in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania, with the control of China. Then as we looked from world affairs to the spiritual realm we found among those who bore CHRIST'S Name a steady and alarming growth, not only of modernism, but also of a virtual indifference as to divine things with some, and incipient infidelity with others. We seemed to already hear the cry of Matt. xxv. 8: "Our lamps are going out" (margin). A coldness creeping over the hearts of men bred an indifference as to CHRIST, and boastfulness as to self and man. Such was included, among other striking things, in the record of the first half of the century. Now with the dawn of 1951 we hear of wars and rumours of wars; a shortage of necessary metals and many other things, with a rush for armaments on one hand and amusements on the other.

The immediate past, the present and the future all serve to depress the minds of those who do not truly expect the coming of the LORD JESUS into the air to call His own away; that secret coming which we speak of as "The Rapture" and which precedes that which is unfolded to us in Rev. iv. and the chapters that follow.

But possibly some of our readers are saying, in common with other Christians, that prophecy is already being fulfilled. We do not think so; it is, however, very plain that the stage is being set for the fulfilment of prophecy, and that we are in the rapids of time and approaching the end of the Age.

It is therefore not without grave concern that we hear of Christian leaders (on platforms where once the hope of CHRIST'S coming was clearly announced) now saying that the Church is to go through the coming great tribulation; through that hour of trial which is about to come on the whole habitable

world to try the earth-dwellers. Doubtless such teachers are carried away by what they see around them and have failed to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim. ii. 15).

The coming of the LORD is no matter of human speculation or opinion, its teaching is not the product of a school of thought, but actually of divine revelation.

Where the believer's heart is truly occupied with the LORD JESUS Himself, there is the longing and bright expectancy of seeing Him and of hearing His voice; there is bridal affection, "the Spirit and the bride say Come" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Let us look now at that very young assembly at Thessalonica, and hear what the Apostle Paul says to them on this subject in his two epistles. In each of the eight chapters there is reference to the LORD's coming, but in various aspects.

The believers at Thessalonica had turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9, 10); so the Apostle tells them that they will be his crown of rejoicing at the presence of our LORD JESUS CHRIST at His coming (Chap. ii. 19), he speaks of the LORD's coming *with* all His saints (Chap. iii. 13), but in Chapter iv. 13 he touches upon a subject which has obviously been causing them some anxiety: what about the believers who had died? Would they miss the joy of His coming? Now the Apostle goes on to say that those who have been put to sleep by JESUS, GOD will bring with the LORD JESUS when He comes to reign; then from verses 15 to 18 we have what is really a parenthesis. These four verses tell us of the raising of the sleeping saints, they do not refer to His coming *with* His own (Chs. iii. 13; iv. 14) but to His coming *for* them. The trysting place is in the air, where the sleeping saints and those who are alive and remain to His coming shall be caught up to meet Him. It is clearly therefore a secret rapture.

Following this parenthesis 1 Thess. v. reverts to the Day of the LORD coming for some as a thief in the night, so we see the contrast between the Rapture, the moment of ecstatic joy for His own, and the solemn and glorious day when He comes back with them to execute judgment (Jude 14, 15). The second epistle likewise speaks of His appearing "when the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST (i, 7, 8).

In 2 Thess. ii. the Apostle again deals with something which is troubling those to whom he is writing. A spurious letter has obviously been circulated, claiming apostolic origin, suggesting that the Day of the LORD was already present, and the fiery persecution to which they were exposed inclined them to believe that they were entering the time of tribulation. Now the religious leaders to whom we have earlier made reference do not say that the Day of the LORD is present, but they claim that prophecy is already being fulfilled and that the Church will be here when "that Day" comes. The inspired epistle which set the heart of the Thessalonians at rest is also to assure our minds for ever on this point, namely that we too shall not be soon shaken in mind.

Now, read carefully Chapter ii. from v. 3 onwards. "That day shall not come except there come a falling away (i.e. the apostacy) first, and that man of sin be revealed." The forces of evil are present, but there are two greater powers that hold them in check. That which restrains (v. 6 N.T.) and He who restrains (v. 7 N.T.). The first is surely God's hand in government and the second the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, "He who restrains until He be gone." So there is a Person here who holds the powers of evil back, but when He is gone the flood-gates of evil will be let loose. If the HOLY SPIRIT is going the Church must be going too (John xiv. 16).

We must never lose sight of the fact that the present Day of Grace is itself a parenthesis in the ways of GOD as unfolded heretofore by prophecy and promise. The forming of the Church as "one body", composed of believers from among both Jews and Gentiles—a work which began by the coming down of the HOLY SPIRIT of God at Pentecost—was a secret hid in GOD, and not made known in Old Testament times (Eph. iii.) The day of grace is absolutely unique and is marked by the gathering out of a people for heaven. Believers to-day are anointed and sealed by the SPIRIT Whom they have received in view of this as "the earnest of their inheritance" (Eph. i.).

The departure of the HOLY SPIRIT (2 Thess. ii. 7) means therefore a change of dispensation. The Church will have gone and it will be Jewish heralds who carry the "Gospel of the Kingdom" to all nations: and then, and not before, the apostacy will come.

In what way does the last chapter of these two epistles speak of this subject? "May the LORD direct your hearts into the

love of God and into the patience of CHRIST" (v. 5 margin). "The patience of CHRIST", this is not our side of the picture, so to speak, but His. Ps. cx. tells us something of this, but presents only the aspect of the Kingdom; such passages, however, as John xiv. 1-3, 1 Cor. xv. 51-58 and 1 Thess. iv. 15-18 tell us that He is "the Man of Patience waiting now."

No matter then that some are saying "My LORD delayeth His coming." We expect Him; we watch for Him; we wait for Him as our immediate hope. As Sir E. Denny so beautifully expresses it in his hymn *Bride of the Lamb, awake, awake*:

He comes, for, oh! His yearning heart
 No more can bear delay,
 To scenes of full unmingled joy
 To call His bride away.

S. G. SCALES.

The Kingdom of God

WHAT difference is there between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven? Here is a question that many in this so-called age-of-enlightenment cannot answer even now. The expression the "Kingdom of Heaven" or literally "of the Heavens" is peculiar to Matthew, and signifies the Messianic rule of JESUS CHRIST, the son of David.

Daniel speaks of a "kingdom that shall never be destroyed" which the God of heaven should set up. He mentions that the kingdom should not be left to other people, but that it would "break in pieces and consume all the other kingdoms (represented in the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw) and that it would stand for ever." This is surely the origin of the expression "The kingdom of heaven" (or the heavens)" (Daniel ii. 35, 44). This is the kingdom covenanted to David's seed (2 Samuel vii. 7-10), and the covenant with David involved a posterity, royal authority, a sphere of rule, and it should be "for ever." Its immediate continuance was made conditional upon obedience, but the disobedience foretold would be visited with chastisement, and would not mean the abrogation of the covenant. Since the chastisement which ended in the captivities (2 Kings xxv. 1-7), there has been but one King of the Davidic family crowned at Jerusalem, and He was crowned with thorns.

The Davidic covenant, confirmed by the oath of JEHOVAH to David, was renewed to Mary by the angel Gabriel (Luke i. 31-33), and mentioned by Peter in his address to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Act ii. 29-32), and by James in his address to the council at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 15-17). The thorn-crowned One was to be given "the throne of his father David."

The ministry of John the Baptist announced the kingdom of heaven as "At hand" (Matt. iii. 2) and the rejected King announced the consequences of His rejection (Matt. x. 20-24). Then the rejected King announced how mere racial claims were to be over-stepped by an enlarged family of faith, when 'whosoever shall do the will of His FATHER which is in heaven' is brought into family relationship with Himself (Matt. xii. 46-50).

The seven mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 1-52) and the parables mentioned after these, show the development of the sphere of Christian profession during the present age, and then the setting up of the kingdom after the return of the King is prophesied (Matt. xxiv. 29; to xxv. 46; Luke xix. 12-27; Acts xv. 14-17).

Matthew's Gospel shows us God's anointed King, surrounded by a nucleus of faithful subjects, but in rejection by the nation to which they belonged. The King Who is to rule in righteousness is shown as announcing the principles upon which His kingdom is based, and as being Himself the embodiment of those principles. His object as King will be to bring his kingdom into the condition in which He can deliver it up to the One Who had sent Him, so that GOD might be all in all. He taught His disciples to pray for this in those memorable words, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". How many of those who repeat these words daily realise what is meant by the FATHER'S kingdom?

The kingdom of GOD is distinguished from the kingdom of heaven as being the universal kingdom whose establishment in the earth the kingdom of heaven has as its final object, and into which the kingdom of heaven merges when CHRIST having "put all enemies under His feet" shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER. Then GOD (FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST) is all in all.

The kingdom of GOD is entered only by the new birth

(John iii. 3, 5-7), while the *kingdom of heaven during this age is a sphere of profession which may be real or false*. Nicodemus is a remarkable example of one who was in the kingdom of heaven by profession, but he neither saw nor entered into the kingdom of God, though he took the "teacher's" place in Israel. He, in common with his fellow Pharisees, knew JESUS as a "teacher come from God" because of the miracles which he performed, but when the "teacher come from God" showed him how he could see and enter into the kingdom of God, he settled the matter by remarking "How can these things be?" (John iii. 9). JESUS had to say: "We speak that We do know, and testify that We have seen, and ye receive not Our witness". The plurality of the GODHEAD is expressed in the word WE (FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST). What matter it, if, after being silenced by the sneering remark: "Art thou also of Galilee?" (John vii. 52), he brought a hundred pound mixture of myrrh and aloes, wherewith to embalm the body of the martyred "teacher come from God," Whom he had interviewed by night (John xix. 39). Surely the LORD alone, Who judges motives, can assess the value of such an action, and what grounds have we for believing that he was ever "born again"? Is he not self-condemned by remaining with those Whom the LORD Himself was compelled to call hypocrites, those who afterwards gave large moneys to the soldiers to propagate a lie about the resurrection.

Since the kingdom of heaven is the earthly sphere of the universal kingdom of God, the two have many things in common, as we see in that many parables and other teachings are spoken of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew and of the kingdom of God in Mark and Luke, but the parables of the wheat and tares, and of the net (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43, 47-50) are *not* spoken of the kingdom of God. There are no tares or bad fish in the kingdom of God, but the parable of the leaven which "a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened" is spoken of the kingdom of heaven in Matt. xiii. 33, and of the kingdom of God in Luke xiii. 20, 21. Even the true teachings of the kingdom are leavened with the errors of which the Pharisees, Saducees, and the Herodians were the representatives.

The kingdom of GOD comes not with outward show (Luke xvii. 20), but is chiefly inward and spiritual (Romans xiv. 17) while the kingdom of heaven is to be manifested in glory on

the earth. Zechariah writes: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9). The angel Gabriel announced that Mary's SON should be great, and called the SON of the Highest, and that the LORD GOD should give 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. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, declares: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28).

The kingdom of heaven merges into the kingdom of GOD when CHRIST, having put all enemies under His feet, shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). Is not the outward profession of the kingdom of heaven full of anomalies like Nicodemus, who was unable to reconcile the truth pointed out to him by JESUS CHRIST with the traditional teaching to which he was accustomed, and with a casual "How can these things be?" remained in the darkness of nature, instead of seeing and entering the kingdom of GOD by way of the new birth? G. S. PURNELL.

The Story of Joseph

(Genesis xxxvii.)

MOST of us will have read the story of Joseph more than once—some, many times; but ever turn to it with keen interest, and find in it new delights.

It was written by (or for) a Hebrew, about a Hebrew, and primarily for the Hebrews, but by no means exclusively so. It comprehends a much wider scope; and, as a matter of fact, the benefits brought in under Joseph are participated in by the Egyptians (Gentiles) prior to the Hebrews. Even when the latter are brought into blessing in and under Joseph it is in connexion with, though in one sense apart from, the Egyptians.

Seeing that in the Joseph of the Old Testament we have so strikingly a type of JESUS of the New Testament, this makes the story of deep and intimate interest to us.

Our meditations, however, must be confined to a few of the most salient points.

It may perhaps be helpful to follow the example of the Apostle Paul. He had been brought to know JESUS as risen and exalted; and more often than not his writings are commenced from that standpoint, from which he is able to look backward and onward as occasion requires.

We will, therefore, commence the story of Joseph at the point of *his* exaltation.

In the forty-first chapter of Genesis we have brought before our notice that great Egyptian potentate Pharaoh—not, by the way, that Pharaoh with whom later on Moses had to do. We know the story of Pharaoh's dreams; the failure of the Egyptian magicians to interpret them; and that when Joseph is brought out of the dungeon, he makes known to Pharaoh that in the dreams God is revealing what is about to take place in Pharaoh's kingdom. Joseph advises what should be done. It is consequent upon this that Joseph is exalted.

"And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants . . . and Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne shall I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah."

From dungeon to be ruler, second only to the throne. It is difficult to imagine a greater or more glorious exaltation. Yet we know of one of which that of Joseph is but a type. We know of ONE (JESUS) of whom it is recorded, "God hath highly exalted HIM, and given HIM a name which is above every name; that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the FATHER."

But there is more. In addition to Joseph's high and glorious exaltation, there is something for his own heart.

"And he (Pharaoh) gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest (prince) of On."

In this we see something of the ways and purposes of GOD. To Adam it was given to have "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." He also was surrounded with all that was necessary to meet his creature needs. But there is more. "And the LORD GOD said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." And Evè was brought to him.

Abraham, wealthy almost beyond description, "gave all that he had unto Isaac". But more; he commissioned his trusted servant to seek a suitable bride for Isaac; and when the servant returned and presented Rebekah to Isaac, "Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Joseph, in addition to his exaltation, and new name; is given Asenath to be his wife.

JESUS, exalted and given a name above every name, is, as the CHRIST raised from among the dead, set down by GOD "at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that to come; and has put all things under His feet,"—but also (more)—"and gave HIM to be Head over all things to the Assembly, which is His Body (Bride), the fulness of HIM WHO fills all in all." The Church absorbed in the CHRIST: an indissoluble union.

We get a type of the foregoing, though falling far short, in the case of Joseph and Asenath. Joseph is exalted: Asenath is then given to him; but she is only seen as it were as absorbed in Joseph by nuptial bonds unbroken by succeeding events. The order of the inspired story testifies as to this:

(To be continued, D.V.)

H. SAMBROOK.

Sparkling Gems

God's word is wiser than all the reasons of men—wiser than all the thoughts and feelings of Christians.

* * *

How many hearts mightest thou have won for thy LORD if thine own heart had been fuller of love, if thine own soul had been more on fire!

* * *

(Neglect of prayer makes prayer become hard work.

* * *

The joy which God commands is a joy in which it is impossible to go too far. It is a heavenly joy, based upon things which will last for evermore.

* * *

The more we endure, the more we test the faithfulness of God, the more we prove His love and the more we perceive His wisdom.

* * *

He who is making us ready for heaven is making heaven ready for us.

* * *

God can soon cut short our usefulness and He will do so if we cut short our love.

* * *

(It is a very great sin indeed to hinder anyone from coming to CHRIST.

* * *

Some have hindered children because they have been forgetful of the child's value. The soul's price does not depend upon its years.

* * *

(Cheerfulness is most becoming in the Christian.

* * *

Our faith deals with what God says, not with what learned men think.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond).

Sublime Tranquillity

(Continued from page 2 cover)

For never haze dims upward gaze—
Oh, glorious sight! for there above me,
Upon God's throne there sitteth ONE
Who diéd to save—Who lives to love me!

And like the dew, each dayspring new,
That tender love shall onward lead me:
My thirst may slake, yet fresh awake,
Till every breath shall pant: "I need Thee."

Thy wisdom give; I'd rather live
In conscious lack, dependent on Thee:
Each parting way I meet this day,
But proves my claim to call upon Thee.

Thy strength I ask, for Thine the task
To bear Thine own on Shepherd-shoulder;
Then Faith may boast, when helpless most,
And greater need makes weakness bolder.

Now, LORD, Thy breast is e'er my rest;
And there, as in my home, I'm hidden—
Where quiet peace makes groanings cease,
And Zion's songs gush forth unbidden.

Yes, e'en on earth may songs have birth,
And music rise o'er nature's groanings,
Whilst Hope, new born each springing morn,
Dispels with joy my faithless moanings.

By the Editor

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WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.

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And Peter

TELL His disciples and Peter." But Peter is a failure. He has not lived up to the expectations created by his great confession at Cæsarea Philippi. He is no credit to the company. So some of the others might have reasoned with good cause in those dark hours of the Resurrection Day before they had seen the Risen LORD. Peter would not have disputed it, but would have sadly confessed: "I am no more worthy to be called a disciple."

However, it does not rest with Peter, the women or the angel. The Risen LORD had given the order that Peter was not to be left out. And the threefold message of the Risen LORD is full of comfort for all His disciples always.

1. The gospel of the Resurrection, "*He is risen,*" is the good news saying that in spite of apparent defeat CHRIST has conquered.

2. "*He goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see Him.*" He keeps tryst with His people. His interest in them is unchanged.

3. "*As He said unto you,*" confirms His word spoken before the shattering happenings of the Betrayal, Denial, Crucifixion and Burial.

"*And Peter*"—yes surely, for *he* needs special assurance that he has not forfeited the blessings by his personal failure. What a gracious message! How like the LORD Who will not break the bruised reed, but binds up the broken heart. "*And Peter*"—then why not me also?

W.G.T.

In the Midst

ALTHOUGH much has been written upon this subject there still remains more that may well engage our thoughts. The Person of our LORD and the place which is His alike call for our continual and reverent meditation.

IN THE MIDST AT THE CROSS

“On either side one and JESUS in the midst (John xix. 18). Here it was *men* who set Him there expressing the unity of all classes when “the kings of the earth and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD and His ANOINTED.” All the various religious and political sects of Judaism, who in the time of our LORD’s ministry were bitterly opposed to each other and—if Jewish historians are reliable, later hastened the fall of their city to Titus through their internecine strife—were all found united at the Cross of JESUS. And Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves. Proud priests and elders who earlier had referred to the masses in contempt as “these people who know not the law” could now ally themselves with them to urge them to ask for Barabbas rather than JESUS. From them all in their evil unity against Him “in the midst” rose one voice in awful unison, “Let Him be crucified”. This was the expression of the heart of the whole misguided race, priests and people, religious and political, refined and rude; and is the sad picture presented of evil unity against Him there in the midst.

IN THE ASSEMBLY

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week . . . where the disciples were assembled . . . came JESUS and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, “Peace be unto you” (John xx. 19). Here it is the LORD JESUS Himself Who *takes* His rightful place “in the midst.” He delights to choose the company of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren.

On the first day of the week, “in the midst” of the Assembly all was peace when JESUS had come and stood in the midst of them. Differences among these disciples that had caused jealousies in the days of His flesh; fears and doubtings that till then had lingered in their hearts, were all alike dispelled as the calming effect of His own peaceful presence was felt,

and His own voice falling upon their ears with, "Peace be unto you." And that peace has been experienced by His people ever since that day when His presence is being realised as in the midst. Differences among His own disappear when His presence is thus realised. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the assembly at Philippi, "I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the LORD" (might not our names be often substituted for these?).

They could be of the same mind if they allowed this claim as the basis of unity—"in the Lord." As already being "in Christ," they were, of course, eternally and inseparably one; but if each acknowledge His Lordship, personally bowing to His authority as LORD and HEAD they would thus express that one-ness. It is also significant that the Apostle concludes that exhortation with, Let your moderation (gentleness) be known unto all: the LORD is at hand (near). True His personal coming is "at hand," but He is always near His people, and when Euodias and Syntyche, or you and I, believe that He is near by—"at hand"—the calming, soothing effect of His presence brings that peace which was realised on the first day of the week when "JESUS came and stood in the midst."

IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE

"In the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6). And in the day of glory it will be seen that it is GOD Who has placed Him there in the midst of the throne. It will also be owned to be an act of perfect righteousness that such a place is accorded Him, the Lamb once slain. Here the unison and harmony are perfect in the singing of the adoring hosts. Speaking may be in various tones and speeds, at times sounding may be only as a confused murmur, but singing is quite different. When we sing with the SPIRIT and with the understanding also, the unity of heart and voice is evidenced.

In that day when the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne the heavenly assembly first strikes the chord, other circles join, and other families in heaven and on earth swell the chorus of praise until every creature harmonises in the great pæan. Worthy is the Lamb. HIS PLACE IS IN THE MIDST. It was; it is; it ever will be. May we always recognise this.

J. R. GRADWELL.

Brethren

IN Matthew xxiii. 8, the LORD JESUS CHRIST makes an appeal to those to whom He was giving instructions, as the rejected King (to the multitude and to His disciples), saying—"All ye are brethren."

Here "brethren" implies more than mere natural relationship, or even national considerations, but relationship to GOD as FATHER (verse 9). If I can truly call GOD my FATHER, then all who can do this are my brethren, whether the relationship is acknowledged or not. What a wide meaning this gives to the term "brethren." GOD has those who can truly call Him FATHER everywhere, and He alone can differentiate between those who are really His children and those who are not.

The term "brethren" has often been misapplied by the exclusive application of it to devotees to some "good cause" which may or may not have the approval or even sanction of GOD. There are tares (or, darnel) among the growing wheat, indistinguishable from it by mere human beings, however spiritually minded they may be; and there are bad fish as well as good in the net cast into the sea, and GOD alone is able to have the tares gathered in bundles to be burned, or to have the bad fish cast away (Matt. xiii. 25-30, 38; 47-50).

On the other hand, human sentiment delights to show favour to such impossible dreams as "the universal brotherhood of man" especially poets and philanthropists in general; and the sentimental use of the term "brethren" is used to hide the universality of the sin that by one man entered into the world and spoiled everything. Since then the devil has children as well as GOD. Of the first two men born into this world it is written:—"Cain was of *that wicked one* and slew his brother, and wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John iii. 12).

The LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself had to say to some who claimed GOD as their father that they were of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they would do (John viii. 44). Is it not the same to-day? Though knowledge has increased, as prophesied by Daniel (xii. 4) and though GOD has been manifest in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ, and though GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT has come down to glorify the One Who sought not His Own glory here (John xvi. 14),

yet is it not plain from the works of the present day that there are distinctly children of the devil as well as children of God, and are not the worst of the devil's children those who pervert the Word of God, and make it of none effect by their own traditional handling of it?

"Every Word of God is pure. He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him: add not thou unto His Words lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs xxx. 5).

The most significant meaning of the word "brethren" is that concerning relationship with the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself. When He was obviously in rejection even by His Own natural relatives, He turned aside from His mother and His brethren and declared plainly that whosoever does the will of His FATHER in heaven is as mother, sister and brother to Him (Matt. xii. 50; Mark iii. 35). GOD, manifesting Himself in flesh, in the lowliness of grace, became man's Brother, and the question addressed to Cain in the first place:—"Where is Abel thy brother?" applies to all the Cains of past and present dispensations. If they trouble to answer the question at all, they give Cain's impudent answer:—"Am I my brother's keeper?" (What has my brother's welfare to do with me?)

The sin that the HOLY SPIRIT convicts the world of is because they believe not on the One Whom He is present to glorify (John xvi. 9, 14) and the judgment with which the prince of this world is judged can only be escaped from by believing in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and accepting all that He is to GOD and to man.

Joseph's brethren are an example of what brethren should not be. They sold their brother as a slave, and lied to their father about him; then, what about David's brethren? How scornfully they treated his kindly service towards them!

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garment; as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, life for evermore." (Psalm cxxxiii. 1-3.) Then there are six things that the LORD hates: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him, and the

seventh is "*he that soweth discord among brethren*" (Proverbs vi. 16-19).

The secret of trouble amongst brethren is revealed in what the disciples of the LORD JESUS disputed among themselves by the way:—Who should be the greatest? Then the secret of true greatness is also revealed by the LORD JESUS Himself as being in the servile humility, of which He Himself is the greatest exponent. (Mark ix. 33-37; Phil. ii. 5-11.)

What an appeal to brethren is presented in Galatians v. 13-26! There all the law is fulfilled in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and biting and devouring one another is said to result in being consumed one of another. The flesh, which lusts against the SPIRIT, and is as active in brethren as it is allowed to be by them, manifests, among other dreadful things, variance, emulations, strife and heresies, while the fruit of the SPIRIT, among other beautiful things, each of which is worthy of the profoundest meditation, contains peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness and self-control.

Then let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another (verse 26).

G. S. PURNELL.

The Old Man and the New Man

By J. C. KELL

(Rom. vi. 3-14; Ephes. iv. 20-32; Col. iii. 1-17)

IN these Scriptures the terms "the old man" and "the new man" occur three times and twice respectively. Akin to the expression "old man" there are also elsewhere "the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14; iii. 3), and "the first man" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47); while akin to the "new man" occur the expressions "inner man" (Rom. vii. 2; Eph. iii. 16) and "second man" (1 Cor. xv. 47). There is a considerable profit, both doctrinally and for practical Christian walk, in studying what Scripture teaches us about the "old" and the "new" man.

THE OLD MAN

The "old man" is *inherited* by every human being since the fall of Adam. He is of the earth, earthy. His *character*

at its best is summed up in a phrase in Eph. ii. 3—"fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." The history of the human race has illustrated this fact consistently throughout the ages. Apart from faith in God, and the motives and energies that spring from such faith, the most learned, most civilised, most cultured man has no higher aim than to fulfil the desires of his mind, and the most debased man has no lower aim than to gratify the desires of his body. The desires of the flesh and of the mind, in varying proportions, have controlled, and still control, the lives of all human beings—apart from the motives and energies that accompany faith in God.

The *active force* or motivating power of the old man is spoken of in the New Testament as "the flesh," the expression having in this use a rather wider meaning than in Eph. ii. 3 as it includes the "*mind of the flesh*" ("carnal mind" in the A.V.) as well. The flesh *evidences* itself not only in gross ways but also in less repulsive ways (from the human standpoint) as is evident in the list in Gal. v. 19-21. Among the nineteen "works of the flesh" in this passage we find included "variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings" (or, as another translation gives them, "strifes, jealousies, angers, contentions, disputes, schools of opinion, envyings"). The view of the world is that ambition and competition make for progress. Are not most of the things listed above really components of competition? They are characteristics of the "old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." These activities of the "old man" require *law* in this present life—the law of God and the law of man—to control them by fear of the consequences. Further, the "old man" is unfit for the presence of God—"they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8)—and there is nothing but death and judgment due to him. Nowhere in Scripture is there any hope held out that the "old man" can be improved or "the flesh" reformed. The "old man" will meet his *final doom at the great white throne*.

THE NEW MAN

THE "NEW MAN" is a complete contrast with all the foregoing—"the new man, which after God (or "according to God") is *created* in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). The "new man" is not in any sense or part inherited

from one's forefathers. He is connected with the new creation. The "second man, the LORD from heaven" is the leader of this race. For each individual believer the "new man" may be said to begin when the individual concerned believes on the only begotten SON of GOD as his SAVIOUR and consequently has eternal life (John iii. 16), i.e., the "new man" is connected with being "born again," a child of GOD. His *character*, in contrast with that of the "old man" (see above), is perhaps summed up for us in Col. iii. 17, "Whatever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the LORD JESUS, giving thanks to GOD and the FATHER by Him."

The *active power* of the "new man" is none other than the HOLY GHOST, Who is Himself GOD, a real divine Person, who dwells in every believer (John xiv. 17). In addition to His activities of which the LORD told His disciples in John xiv.-xvi. (teaching, bringing to remembrance, testifying of JESUS, guiding into all truth, revealing things to come, glorifying JESUS) the HOLY SPIRIT gives the assurance, to those who believe, that they are the children of GOD. The indwelling SPIRIT of GOD *evidences* Himself in the believer by producing "the fruit of the SPIRIT" in ninefold character—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22, 23), and "against such there is *no law*."

The "new man," being "created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. iv. 24), and being "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. Where . . . CHRIST is all and in all (Col. iii, 10, 11), is *fit for the holy Presence of God*. So in every way the "new man" is a complete contrast with the "old man."

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION

What then is the position of the one who believes in JESUS, in relation to the old man and the new? Consideration of Romans vi. 2-11 will help in the first place to answer this question. In this passage baptism is used as an illustration. The reader will remember that the first mention of baptism in the New Testament is in connection with John the Baptist (Matt. iii.). Baptism at that time was clearly an acknowledgment that all the past needed to be washed away and that a new start was necessary in view of the nearness of the

Kingdom of Heaven which John was proclaiming. This thought continues, for Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus "Be baptised and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the LORD" (Acts xxii. 16). From the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) onwards it is recorded over and over again that immediately a Jew or a Gentile believed on the LORD JESUS CHRIST he (or she) was baptised, thus in figure renouncing all the past, whether it was a religious position on the ground of keeping the law of Moses, or a purely heathen position as a worshipper of false gods. But there was more than that. After the death and resurrection of the LORD JESUS believers were baptised "in the Name of the FATHER and of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST" (Matt. xviii. 19), "in the Name of the LORD JESUS" (Acts x. 48). Those who were baptised thus not only showed they abandoned the old position but that they were in a new position. This was not "turning over a new leaf and trying again" but was associated with the full revelation of the Godhead, and in particular with the Name of JESUS CHRIST—the One Who had been crucified, raised and exalted—(Acts ii. 38), or with the Name of the LORD JESUS—conveying similar truth—(Acts xix, 5).

The passage in Romans vi. continues from this point, as it were. The HOLY SPIRIT, writing through the apostle, takes it for granted that all the believers in Rome had been baptised unto JESUS CHRIST, and unfolds the further implications of their baptism. It expressed identification with JESUS CHRIST in His death, and from this follows the remarkable statement that "our old man is crucified with Him." As far therefore as the believer is concerned the "old man" met his *final doom at the cross of Christ*. It is not that we must understand all this before we are baptised, but that, having been baptised, we find that there is much valuable truth to be learnt from our baptism.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

Here it may be well to diverge for a few moments from consideration of "the old man and the new." Baptism in the Bible means immersion, not sprinkling. (Sprinkling may have had its origin in convenience or expediency.) The actual immersion in water does not in itself change the status of the one who is immersed, and certainly no one was thereby made

a child of God, a member of CHRIST, or an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven! Such an idea is found nowhere in Scripture. Nor does the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, or the Philippian gaoler, or Saul of Tarsus, or any other Scripture present baptism as a *public* testimony, or a way of *publicly* professing conversion. It was not done secretly, but it is primarily "the answer of a good conscience *toward God*" (New Translation "the demand as before God of a good conscience") 1 Peter iii. 21. If you are a believer in the LORD JESUS as your SAVIOUR, and have not yet been baptised, your conscience (which is "good" before God because you know "the blood of JESUS CHRIST His SON cleanses from all sin") demands that you should be baptised, acknowledging before God your position. You need not wait until you have learnt all that Scripture teaches about baptism, because there is no suggestion in Scripture that a believer should continue unbaptised for months or weeks or even days. You will learn the truths of which baptism is a figure in due time, as the SPIRIT of GOD may teach them to you.

THE OLD MAN PUT OFF; THE NEW MAN PUT ON

In the light of Rom. vi. 4, 6, 11, we learn that our "old man" has been crucified with CHRIST, that we are to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. In Col. iii. 9, 10 this teaching is amplified, "Seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

So we learn from these various Scriptures that, having believed on the LORD JESUS as our SAVIOUR, we *have* put off the old man with his deeds and *have* put on the new, and that our practical responsibility is to reckon that all the deeds of the old man, the works of the flesh, have been put to death, and that the characteristics of the new man have been put on—the fruit of the HOLY SPIRIT Who now dwells in us.

A few practical suggestions follow. My *body* is to be used in the service and fear of GOD. And of its activities that my conscience tells me I cannot do in the NAME of the LORD JESUS, giving thanks to GOD the FATHER by Him, I am not to allow but to regard them as already put to death. My *body's* natural functions are God-given of course, but even they are not to be

in control of me, but to be controlled by me for Him. My *mind* is to be fed (as it were) by what nourishes the "new man," the "inner man," not on what stimulates the "old man." No one keeps on feeding a corpse, nor do we unbury it from time to time to look at it. Let us treat the "old man and his deeds" accordingly. We do not doubt that God has His wise purpose in not eradicating all trace of the old man the moment we are born again. He has left us with responsibility shewn in the foregoing until life on this earth ceases, either by the believer "falling asleep" or at the LORD's coming in the case of those who will then be living, and He has sent the HOLY SPIRIT to dwell in us as the active power for our walk.

The Story of Joseph

(Continued from page 47)

AND Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without numbering. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh; For GOD, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim; For GOD hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Here, at least in measure, we see a type of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the highly-exalted ONE, with His bride — the church — seated with HIM in the heavenlies; now reaping something of the fruit of "the travail of His soul," although still unknown by His brethren after the flesh.

We may view this point as the end of the second phase of the story of Joseph. Before proceeding to the third, let us briefly glance at the opening phases and gather some thoughts of our Joseph in the days prior to this exaltation.

The way the inspired story opens is remarkable in its indication of Joseph as the central figure.

"These are the generations of Jacob. *Joseph*, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Thus is Joseph singled out.

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children . . . and he made him a coat of many colours."

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, I will send thee unto them. And he said, Here am I. And he said unto him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem." In this is seen the delight of the father in Joseph; and Joseph ever ready to do his father's will in seeking the welfare of his brethren.

But what of those brethren? "And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and told it to his brethren; and they hated him yet the more." And further, "His brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying." And, finally, as Joseph approached them with an enquiry of welfare from the father, "they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

"And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him, and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it . . . Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt."

We will not here dwell upon what happened to Joseph in Egypt up to the time of his being cast into the dungeon, but rather pass on to the answer, after his exaltation, to the vaunted boast of his brethren, "We shall see what will become of his dreams."

Before passing on, however, we cannot refrain from some little meditation on what we see in type in the foregoing, of JESUS in HIS pathway of humiliation. We see HIM as the BELOVED of the FATHER; hearing the voice out of the heavens saying, "THOU art MY beloved SON, in Whom I have found MY delight." As we follow JESUS in the Gospels we see HIM, may we not say, clothed with the coat of many colours—token of the FATHER'S delight in HIM—doing always those things that please HIM (the FATHER). We see in HIM, the SON of HIS love sent by the FATHER on a message of goodwill. On the other hand, we see that same JESUS, instead of being received by "HIS own," to whom HE came, hated by them. Like Joseph's brethren, they consulted together how they might take HIM and put HIM to death; and ultimately delivered HIM to death.

But GOD has raised JESUS from the dead, and put all things under His feet; and though "now we see not yet all things subjected to HIM, . . . we see JESUS . . . crowned with glory and honour." We also find HIM in the midst of (with) the Assembly. And further, according to the purposes of GOD, "for the administration of the fulness of times," all things are to be headed up in CHRIST, "the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth."

This brings us back to Joseph. The administration of all the things connected with Pharaoh's kingdom are vested in him. Pharaoh had said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

The exalted Joseph begins his administration session by going over all the land of Egypt, and during the seven plenteous years gathering the corn into Pharaoh's storehouses. Then, when the famine comes, and the people in their need cry to Pharaoh for bread Pharaoh's word to them is, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith unto you, do."

"And the famine was sore over all the face of the earth; and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt, and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was sore in all lands."

(To be continued, D.V.)

H. SAMBROOK.

Sparkling Gems

We cannot understand the Bible by forcing the lock; what we want is the key. In faith apply CHRIST to the Bible and you can understand it.

* * *

The Christian already has, not CHRIST only, but the SPIRIT in virtue of redemption; and hence he is called and qualified to search all things, yea the deep things of GOD.

* * *

You only begin to find out how little you know of the Bible when you are really advancing in the knowledge of it.

* * *

I can never sympathise with those who put a slight upon such Christians as have not been taught as you and I. Such slights are mere manifestations that bear the brand of sect or school written upon them.

* * *

The weakest Christian has the oil, as well as the strongest. The Apostle John so tells not the fathers, nor the young men, but the babes, the little children. He tells the feeblest they *have* the unction from the HOLY ONE.

* * *

I have no sympathy with the Christian now who is not a mourner because of the state of the church. It is well to have joy in the LORD, but we should be humbled about ourselves and the church.

* * *

The least smile of GOD when our glass is running out will make our soul amends for all our past waiting.

* * *

Sometimes the purposes of GOD are a long time running underground before they break out.

* * *

GOD may well be taken as a substitute for *everything*; but *nothing* can be taken as a substitute for GOD.

* * *

To obey GOD is perfect liberty: he that does this shall be free, safe and quiet.

* * *

The generous never enjoy their possessions so much as when others are made partakers of them.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond.)

By the Editor

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SEVERAL correspondents having kindly drawn attention to recent references in our pages to *Nicodemus*, both of our valued contributors have written expressing their complete agreement with the following:—

“*Nicodemus* longer known but with no happy reputation for moral courage at the first, though afterwards venturing a remonstrance to the haughty yet unjust Pharisees, joins in the last offices of love with an abundant offering of myrrh and aloes. The cross of CHRIST so stumbling to unbelief exercises and manifests his faith; and the twain [Joseph of Arimathea and *Nicodemus*] waxing valiant by grace fulfil the lack of service of the twelve.”

From “Exposition of the Gospel of John”

by William Kelly (p. 405).

EDITOR.

Not Without Honour

(*St. Matthew xiii. 57*).

WHAT is the intrinsic meaning of the word honour? It is difficult to give an exact definition of it, but the way in which it is used in connection with high esteem, respect, and even glory, makes its signification clear.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST uses the word in Matthew xiii. 57. "when He was come into His Own country and taught," and His hearers were "offended in Him," because they thought they knew all that there was to be known about His personality and origin. He then said: "A prophet is *not without honour*, save in his own country, and in his own house." They allowed the condescending familiarity of grace to degenerate into the unbelief that prevented "THE PROPHET" from doing many mighty works there.

This same One in John v. 41, says: "I receive not honour from men" and in verse 44 He draws a distinct line of demarcation between the real honour that comes from God alone, and the honour that mere men give to one another: "How can ye believe that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only." Here again unbelief comes in and hinders what only faith in God can accomplish.

The honour that comes from God alone is a thing to be sought after, and made a supreme object, and in Romans ii. 7 we are assured that God Who "judges according to truth" (verse 2) and "renders to every man according to his deeds" (verse 6) gives to those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. Patient continuance in well-doing cannot go on without real faith in God, and a consciousness of His love, mercy and grace, as exemplified in His only-begotten SON, our LORD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, Who is the embodiment of all that God is. What a reward for this patient continuance . . . Eternal Life! "in JESUS CHRIST our LORD" (Romans vi. 23). This is implied in Paul's message to Timothy in 1 Timothy vi. 12, where, after giving him a list of things to follow after, he writes: "Lay hold on eternal life." . . . Make it manifest that eternal life is yours by patient continuance in well-doing.

A prophet who values the honour that comes from God alone has to be prepared for all sorts of opposition when this honour comes up against the honour that men give. Moses had to face the scorn of an unbelieving people who said: "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus xxxii. 23), and is not his patient continuance in well-doing manifest in the way in which he pleaded for them and acted for God's honour on their behalf? But the prophet who is "not without honour" must be careful lest he abuse that honour by careless disobedience, as Moses did when he gave way to his own indignation, to God's dishonour (Numbers xx. 10-12).

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, as THE PROPHET, was, as in every other capacity, perfect, and we have Him set before us, as a perfect example, together with GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, to instruct us in following Him.

Balak promised Balaam that he would promote him *to very great honour* if he would curse the Children of Israel, and Balaam was torn between the present honour offered to him by Balak and the future honour offered as an obedient prophet of God, and he ultimately made a wrong choice to his own future dishonour (Numbers xxii. 17; xxxi. 16).

When God said to Solomon: "Ask what I shall give thee," and Solomon chose an understanding heart to fit himself for the position to which God had appointed him, he was given not only an unparalleled wise and understanding heart, but unequalled riches and honour, with a promise of a lengthened life if he patiently continued in well-doing like his father David (1 Kings iii. 5-14; 2 Chron. i. 7-12) of whom it is written that he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and *honour* (1 Chron. xxix. 28).

King Uzziah is an example of the deliberate intrusion of a king into an honour belonging alone to the sons of Aaron as priests, and the dishonour it brought upon him (2 Chron. xxvi. 16-23).

In the book of Esther we read of a queen who deliberately refused to give due honour to her husband the king, and her

consequent dishonour, with the decree resulting from it that all wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to small and great (Esther i. 10-20).

The Psalms naturally mention honour under different conditions. Psalm viii. is quoted in Hebrews ii. 6-9 as referring to the glory and honour due to the LORD JESUS CHRIST as man. In Psalm xxvi. 8, the habitation of the LORD's house is mentioned as the place where His honour dwells. On the other hand Psalm xlix. concludes with the statement that mere man in honour and understanding not is like the beasts that perish. Then Psalm xcvi. ascribes honour and majesty to the LORD Who made the heavens, and Psalm cxlix. says that all the saints of the LORD have the honour of executing judgment upon the nations. This looks forward to a day yet to come.

In Proverbs iii. 16 wisdom is described as having length of days in her right hand, and riches and honour in her left, while in iv. 8 she is said to bring those to honour who exalt and embrace her. In xx. 3, we read: "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife" and in xxv. 2, research is the honour of kings. In xxvi. 1, honour is as unseemly for a fool as snow in summer and rain in harvest, and a fool is one who says in his heart: "No God" (Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1). In Proverbs xxxi. 25, strength and honour are said to be the clothing of a virtuous woman, whose price is far above rubies (verse 10).

In Malachi i. 6, the LORD raises the question of the honour due to Himself, and asks: "Where is it?"

The Scriptures make it plain that there is an honour due from children to their parents, from married people to one another, from servants to their masters, from everyone to those in authority as ordained of God, and to one another, and Romans xiii. 7 gives the injunction to render honour to whom honour is due.

Finally, in Revelation iv. 11 glory, honour and power are ascribed to the LORD as CREATOR, and in v. 12, power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing are ascribed to the LAMB as being worthy of them. Then the whole creation joins in ascribing blessing, honour, glory and power to the OCCUPANT of the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever (verse 13).

Thoughts on 1 Corinthians xiv. 1

THE Apostle says "Follow after love," and he uses the language, it seems to me, in a very precise, beautiful, divine way, because, when we think of what is the expression of divine love naturally, only the divine Person could fully set it forth. So it is that the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** was the only perfect Example of divine love here. But He is the model for us. He is the One Who alone can produce this love in us, and manifest the power which **GOD** has given us in the gifts with which He has endowed His Church; that she should be built up in her most holy faith, to know Him better, to be daily brought nearer and nearer to the realisation of the reason why **GOD** has brought her to Himself. He speaks of this in Ephesians iv. 13, as "a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of **CHRIST**." So he says "*Follow after love.*" It is that, which must ever be before us. As we have the **LORD** personally in John xxi. giving His servant Peter the divine lesson, which was needed in order that he might be in a position to follow Him; and that he should be delivered from all the hindrances which would prevent his having **CHRIST** as an Object. So here we find in the Assembly, that you and I can have before us that which will enable us, in the gifts that **GOD** may have given us, to realise this divine love. And the character of that love we have brought before us in its full extent in **CHRIST** personally, or in the beautiful qualities that we have in chapter xiii.

The next thing is "Desire spiritual gifts or manifestations," The word "gifts" is in italics. The **SPIRIT** of **GOD** manifests Himself in a variety of ways; the gift of prophecy is only one means, whereby the **SPIRIT** is able to manifest Himself in divine power for edification. Therefore it is within the reach of the youngest and the humblest of **GOD**'s dear saints, to desire for themselves the manifestation of the **SPIRIT** working in them divine love in connection with the members of the Body of **CHRIST**. I would urge this on each one of the beloved saints of **GOD**, however young they may be, and however un-instructed it may be that they are in the truth. Let us remember that for the proper working, the easy working, the complete working of the Body of **CHRIST**, or the local *expression of that Body*, it needs that every one of the mem-

bers should be, so to say, in spiritual health, and expressing this divine love now. We must not be waiting for one another to do it. "We love Him because He first loved us," and when we have the divine nature within us, it loves naturally. When we are occupied with CHRIST, we shall be expressing that divine love, and it is not only to those who manifest their love to us that we express it. Those who do not manifest, or we think do not manifest love concerning us, probably need the expression of divine love in us the most.

Therefore, if we are occupied with the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we can be sure of this, for the conversion of sinners, or help and blessing of saints, however small may be the place that we think we occupy in the Body of CHRIST, that every single part of the Body of CHRIST should be in working order, and that none of the saints when they come together should come in the way of being spectators. We all of us must be before GOD in active communion, if we desire that the manifestations of the SPIRIT, spiritual gifts if you will, may be vitally known to us, and may be brought to bear upon our collective state in such a way as that CHRIST should be glorified, and every single member of the Assembly should be blest and go on their way rejoicing. There is that which GOD speaks of here as the gift of prophecy, which is in a special degree the blessing which CHRIST the HEAD bestows on certain of His members. All may prophesy, but to exercise it for edification is a spiritual gift, and if one, who has not the gift of prophecy, (not a word from the LORD) speaks, it is very soon discerned by others that he is not speaking in the SPIRIT. *It is not for edification.* It does not help us, and it does not come in with the line of the meeting in which we are gathered together. Therefore it should be our desire, that we might know, each one of us, how to be in the SPIRIT. Speaking may be only by "five words." We are apt to think that only those can prophesy, who can speak, if necessary, for a considerable length of time. The Apostle says he would rather for edification have a word from the LORD comprised in one sentence, as we might say, than that he might speak ten thousand words in a manner which did not edify, help, and build up God's children, the members of the Body of CHRIST.

F. LAVINGTON.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Unity

(*Human Efforts and God's Plans*)

THE work of an evangelist is primarily to present the good news of salvation to the lost. It involves awakening the unsaved to a sense of their guilt before God, and the judgment that awaits them if that guilt is not expiated. It then proceeds to present the LORD JESUS CHRIST and His work at the cross as the provision God has made for the obedience of faith. The evangelist may then continue his message to include the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, of justification before God, and responsibility for consecration of life. The evangelist may then feel that *his* responsibility has been fulfilled. What a blessed work indeed it is to be used by the SPIRIT OF GOD to bring lost sinners to "safety, certainty and enjoyment."

The *saved* sinner at this stage feels himself an individual with a responsibility for living for God in a sinful world. He looks round for like-minded companions, and joins some Christian union or becomes a "member" of some church or chapel or mission. Is there not a well-known text, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to *dwell together in unity*"? (Ps. cxxxiii. 1). Even the world has a proverb: "Unity is strength." It is to meet this natural and right desire that the present article has been written. It may be helpful to consider human efforts to create unity first and then to consider the plans God Himself has revealed in His Word.

BY HUMAN EFFORT—POLITICAL

In the course of man's history on this earth he has made repeated efforts to bring about political unity. His efforts to attain this have relied upon aggression by force or fear, or upon mutual assistance to resist aggression, or towards prosperity. Repeated efforts have been made to establish world-wide empires, but what has happened to the four great Empires of Daniel ii., vii. and viii.—the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman? All have faded away. In more recent years there have been various Treaty Pacts, the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation.

But ever since the Tower of Babel the all-wise and omniscient God has frustrated man's efforts. Man's schemes today for political unity in independence of God are foredoomed to failure. GOD has *His plan for the world*.

BY HUMAN EFFORT—RELIGIOUS

As in political matters, so it has been in religious matters since the day of Pentecost. The early chapters of the Acts reveal a lovely condition of unity. The early Christians had all things in common; they were of one heart and of one soul (Acts iv. 32-35). But such unity did not last long and the secular history of the "early fathers" and later years is characterised by Councils following one after another in the effort to produce unity where disputes and contentions had arisen. In the "middle ages" the so-called "Church of Rome" endeavoured to produce religious unity by force and fear. Military conquests under the "banner of the Cross" were undertaken against the Saracens, and even in North and South America, and elsewhere. The terrorism of the Inquisition was used in so-called Christian countries to enforce unity if possible. These things seemed for a time successful, but God would not have it so. Since the Reformation, after a period during which independence of thought, and the conflicting activities of human reason applied to the Word of God, had multiplied the sects of Christendom, further attempts towards religious unity have frequently been made, and continue to be made, on the ground of agreeing to differ, and under the deceitful cloak of toleration and broadmindedness. At times these human efforts for religious unity seem to make some headway, but as long as the coherent power is the will of man there will be no true unity, and even an outward simulation of unity cannot long continue on such a basis. GOD has *His plan for His Saints*.

BY HUMAN EFFORT—CULMINATION

The culmination of human effort for unity, both political and religious, will, however, have a brief period of apparent complete success after CHRIST has come for His Church. There will be a revived form of the Roman Empire in the beast of Rev. xiii. 1, the fourth beast of Daniel, which will incorporate characteristics of the first three beasts (compare Rev. xiii. 2 with Daniel vii. 4-6). Political unity under this "beast" will

last for 3½ years (verses 5, 7). In combination with this political power, for part at least of the 3½ years, there will be a religious power, lamb-like in appearance, devilish in purpose (verse 12). Both "beasts" in reality obtain their power from the dragon (verses 2, 12) who is in fact "the devil and Satan" (ch. xii. verse 9). The result will be an appalling exhibition of unity in the hands of man. But not for long—both the political and the religious heads of this terrible evil tyranny will be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone (ch. xix. 20).

Dear fellow Christian, is not the foregoing outline of the history and doom of human efforts for unity sufficient to warn us against involving ourselves in them? Does it not stir in us the decision by GOD'S help to keep clear of them all, and to enquire whether GOD has not revealed to us in His Word *His* plans for unity?

GOD'S PLAN FOR WORLD-WIDE UNITY

The final doom of man's efforts to establish political and religious unity referred to above will be brought about by the return to this earth of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. (Do not confuse this with the fulfilment of 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, and 1 Thess. iv. 14-17 which will take place *before* the events referred to in the preceding paragraph beginning "the culmination of human effort".) CHRIST *must* reign until He hath put all things under His feet (1 Cor. xv. 25). He alone is worthy to wear both royal crown and priestly mitre, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, King of righteousness and King of peace. The LAMB is to be LORD of lords and KING of kings (Rev. xvii. 14). Righteousness and peace will be the characteristics of His Kingdom, and both political and religious unity will be established on earth according to the will of GOD.

GOD'S PLAN—IN ETERNITY

Moreover, GOD in His wisdom and infinite grace has been pleased to make known to us, who have redemption through the blood of CHRIST, the forgiveness of sins, what His plan for unity is when the various eras in which He has been dealing with man on the earth have reached their consummation. He has "made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might GATHER

TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. i. 9, 10) What evidence this is of the abounding grace of GOD toward us that He should have revealed to us this long-hidden secret as the pinnacle (so to speak) of His purposes, and He tells us further that we are associated with CHRIST, as intimately as body to Head in this will of GOD (Eph. i. 22, 23). How infinitely greater are GOD's plans than anything man can achieve by his puny efforts, or has ever conceived, whether considered from the aspect of man's blessing or His glory!

GOD'S PLAN—NOW

So far we have considered GOD's plans for political and religious unity on earth in the Millennium of CHRIST's reign, and in eternity. What about this present time? Scripture teaches us that in the meantime a very real unity exists which has been formed by GOD Himself and cannot be destroyed. It does not include the whole human race, not even all the professedly Christian nations, nor all who call themselves Christian in contrast with Mahommedans, idolators and atheists, but it does embrace all from every kindred and tongue and people and nation who believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This GOD-made unity is presented in Scripture in two different aspects—as a *family* of which GOD is the FATHER, and as a *body* of which CHRIST is the HEAD. In either aspect the unity is AN INDESTRUCTIBLE REALITY, as indeed it must be because GOD has made it, though there are also warnings and exhortations in the Scriptures about practical conduct consistent with this unity. In ordinary human life we have the analogy of "a united family" or the converse, where the sons and daughters are all on happy terms with their parents and with one another, or otherwise. Though they may disagree, and separate, and live independently, *the real family relationship abides*. In the human body also, each member has its own function and each is necessary for the well-being of the whole. If one member fails in its function the whole body is affected; if one member is not controlled by the head ill-health is indicated, but *the unity of the body abides*. So it is with the unity GOD has formed. When we believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST as our SAVIOUR we are *not* just individuals, to live as Christians here independent of one another. On our conversion we are born of GOD, and have become His

children by new-birth. Also the HOLY SPIRIT, Who is GOD, dwells in every believer (1 Cor. vi. 19), and all who call upon the Name of JESUS CHRIST, both their LORD and ours (1 Cor. i. 2) by one SPIRIT are baptised into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). Let us constantly keep before our minds that this unity exists. The LORD JESUS *prayed for it* (John xvii). It will be manifested in glory.

CHRIST'S PRE-EMINENCE

As we have seen, CHRIST Himself as political and religious HEAD is the centre of GOD's plan for unity in the Millennium. CHRIST is also the centre of GOD's plan for unity in the consummation of the ages. So also CHRIST IS THE CENTRE OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THE UNITY OF HIS OWN IN THE PRESENT DAY. We not only become children in the family of GOD, and members of the body of CHRIST, through faith in CHRIST as our REDEEMER and SAVIOUR, but in the FATHER'S family He has given pre-eminence in all things to His SON, and the GOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the FATHER of glory, has given CHRIST to be the HEAD over all things to the church which is His body. These are all indestructible realities. May they be constantly before our hearts and minds, stabilising us in a day when many human efforts for unity, with other centres and on other bases, are being promulgated. "CHRIST the Answer" has been, and is, the keynote of much gospel effort to lead those who are awakened to the chaotic state of the world to believe, for the saving of their souls, in the once crucified, now risen and exalted CHRIST as their SAVIOUR and LORD. May "CHRIST the Answer" meet the needs of the saved readers of this article who are seeking a knowledge of GOD's plan for the unity of His own in this evil day.

(It is hoped, if the LORD will, to consider some aspects of the practical conduct consistent with this unity in one or more later articles.)

J. C. KELL.

The Story of Joseph

(Continued from page 60)

WHEN Joseph's brethren conspired against him to slay him, they said, "and we shall see what will become of his dreams." They said that in scorn. We are now about to see what really did become of his dreams.

The famine is "sore in all lands," including Canaan; but Jacob hears that there is corn in Egypt, and he sends ten of his sons (Joseph's brethren) thither to buy corn, that they "may live, and not die."

"And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the earth."

They did not see in that one before whom they bowed the "dreamer", clothed with the coat of many colours. They saw that one as robed by Pharaoh, with a gold chain about his neck; Governor over all the land. If they knew of his name, it was that of Zaphnath-paaneah (Revealer of Secrets); in which character he shewed himself towards them.

"And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them." He "made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them". He knew his brethren, and what they had conspired and done. With wisdom and discretion he deals with them so that they might be brought to a knowledge of their evil doings. Their conscience *must be* reached.

He probed them as to their claim of being true men. Their conscience *was being reached*. "They said one to another, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother'."

"They knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake to them by an interpreter." They had not as yet been brought near to him. But it *was* Joseph, and though making himself strange and speaking as it were roughly to them, his heart yearned over them. "And he turned himself about from them, and wept." Does not that remind us of JESUS, weeping over those who did not know the time of their visitation?

The tenderness of Joseph's heart towards them did not prevent him from continuing to deal with them with wisdom and discretion. He deals with them in bountiful goodness; sent them away with full sacks, and their money returned; but Simeon is retained as hostage until Benjamin is brought, "that your words may be proved, whether there is any truth in you". The *probing* had to go deeper.

Joseph's nine brethren return to their father, with the sad tale of their experience, yet with tokens of the goodness of the Governor of Egypt.

The famine lasts; but the corn they brought back does not; and Jacob requests his sons to go again and buy them a little corn. The sons recount the only conditions upon which they will be allowed to see the Governor's face; and eventually Jacob consents to Benjamin accompanying them.

Poor Jacob; how slow, like most, to learn that all the dealings of God in blessing are on the principle of grace.

"If it must be so now," says Israel to his sons, "do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds; and double money in your hand; and God Almighty give you mercy before the man."

"And the men took the present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house, And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house."

How different were their thoughts and feelings from those of Joseph. His words to the ruler of his house were, "These men shall dine with me at noon." Their thoughts were, "Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he make seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses."

"A bad conscience is ill at ease," is true of all who have one; and is prone to think ill of even its benefactors. None can draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith if their hearts are not "sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

The conscience of Joseph's brethren had not been set at rest, or as yet fully probed, so they were ill at ease at the thought of entering Joseph's house.

"And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and communed with him at the door of the house." Afraid, they pour out a pitiful tale. However, he, having somewhat pacified

them, "brought them into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; . . . And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon; for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth."

The man they thought sought occasion against them speaks graciously to them; "asked them of their welfare, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?'" He lifts up his eyes and sees Benjamin, and gives him a kindly word. His thoughts were not as their thoughts. Instead of seeking occasion *against them*, "he made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he *sought where to weep*; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refreshed himself, and said, Set on bread."

"And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth, and the men marvelled one to another." And no wonder. At their first interview with Joseph, Jacob's ten sons had said to him, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with his father, and *one is not*."

The youngest is now with them; Simeon has been restored to them; and the eleven find themselves apportioned their places for dinner according to their birthright. Was this remarkable arrangement intended to exercise their conscience as to the "One is not"? There is no evidence that it did. But he *was* there, sitting apart by himself; not the Joseph as they had known him; but the exalted Governor of the land, before whom they had once again bowed with their faces to the earth.

H. SAMBROOK.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Sparkling Gems

Let us not suffer the dread of what *may be* to hinder our present blessing. We can only take one step at a time: let us take it with **CHRIST**.

* * *

The measure of my privilege is that I am in **CHRIST**; the measure of my responsibility is that **CHRIST** is in me.

* * *

All saints are ignorant more or less; and the church of God contemplates them *all*.

* * *

If I love a family of children for the parents' sake, I shall love *all* the children. If, on the contrary, I love some of them and hate or despise or take no account of the rest, it is evident that my love for those I do love is owing to some congeniality or other personal cause, not from love to the parents. How is it with *you* and God's children?

* * *

The patience of the **LORD** of love is never wearied by the obstinate perverseness of His people.

* * *

Oh, how little are men aware of the indefatigable perseverance of the enemy of souls! It is while men sleep he does the mischief. It may not for a time be manifested; but he has sown it, and it will soon spring up.

* * *

The **LORD** makes His cause and His people's one; they are His, and therefore *their* enemy is His.

* * *

We must either have the portion of the world, or **CHRIST**'s portion. Happy they who have the **LORD** for their portion! Happy they who are dead to all the little gilded toys of the world, which Satan has scattered around in order to entrap us!

(Selected by C. A. Hammond.)

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.

JULY, 1951

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“When He Giveth Quietness”

(*Job xxxiv. 29*)

“He giveth quietness.” Sweet words of blessing,
When the storm gathers and the skies are dark,
Out of the tempest to His sheltering bosom
Fly, O my soul, and find a welcome ark.

“He giveth quietness.” O Saviour Lord,
Whose homeless feet have pressed our path of pain,
Whose hands have borne the burden of our sorrow,
That in our losses we might find our gain.

Of all Thy gifts and infinite consolings,
I ask but this: in every troubled hour
To hear Thy voice through all the tumult stealing,
And rest serene beneath its tranquil power.

Cares cannot fret me if my soul be dwelling
In the still air of faith's untroubled day;
Grief cannot shake me if I walk beside Thee,
My hand in Thine along the darkening way.

Content to know there comes a radiant morning
When from all shadows I shall find release;
Serene to wait the rapture of its dawning,
Who can make trouble when Thou sendest peace?

E. H. MILLER.

The Present Exaltation of Our Lord

“Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”—Ps. cx. 1).

THERE are four occasions in the New Testament where this verse is given in full, and eleven other places where it is cited in part or some reference made to the truth it unfolds; sufficient, surely, to impress us with its importance.

So much is here condensed into a few words that we will look at it in three parts:

(1) JEHOVAH SAID UNTO MY LORD

It was our **LORD JESUS** Himself who placed emphasis on the first sentence (cf. Matt xxii. 44, Mark xii. 36, Luke xx. 42). Pharisees and Sadducees, and then Pharisees again, had sought to catch Him in His speech, when He asks, “What think ye of **CHRIST**, Whose son is He?” The answer comes without hesitation, “The son of David”. Were they wrong? Surely not. But was it all the truth? By no means. It will help us to compare another question by our **LORD** (Matt. xvi. 15), “But whom say ye that I am?” Not the hasty answer of the learned Pharisee, but the voice of one who had been taught by the **FATHER** replies, “Thou art the **CHRIST**, the **SON** of the Living **GOD**.” He was indeed the Son of David and Heir to David’s throne, but He was infinitely more, He was David’s **LORD**, the **SON** of **GOD** incarnate. The apostle Matthew adds, “And no man was able to answer Him a word”; St Mark adds, “And the common people heard Him gladly”; whilst in St. Luke we see the Scribes silenced and vanquished.

A useful note of the late Mr. G. V. Wigram’s on the titles which occur in the Psalms points out that whilst “**LORD**” is really **JEHOVAH**, the original word here for “*lord*” is “**ADON**” or “**LORD** in power”.

Right down through the centuries we find mere human reason and intellect unable to accept the revealed truth as to **CHRIST**’s Person. The mind of the learned is often left blank and lost, whilst the faith of the common people believes and worships. It is interesting to read what **RICHARD HOOKER** wrote in (or about) the year 1585 A.D. when on this subject he sums up simply in four words: “*Truly, Perfectly, Indivisibly, Distinctly*”, and explains these thus: He was *truly* **GOD**;

He was *perfectly* MAN; He was *indivisibly* GOD and MAN in one Person; and lastly He *continues in that One both*. As to the last of these four points compare Jno. iv. 6, and xix. 26, with Jno. xi. 43, 44, and Mark iv. 39.

We need ever to remember that had our LORD not been legally the son of Joseph He would not have been heir to the throne; but had he been actually Joseph's son and not SON of GOD, He could not have undertaken the work of redemption, He could not have been our SAVIOUR.

(2) SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND

In the Gospel of Mark where we trace our LORD's pathway as the perfect Servant of JEHOVAH we have in the very first words of chapter i. the words "JESUS CHRIST the SON of GOD", and then at the close in chapter xvi. 19, "After the LORD had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven and *sat on the right hand of GOD.*" We must never forget the glory of the Person who stooped so low. In Acts ii. 34, our whole verse is repeated and adding, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made that same JESUS whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST." Those titles disowned here by men are confirmed and made good in glory.

Special testimony seems to be borne to the truth of this second line of our verse in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where in none of the five references is the first line given. In chapter i. 3, it is after repeating a constellation of those glories that are His, that we read He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Both here and in verse 13 of the same chapter the words are connected with the glory of His Person. As an unnamed writer wrote long years ago, "He was not merely exalted above His fellows but He was GOD . . . He was a MAN that was GOD." To no angelic being had it ever been said, "Sit on My right hand."

Hebrews viii. 1 and 2: "The glory of Him Who is our High Priest is such that He is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

The fourth quotation in Hebrews is in chapter x. 12, 13. Here we have reference both to His Work, and to His Priesthood. His Priesthood is contrasted with that of those under the law. As we love to sing:

Their priesthood ran through several hands,
 For mortal was their race;
 Thy never changing office stands,
 Firm as the Throne of Grace.
 Their range was earth, nor higher soared,
 The heaven of heavens is thine;
 Thy Majesty and Priesthood, LORD,
 In peerless glory shine.

“This Man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God.” (N.T.). Such the value of His one sacrifice that He has sat down for ever. May we never allow any one to rob that precious word, *It is finished*, of its meaning.

And lastly in Heb. xii. 2, we are reminded of His pathway, as the Leader and Completer of faith. It was in view of the joy that was set before Him that He endured the Cross and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. And the Apostle adds, “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.”

In short, these references in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* connect the taking His seat at the right hand of the Throne of God, with the merits of His *Person*, His *Priesthood*, His *Work*, and His *Pathway*.

The one mention in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* (ch. i. 20, 21) of His present seat on high, widens out the vision still further beyond our ken: “Far above all principality and power and might and dominion; and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.”

(3) UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL

We might have limited this period in our minds, and thought that it was only until He comes forth to take His Kingdom, but 1 Cor. xv. throws light upon it: “For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet, the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (vv. 25, 26); this being it would seem an allusion to the truth of our verse. But the same chapter makes a distinction between “all enemies” and “all things” (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 27, with Ps. viii. 6). In Ps. viii. 6, creation is indicated, but in Ps. cx. 1, enemies. All must be subjected to Him, and every tongue confess that He is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

As among those in this world who are His, we look up and rejoice to see our LORD and SAVIOUR on the throne. So the apostolic exhortation (Col. iii. 1) runs: "*If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth, at the right hand of GOD.*"

S. G. SCALES.

Thoughts on 1 Corinthians xiv. 3

(Continued from page 65)

HERE we have the character of the true prophet. The man who has a gift from CHRIST is discerned, and you find that it says later on, that when a prophet speaks, the rest are to judge. It does not mean that we should criticise, but it means that we should discern by the fact that we have the mind of GOD ourselves, and that we have the SPIRIT of GOD in us and with us. We should discern, whether it is of the LORD, and the manner in which we are given to discern is whether or no it is for edification. If a person were to come into one of our gatherings and were to give an address it may be of considerable length on, we will say, astronomy, and were to tell us a number of remarkable things with regard to the systems around us in all their wonder, well, we should say, "No doubt in its place this is quite all right; but seeing that the assembly of GOD is not a students' class to take up the question of the different sciences, it is out of place; it is not of GOD; it is not for edification." We should seek grace to put it before the dear brother, who had made a mistake in that way. If he were a humble-minded soul, he would admit that he had made a mistake, and would seek grace that his next utterance would be for the edification of the Church.

What we have here is that when a prophet speaks it says, "He that prophesies speaketh unto men." He speaks in a language that can be easily understood. Of the LORD it was said that He spoke of the mysteries of the Kingdom of GOD and "the common people heard him gladly." It says again that "the poor should have the gospel preached to them," and even the rough soldiery, the Roman soldiers who were often drawn from the dregs of humanity, until they were brought into shape and obedience by discipline, asked His advice (Luke xiii. 14). The officers of the High Priest said, "Never man spake

like this Man" (John vii. 45). There was simplicity about His language, as One who was perfect Master of His subject, and you will find that with those who are with CHRIST in communion. They have no need to be dealing in peculiar words, or high-sounding phrases, things that simple people cannot understand. The SPIRIT of GOD does not communicate His mind in that way. It is in language that is easily understood, and He speaks in three distinct ways. You see He says either for "edification or exhortation or comfort." So that the prophet has the discernment from GOD, whether the saints need to be built up or to be edified; or he has from the LORD the thought that the saints need to be stirred up, or exhorted; or there may be with the saints that mind that needs to be bound up, as it were, those who have been hurt in their spirits. One of the Lord's characteristics, as the "Divine Messenger" was to "comfort those who mourn." The very name that the SPIRIT of GOD is given is the COMFORTER. Oh that we had the word of CHRIST for the wounded spirit! God tells us in His word, by the wisest of men, "A wounded spirit who can bear?" (Prov. viii. 14). Now GOD gives to His prophets a word to such; and by reason of what we are, we wound one another sometimes unknowingly, but often, I am afraid, we do it with some little knowledge of what we are doing. Then there is, as it were, this pouring in the oil and wine (Luke x. 34)—there is this administering the comfort of the love of CHRIST; then there is the binding up of the wounds, there is this bringing the soul, as it were, to the LORD, reminding him of how precious he is to the LORD. In spite of all he may have done, he is still the object of that blessed MASTER who loved him, and His changeless love is ever on him. In spite of all which may have occurred, the word of comfort can be given, and the Comforter will be pleased to draw him nearer by that which has occurred, to the heart of that blessed SAVIOUR with Whom he is going to be throughout the countless ages of eternity. He gives us, that we might be able to comfort others the Apostle says, "With the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God." Oh that we might have the heart of Christ for His saints; that we might have the discernment of the LORD for those who are passing through distress of mind or body; that we might be so near to Him, that we might be able to present to them the LORD JESUS in such a way that their hearts should be comforted, their

wounded spirit, as it were, bound up, and they themselves find that by the very exercise they have been drawn nearer the LORD JESUS Himself.

F. LAVINGTON.

Unity

(Six Practical Necessities)

IN the previous article on Unity man's efforts to achieve this were contrasted with God's revealed plans for unity—political and religious—under CHRIST during His millennial reign on earth, and for unity of all things in heaven and on earth in CHRIST when all God's dealings with the earth under the various dispensations have reached their consummation. God's plan for the unity of all who truly believe in CHRIST *to-day*—a unity that is real and indestructible—was also considered. The present article is concerned with the characteristics necessary in the individual Christian in order that this unity may be practically displayed. The natural tendency is to try to bring about agreement between Christians by trying to convince others that where they differ with us *they* are wrong. Many can testify from experience that this effort fails. Something more radical is necessary and must begin with *us*, not with the others. Ephesians iv. 1—3 takes up this subject.

WORTHY WALK

The first characteristic set before us here is that you, and I, *individually* should walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. The preceding chapters of the epistle have unfolded the characteristics of that calling, and it is not possible to summarize them, but one or two practical points may be mentioned without any implication that they are more important than the rest of those chapters. Our "calling" is to be holy and without blame before God in love; to be God's adopted children by JESUS CHRIST; to be quickened, raised and seated in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS; to be God's workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them; to be built together for an habitation of God through the SPIRIT; to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom

of God. Read and ponder over the first three chapters. Then remember *we* are to walk worthy of this calling. May the LORD help us to judge *ourselves* by this standard individually. It does not help us at all to say "others do not." Nor must we give up because *we* cannot. Is it our earnest desire, endeavour and prayer? There will never otherwise be any *practical* display in this world of the unity God has formed. It is a divine principle that personal obedience comes before fellowship. This is shown for instance in 2 Tim. ii, 21, 22, where a believer is told to purge himself from what is dishonouring to the LORD and to flee youthful lusts, before he is told to "follow . . . with them (that call on the LORD out of a pure heart." So here each is besought to walk worthy in order that unity may be practical. The standard GOD sets before us is always a perfect one, and we can only see this and other standards perfectly attained by the LORD JESUS Himself. In every aspect of His "calling" revealed to us in Scripture—child in His home, prophet, shepherd, lamb for sacrifice—*He* walked worthy. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Even the great apostle said "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after." "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS." For CHRIST Himself it was necessarily a lonely path; for the Apostle Paul it was almost so; for us, we shall find that those who so walk that there is a *practical* display of unity are not all who are included in the unity formed by GOD. Be this as it may, the SPIRIT of GOD beseeches us, through the Apostle, to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called.

LOWLINESS

Far from being puffed up with pride as we learn the high and heavenly character of our calling and position in CHRIST, our failure in practice to walk accordingly should produce in us "lowliness". Now "lowliness" is a state of mind which results in each esteeming others better than themselves (Phil. ii. 3). It therefore entirely refuses to impute bad motives to what other Christians say or do. Whether we can agree with them or not we are to esteem them better than ourselves. Have *any* of us good ground for thinking highly of ourselves? *If* we are sound in doctrine, and walking consistently with all we have

learnt from the Scriptures, can we rightly take any credit to ourselves for it, or pride ourselves on it? At the highest, we can only say by the grace of GOD we are what we are. Pharisaism is by no means confined to the Jew, and is one of the greatest obstacles to the practical display of unity among Christians. Lowliness, too, is many-sided, covers all activities of the mind in our esteem of others. Hence the exhortation is "In all lowliness." The writer has been deeply pained recently by hearing, and even seeing in writing, such adjectives as "dishonest" freely applied to the statements of other Christians. The judging of the motives of others is inconsistent with lowliness on one's own part. The judging of actions and statements as being good or evil, right or wrong, is quite another matter, and authorised by Scripture.

MEEKNESS

Meekness is a quality displayed towards others. Neither lowliness nor meekness are considered desirable qualities by the unconverted. The world esteems their opposites, self-confidence and self-assertion, as qualities leading to self-advancement and success. But in the sight of GOD "all lowliness and meekness" are of great worth and importance, and they are essential if there is to be practical manifestation of unity among the people of GOD. Meekness is to be shown to all men (Tit. iii. 2). The Apostle Paul gives us two practical applications of it. There are those who oppose the truth. The servant of the LORD is exhorted in meekness to instruct them (2 Tim. ii. 25). If it is done in a spirit of superiority it will arouse the opposition of the flesh, and is unlikely to achieve the end in view, i.e. acknowledgment of the truth. Apart from the work of the SPIRIT of GOD in us, we should all be opposing the truth. We know nothing of ourselves. We have nothing that we have not received by the free grace of GOD. If GOD uses us as His bondslaves to instruct opposers how evidently meekness becomes us!

Again, it may be that a Christian is actually caught in the act of committing an offence ("fault" in Gal. vi. 1 is the same word in the original as Adam's "offence" in Rom. v. 15-17, and "trespasses" in Eph. ii. 1, so it does not mean a minor fault, if there is such a thing). Those who are spiritual are to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering oneself lest one also be tempted (Gal. vi. 1). This latter clause throws con-

siderable light on the word meekness. The deep consciousness of one's own liability to oppose the truth (preceding paragraph), or to succumb to temptation, is to characterize one's method of instructing the opposer, or restoring the one who has committed an offence. This same spirit of meekness is to be shown to all, and of course in many other respects besides the two quoted.

LONGSUFFERING

In considering this word it may help to notice that it is used of **GOD** Himself, of the **LORD JESUS**, and of the **Apostle Paul**. In the days of **Noah** **GOD** saw the earth was corrupt and filled with violence, and said He would destroy man, but in long-suffering **GOD** waited while the ark was being prepared (1. Pet. iii. 20). Longsuffering is one of the characteristics **GOD** has shewn toward **Israel** (Exod. xxxiv. 6), towards the world as a whole (2 Peter iii. 9), and to the individual sinner (Rom. ii. 4). The **Apostle** records that in him first **JESUS CHRIST** shewed forth all longsuffering (1 Tim. i. 16), and he, in his turn, could remind **Timothy** of his (**Paul's**) longsuffering (2 Tim. iii. 10). It is one of the characteristics of love which is **GOD's** nature, and is to be followed after by **His own** (1 Cor. xiii. 4) for "love suffereth long and is kind." Longsuffering includes patience with the ways and waywardness and temperaments of others, the endurance of their slights and neglect, and the absence of any resentment in one's heart. What wonderful longsuffering **GOD** has shewn to believers since the cross in regard to their unfaithfulness and worldliness.

FORBEARANCE

All the sins of generation after generation from **Eden** to **Calvary** were passed over by the forbearance of **GOD** until the time was ripe for **GOD** to set forth **CHRIST JESUS** to be a mercy-seat through faith in **His blood** (Rom. iii. 25 New Trans.). Since the cross, too, what forbearance **GOD** has shown to the human race, which crucified **His SON** and still rejects **Him**! Forbearance on **GOD's** part means that in grace **He** has suspended the judgment which man's sins merit, and still gives him the opportunity to repent and believe in the **SAVIOUR**. Believers in **CHRIST**, members of the one body, we are to be forbearing towards one another in love. Though other Christians act harshly towards us, though they trespass against us, we are not

to retaliate. Peter's question to the LORD, and the LORD's answer seem to give an illustration of the meaning of forbearance. Though our brother trespass against us 490 times we are to forgive him. And there is something more. All is to be done in love. "Not to retaliate" is too passive. *Love is to be active in association with forbearance.* Putting up with one another and trying to make the best of it, or keeping out of one another's way because we can't get on with one another, is *not* forbearing one another *in love.*

"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP" THE UNITY

If the foregoing five things really characterize us there will be no evidence of the activity of the flesh in our relations with one another. It is the activity of the flesh that prevents the unity of the SPIRIT from being practically manifested, and that breaks the bond of peace. As emphasized in the previous article on this subject "the unity of the body is indestructible," but *God has committed to our responsibility the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* This we are besought to *endeavour* to do. Real and constant purpose and effort are necessary. We can perhaps learn a lesson from Zechariah xi. 10-14. The prophet had two staves, named Beauty and Bands respectively. Beauty was cut asunder first, the cutting asunder of Bands necessarily followed. If the enjoyment of the Beauty of the LORD Himself in the experience of the soul is real the Bands of brotherhood abide firm. Lose the former and the other is also lost. So just before the exhortation at the beginning of Eph. iv., which is the subject of this article, the apostle writes, "I bow my knees unto the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST . . . that CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith . . ." All will admit that it is *our* failure that limits the extent to which the Apostle's inspired prayer is realised practically in *us*, and that the more it is realised practically the more we shall display the six characteristics in Eph. iv. 1-3. May the LORD so work in our souls by the HOLY SPIRIT that these six practical necessities may be more characteristic of us individually, so that the unity which He has formed may be more clearly and more practically manifested in this world while we wait for Him to come and take us to Himself. Then the unity will be perfect in every aspect and the need for Eph. iv. 1-3 will be over.

J. C. KELL.

The Story of Joseph

(Continued from page 3 cover last issue)

JOSEPH'S brethren leave the festive scene apparently in happy mood. With sacks again filled, imagine with what light hearts they set out on their return to their father. Their elation was short-lived; for "when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing."

Joseph's silver cup was missing, or rather it was in the sack's mouth of one of his brethren. We, having read the story, know why. Joseph yearns over his brethren, and he longs to have them near him; but this cannot be without a knowledge of their guilt being brought to bear on their conscience.

They protest their innocence to the steward, and they themselves avow that with whomsoever the cup is found he shall die. Speedily they take down their sacks for the steward to search. He begins at the eldest, and as each sack is searched a sigh of relief goes up, until it came to the sack of Benjamin, wherein the cup is found.

Is there not significance in the cup being found in the sack of Benjamin, the one of the eleven who was guiltless as to what his brethren had done to Joseph? Death had now been linked to the cup: "With whomsoever of thy servants it is found . . . let him die." So Benjamin, the innocent one, was brought under the penalty of the guilty.

The sighs of relief of Joseph's brethren were now turned to sighs of anguish. Brought back into the house of Joseph, what a tale of anguish and sorrow they poured out before him; they also again bowed down before him to the ground.

It was not a confession of their guilt, for Joseph has not as yet revealed his identity; but they were bowed down with grief; and the heart of the one sinned against was now too full to be further restrained.

"Then Joseph cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said

unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them; and after that they talked with him."

They were now able to resume their journey home, carrying the joyful news to their father.

Israel, his eleven sons, and all their belongings, go into Egypt, where they are given possessions in Goshen, and are nourished by Joseph.

In these fragmentary musings on this story, Joseph has, in some little measure, been viewed as the son of his father's love and pleasure; as the one hated by his brethren, and cast off by them; his humiliation in Egypt; his exaltation; his being given a wife; and as administering the affairs of Pharaoh's kingdom.

At the opening it was remarked that the inspired story was of a Hebrew, and mainly concerning the Hebrews (Israel), but not exclusively so.

Among other things, we have seen types of JESUS: in humiliation; in exaltation; in having a bride given to Him; and as being the Administrator of the things of God, including the bringing into blessing of Israel.

The fulfilment of this administrative work is yet future; nevertheless, it is of present deep interest.

H. SAMBROOK.

Sparkling Gems

Prayer is the expression of entire *dependence*, but at the same time *confidence in GOD*.

* * *

Satan is more clever than we, and wherever redemption is not fully known there Satan plays his tricks. The moment that redemption is really believed in, all the systems of superstition, so prevalent in the world, are gone.

* * *

Nothing could be more weak and foolish in man's eyes than the cross, but we know it is the power of GOD and the wisdom of GOD.

* * *

GOD is above Satan. Satan may shoot his arrows, but they cannot break through the shield of faith.

* * *

With a good conscience we can go on boldly . . . there is nothing for Satan to lay hold of.

* * *

Why should CHRIST be more precious to the believer to-day than He was yesterday? Because he sees he wants Him more.

* * *

Alas, that there is such a scarcity of love and of lovers of CHRIST among us all! Fie upon us who love fair things, fair houses, fair lands, fair pleasures and fair persons and do not pine and melt away with love to CHRIST! . . . It is no gain to CHRIST that He getteth my little, worthless, span-length and hand-breadth of love; but how happy are they who get CHRIST for nothing!

* * *

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(Selected by C. A. Hammond.)

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WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.

AUGUST, 1951

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The late Mr. H. SAMBROOK

(Contributed by a Friend)

MANY readers will feel the loss sustained by the home-call of Mr. H. Sambrook. In Canada and the North of England many memories will be stirred by the, to us, sad news. For over sixteen years in Sheffield, and forty-one in Manchester he was known and esteemed for his diligent service of the LORD and His people.

A seizure some four years ago somewhat curtailed his physical activities but he was enabled to serve the LORD by oral and written ministry right to the end, which came suddenly on Thursday, June 7th, in the presence of his dear wife and daughter. Sitting in his chair he spoke of feeling tired, and in a few minutes had passed away to be with the LORD Whom he had loved and served through a long lifetime.

He was beloved by all who knew him, for he loved all himself; the marked feature of his character being his graciousness. He leaves assemblies that will greatly miss him, a family that can never forget him, and friends all over the world. The numbers at the burial on June 11th at Sheffield by their presence and words testified their great regard for him, and deep sympathy with the bereaved family.

* * *

A paper of his in our present issue only came to hand a few days before he passed away. He held a high place in our personal regard, and we *heartily endorse the reference to his graciousness.*

EDITOR.

Esther

BY THE EDITOR

ESTHER is a book valued alike by orthodox Jews and instructed Christians, and when rightly understood is both interesting and instructive. The novel and foreign circumstances are but as the husk or shell of the fruit for admittedly it is an unusual book to find in the Bible, a Jewish book with a Pagan title (*Esther* meaning a "star" from the planet Venus connected with *Astarte* a heathen goddess); a Scripture book in which the name of GOD is not once mentioned.

It is the shortest historical book of the Old Testament, and, like *Genesis* which is the longest, presents a challenging character typifying in some measure our LORD. In *Genesis* Joseph's career provides a fairly distinct type of CHRIST in many ways; in *Esther* it is Mordecai the Jew who really, yet more faintly, does the same. This gives its greatest value to the book. At the same time comfort is ministered to the souls of tired perplexed believers by the real, if strangely ordered, working of GOD's providence here. Yet another value of the book is to be seen as in its prophetic significance the age-long Jew and Gentile problem passes in typical review, and old foes with new faces appear and re-appear here.

One important reason for the careful reading and study of the Book of *Esther* is as the Apostle Paul reminds the Roman believers "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," and again to Timothy where he says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (Rom. xv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

A modern Divine, in a published lecture on *The Use of the Old Testament*, slips up very badly at the end. He has reached *Esther* in his lecture course and proceeds thus: 'Of *Esther* I bring myself to speak with difficulty. It is Judaism gone bad. Where then, you may ask, is the Word of GOD in it? Well, if you are on a journey and come to a crossroad where

a signpost points to the place you seek and names it, that is clear guidance. But if you come to a place where there is a side road, more or less a track, and there is a notice which says 'No road this way' or 'Danger', that also is clear guidance, even if it is negative guidance. *Esther* is that 'Danger' notice, that 'No road this way'."

With this we emphatically disagree and from this we flatly dissent, and so proceed to give the reason why. For here patience and comfort of the Scriptures are most admirably joined; to the reverent listener the very breathing of the HOLY SPIRIT may be heard even in *Esther*, and the inspiration of its message most surely felt by him.

While to the learned scholar lacking in reverence for the written word, proud of his erudition, theological learning (complete with the hallmark of his university degree as in the case of the lecturer referred to here) and ability to instruct others, *Esther* may only appear as "*Judaism gone bad*," as he informed his students; to the simple Christian reader these things of God's patience, providence and prophecy are revealed and enjoyed.

It is not without marked significance that of the LORD JESUS on one occasion it is recorded by two of the Evangelists: "In that hour JESUS rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, FATHER; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." This is still the Divine method, and merits our gratitude. The condition and position of these Jews in the Persian Empire at that period may well account for the absence of the Divine Name from *Esther*. They were those who had not troubled to avail themselves of the gracious proclamation of King Cyrus some years previously to return to the Holy Land, but had settled down in ease and commerce with apparently no heart for the land of their fathers, and no desire to return thither. Their spiritual condition was very low, resembling worldly-minded Christians to-day, "minding earthly things" as the Apostle says of some in his day to the Philippians. They were not seeking the better country, but were fast drifting and anticipating to all appearance the prophetic word "Lo-Ammi—not My people."

Indeed their circumstances were such through ceasing to care for better things that God could not with consistency openly appear on their behalf. Yet He being Who His is, never ceases to care for His wayward people, and so by His secret but active providence on their behalf frustrates the evil designs of their enemy. What lessons indeed of "the patience and comfort of the Scriptures" may be learned from the careful consideration of the even apparently unspiritual record of the things in *Esther*. The book opens amid a scene of pomp and pride of kingdom, a scene of passion and powerlessness, with a king unable to rule either himself or his household. It presents a vividly drawn picture of worldly splendour, self-indulgence and a dramatic description of Persian Court intrigue. Ahasuerus, better recognised as Xerxes, is a drunken despot as a *man*, but as the King of Persia the second of the world empires of the times of Gentile domination he embodies "the powers that be," for as St. Paul says, "There is no power but of God: and the powers that be are ordained of God." So Ahasuerus is officially "the great king," and as such in God's secret over-ruling providence, may be said in the story officially to represent One greater Who everywhere has sway. His character as an individual is one thing, the office or position occupied in the providence of God is quite another, and this must be carefully remembered as we proceed.

In chapter i. Vashti, the queen, a very minor character in the story, appears, and then is summarily dismissed from the scene. Was she a defiant wife as the drunken despot assumes, or a lady whose modesty and right feeling made her refuse to obey his outrageous order? Charity pleads for the latter interpretation of her character, but she passes out of the picture here.

It is around the persons of Xerxes the Persian, Haman the Amalekite, Mordecai the Jew, and Esther the Queen, that the theme of the book revolves.

In chapter ii. 5-7 the movement begins where the Man of Destiny appears on the scene. He is one whom we shall see waxes greater and greater in the sight of his brethren the Jews, in spite of tremendous odds, until having obtained deliverance for them he is seen seated next unto the great king in the kingdom. The way is long and hard, the road is rough with

many obstacles, but "the righteous shall hold on his way" is a scriptural word of encouragement, which Mordecai the Jew, the Man of Destiny in this *Book of Esther*, is seen to illustrate.

As we carefully ponder his record, we find ourselves gradually, as in a dissolving view, getting an ever clearer impression of One greater than Mordecai the Jew who is the real Man of Destiny, the Deliverer of His people, and finally seated on the right hand of the Eternal Majesty.

It is said that the Americans have a system of teaching geography without tears. A kind of puzzle made up of small squares of pasteboard with all the States printed on one side in due order and position, and on the reverse a picture of a great President, is given to the child all jumbled up. His task is to sort the pieces and put them in the right order, the geographical side of course uppermost. If and when the task proves too difficult for the scholar he is told to turn them all over and find the man, and when this comparatively easy thing is done, to reverse and note all the States in their true positions.

Something like this is the clue to *Esther*, and indeed in all the Old Testament histories, types and figures. CHRIST is in all the scriptures. He is the Man to Whom the HOLY SPIRIT points, all others being subsidiary though useful as serving in various degrees as types, illustrations, encouragements or warnings in connection with Him.

So here in *Esther* the outstanding character is Mordecai the Jew, whose story runs through the book.

In Windsor Castle seven fine Gobelin tapestries with scenes from *Esther* adorn the very chief apartments, and fittingly tell their great tale there. How much of the story of Mordecai the Jew is embodied by them we cannot say, but here in Scripture are given some special things which claim the attention and arouse the interest of the devout student of the *Book of Esther*.

1. He is Mordecai the Jew, name and race being carefully stated (ch. ii. 5, 6).
2. He is then seen as the man who rendered the great King a supreme service (ii. 21, 22).
3. He is a man who refuses to bow to the enemy of the people of God or to do him reverence (iii. 5).

4. He is the special object of hatred by the enemy of God's people—the people of Mordecai (iii. 6, 13).

5. He is the man whom the King delighteth to honour (vi. 6).

6. He is the man through whom deliverance came to the people of God, bringing light, gladness, joy and honour to them (viii. 16).

7. He is seen as the man by whom dire defeat was brought to the inveterate enemy of God's people and all his evil plans against them.

8. He is the man exalted by the King to be next unto the King (x. 3).

9. He is a man who obviously shadows by his story One far greater, the real Deliverer of His Jewish brethren, seen in the Kingdom, seeking the weal of His people, and speaking peace to all His seed.

(To be continued D.V.)

Caleb

CALEB stands out in refreshing relief in the middle of two pictures of general failure. He is an example of what JEHOVAH desired for all His people, but to which only the few attained. Caleb came into the land of promise when the many, with whom JEHOVAH was grieved forty years in the wilderness, "could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. iii. 19). Again, when many could not obtain possession of their inheritance, we read that "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day" (Josh. xiv. 14).

Let us go back to Exodus xv. There, safely over the Red Sea, Israel sing a song to JEHOVAH, who was their strength. It was His right hand that had dashed in pieces the enemy—"Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them." JEHOVAH had brought Israel out of Egypt, and He would guide them in His strength unto His holy habitation. And they exalted Him; "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Having just witnessed the defeat of their foes, they looked forward to what JEHOVAH

would yet do for them to plant them in the mountain of His inheritance.

But when JEHOVAH brings them to the border of the land, they discover another enemy there, "the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. xiii. 33). This time they are not looking at JEHOVAH and His strength, and they have forgotten His word of promise that once they had boasted in. All they can think of is what they were in themselves, and, being dismayed, they long to go back to the Egypt they had left, giving up all thought of the inheritance. But Joshua and Caleb are still looking to JEHOVAH, who is still their strength and song, so that they can say, "If the LORD delight in us then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us." The sequel is well known: because of unbelief the people were wasted in the wilderness; because he "wholly followed the LORD" Caleb entered the land.

We have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven," and it is for those "who are kept by the power of GOD through faith" (1 Peter i. 4-5). This was what preserved Caleb—"the power of GOD through faith," and is what will keep us. Those kept thus are the "elect . . . unto obedience," and this is the purpose behind the experiences of the wilderness pathway, to "learn obedience" even as the LORD Himself did. GOD will bring us into blessing, but to follow Caleb's pathway there is, first of all, one thing needed—a heart which will wholly follow the LORD. Both Caleb and Joshua would ardently serve the LORD. We, too, need their faith, to believe that GOD is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. To continue to walk, day by day, in the consciousness that accompanied our deliverance from this world, which is under judgment, that it is GOD alone who is able to do anything. He is our strength, our song, our salvation. And to seek in all things that we may be acceptable to Him—"if the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us in." Now this means obedience; to take His word and rely utterly on it and on its promises. All along the wilderness way, in the which we learn our own hearts, and whether we will keep His word or no, we shall also prove His sufficiency in the conflict with the flesh and with the wiles of

the devil. However, many lessons may be needed as we go on to become partakers of His holiness, the only thing we need fear is an evil heart of unbelief, that would doubt God's love and purposes of grace for us; doubt, too, His word, by refusing its application to our own hearts.

Caleb has come to the land, and has shared in Joshua's victories. Now he seeks his own portion and, in happy contrast to so many, he possesses it. His own feet tread its heights, and, although it may have been a principal seat of the enemy, he drives them out.

Now it seems to be one thing to be brought to the land, and another to have your own possession in it. The one requires, as we have seen, faith and obedience: the other, spiritual energy. Caleb displays both, but how many fail! He had been redeemed out of Egypt and had passed through the Red Sea; he had proved God in the wilderness. He had crossed Jordan with the ark of the covenant, and had seen the stones of memorial taken out of the river; had watched, too, while other twelve stones were placed where the feet of the priests had stood. He had engaged in Joshua's battles, and, having identified himself with these stones beneath the waters of death, he returned continually to Gilgal, watching day by day to deny the flesh, and progress in the strength of JEHOVAH alone. Now he is ready to possess his portion.

This is the stage that the apostle refers to in Phil. iii. He, too, had passed Jordan, and entered into the power of CHRIST'S resurrection; he looked back to the stones in the river, and would be made conformable unto His death. Then it was his to "follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS." It takes spiritual energy; watching and denying the flesh that is reckoned dead; turning obedient steps to the truth of the word, whatever the cost; using those weapons of warfare that are not carnal, and standing fast in an evil day; but only so does God lead us into the full enjoyment of the treasures of His counsel, and only thus is the power of the SPIRIT known, to lead our souls in peace and joy to our place above in CHRIST JESUS. May we be encouraged, as we press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS, for Caleb and Paul were men of like passions as ourselves, and our God is unchanging.

One last glimpse of Caleb. He takes possession of Hebron, which means fellowship. There were others of a kindred spirit there, such as Othniel, but doubtless he enjoyed a happy communion with the **JEHOVAH** who had been with him all along the way. Here is peace and rest where **GOD** commanded the blessing, and it is the result of individual spirituality—spirituality measured in terms of faith in **GOD**, trust in and obedience to His Word, and zeal and energy in acting on its promises. From this place of his, too, he is able to dispense blessing to others. “And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs” (Josh. xv. 18, 19).
D.E.B.



“Which of You Convinces Me of Sin?”

(*John viii. 46*)

OF the four Gospels, two only—Matthew and Luke—record the birth and early life of **JESUS**. All four give recordings of His life from the days of John the Baptist onwards.

Matthew begins his Gospel (J.N.D.'s N.T.) thus:—“Book of the generation of **JESUS CHRIST**, Son of David, Son of Abraham.” After enumerating the generations, he proceeds with the record of the birth of **JESUS CHRIST** as given in chapter i. 18—ii. 1: “Now **JESUS** having been born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold magi from the east arrived at Jerusalem, saying, Where is the King of the Jews that has been born?”

Matthew then records the flight of Joseph and Mary, with the Child, into Egypt; and, after the death of Herod, the return out of Egypt thus: “But Herod having died, behold, an angel of the **LORD** appears in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, take to thee the little Child and its mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they who sought the life of the little Child are dead . . . and having been divinely instructed in a dream, he went away into the parts of Galilee, and came

and dwelt in a town called Nazareth: so that that should be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, He shall be called a Nazaræan."

At this point Matthew ceases his records of the early life of JESUS CHRIST, resuming them at a date some twenty-seven or eight years later, in the days of John the Baptist: "Then came JESUS from Galilee to Jordan to John to be baptised of him."

Luke having, with much detail and clearness, referred to "the matters fully believed" (chapter i.), in chapter ii. then records the birth to Mary of the predicted Son; the announcement of that birth to the shepherds by the angel of the LORD, thus: "Fear not, for behold, I announce to you glad tidings of great joy; which shall be to all people; for to-day a SAVIOUR has been born to you in David's city, who is CHRIST the LORD."

Luke then records the praising of GOD, and the testimony of the multitude of the heavenly host; and, after the departure of the angels, of the shepherds making their way to Bethlehem to see what had been made known to them. In turn, the shepherds, having seen, "made known about the country the thing which had been said to them concerning this Child."

"Mary kept all these things in her mind, pondering them in her heart."

Following, comes the detailed account of the happenings in the temple. Then, passing by the years with the brief reference that "His parents went yearly to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover," Luke gives that most interesting and important record, focussing the mind on JESUS, viz. "And when He was twelve years old, and they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast and had completed the days, as they returned the boy JESUS remained behind in Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and hearing them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him they were amazed: and His mother said to Him, Child, why hast Thou dealt thus with us? behold Thy father and I have sought Thee distressed. And He said unto them, Why is it that ye have sought Me? did ye not know that I ought to be in My FATHER's business? And they understood not the thing that He said unto them. And He went down

with them and came to Nazareth, and He was in subjection to them. And His mother kept all these things in her heart. And JESUS advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and men."

Here Luke, as did Matthew, passes over in silence some eighteen years. Resuming, he records, 'And it came to pass, all the people having been baptised (by John) and JESUS having been baptised and praying, that the heaven was opened, and the HOLY SPIRIT descended in a bodily form as a dove upon Him. . . . And JESUS Himself was beginning to be about thirty years old; being as was supposed the son of Joseph."

Of those years of unrecorded events, Luke has recorded that which gives ground for concluding that the life of those years was the life of a Man lived in the circumstances and amid the environments in which it was placed, under the eyes of God and before the eyes of men. "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was in subjection to them. And JESUS advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and men."

"*In favour with God.*"—Coming up out of the water after His baptism, there is the record of the HOLY SPIRIT in the form of a dove resting upon Him, and "a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved SON, in Thee I have found My delight." That voice was addressed to, or speaking of, JESUS, Who had lived in the midst of ordinary obscure surroundings for about thirty years; and now about to enter upon His time of public service.

"*And men.*"—There is also scripture testimony of the private life of JESUS as observed by men. Although the records of this have reference to utterances made subsequent to JESUS having entered upon His public ministry, they reflect knowledge of His private life in Nazareth.

Philip, having been found by JESUS, himself finds Nathanael, and declares to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses wrote in the law, and in the prophets, JESUS, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth. And Nathanael said, Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Again, those of His own country and who claimed knowledge of His family, said with amazement, "Whence has this man these things? and whence is this wisdom that is given to

Him, and such works of power are done by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us?"

Others, perplexed, reasoned "Have the rulers then indeed recognised that this is the CHRIST? But as to this man we know whence he is" (John vii. 26, 27). JESUS accepts their claim as to their knowledge of Himself according to natural things.

The fault-seeking, hypocritical Pharisees could in sarcasm speak of Him as "of Galilee"; but He, rebukingly, told them, "Ye know neither Me nor My Father."

In the light of this expressed knowledge of Himself, whether in sincerity, in enquiry, in amazement, in perplexity, or in sarcasm (and more directly in respect to the latter), it was JESUS, and He alone, Who dare put forth the challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

The Apostle Paul points out to the Philippian believers (and to us also) that the LORD JESUS CHRIST was GOD's pattern Man, His everyday life—not only the years of public service—having been lived under the eyes of GOD and men. "In favour with GOD and men." So the life of every true Christian should be after this pattern "following His steps."

H. SAMBROOK.

Sècret Disciples

IN Proverbs xxix. 25, we read that: "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but (in contrast to this) whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." Surely the mention of secret disciples by an inspired writer like John is not intended either to encourage such secrecy, or even to condone it. "No man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews." (John vii. 13.) The fear of man was a stumbling-block to faith. Yet, "Many of the people believed in Him and said, 'When CHRIST cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?'" (John vii. 31.) Nevertheless one secret disciple is singled out for special mention under very special circumstances in Joseph of Arimathæa. This man is mentioned by all four Evangelists as the prime mover in the burial of our

LORD JESUS CHRIST and each writer mentions something that the other three do not.

Matthew says he was "a rich man" (xxvii. 57); Mark mentions him as "an honourable counsellor, who also waited for the kingdom of GOD" (xv. 43); Luke describes him as "a good man and a just", and adds that "he had not consented to the counsel and deed of them, who himself waited for the kingdom of GOD" (xxiii. 50, 51). John alone says he was "a disciple of JESUS, but secretly, for fear of the Jews" (xix. 38).

Nothing certain seems to be known about Arimathæa. Some have thought that it is Ramah, where Samuel dwelt (1 Samuel vii. 17), and the Septuagint Greek translator calls Ramah "Armathaim", which looks something like it. We are not told how Joseph came to have a new tomb in a garden outside Jerusalem all ready when it was needed, but its existence reveals the over-ruling hand of GOD's providence for the fulfilment of what was written aforetime for our learning, and the removal of the fear of man from Joseph's actions can only have been of GOD, with Whom all things are possible. Joseph "bought fine linen" (Mark xv. 46), and Nicodemus came forward with spices and ointments to do according to the Jews' manner of burying, but nothing is said about Nicodemus beyond the thrice-repeated mention of his coming to JESUS by night. We can only guess and hope for the best, while praising GOD for all that was done for His glory. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs xxi. 1).

GOD's over-ruling providence for the fulfilment of what was written is very marked during our LORD's sojourn here. When an ass was required for the circumstances of Zech. ix. 9), there was one ready (Matthew xxi. 1-11); when a room was needed for the last passover, there was one immediately available (Matthew xxvi. 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-16; Luke xxii. 7-13). Vinegar was immediately ready for Psalm xlix. 21, when the LORD JESUS said "I thirst" (John xix. 28-30; Luke xxiii. 36; Mark xv. 36; Matthew xxvii. 48), and for the accompany circumstances of His death in Isaiah liii. 9, there was a specially-prepared new tomb for all that was required in the way of testimony.

G. S. PURNELL.

Sparkling Gems

When the LORD distinctly enjoins a service upon any of His servants, nothing is frequently more dangerous than consultation with others.

* * *

Faith trusts in Him Who commissions for the work, for the strength and wisdom needed in its execution.

* * *

Conference with others produces many questions; such as, Is it possible? Is it wise? or, Is it the proper time? And the effect is, that faith droops under the influence of many a suggested doubt, if it does not become altogether extinguished by prudence and common-sense.

* * *

There is nothing like boldness in the face of the adversary; but this can only spring from a divine courage, begotten by the assurance that "if God be for us, none can be against us."

* * *

God surveys his people, how carefully He notes the state of their hearts and the character of their service, and how grateful to Him is the exhibition of devotedness to His glory.

* * *

Faithfulness within precedes outward strength. Evil must be put away from Israel before the enemy can be driven out. Obedience first and then strength. This is God's order.

* * *

There are servants which are adapted for lonely service and there are others almost useless unless in association with others.

* * *

Dangers beset the path of both. The former are often tempted to be isolated and to forget that the LORD has other servants working for the same ends; while the latter are sometimes betrayed into forgetfulness of individual dependence.

* * *

Every Christian has his or her own place, which no one else can fill, and his or her own work, which no other can do.

* * *

The importance of occupying the position given us to fill and of exercising the special gift or function bestowed upon us, cannot be too much pressed.

* * *

Whenever the people of God are active, Satan is roused and he seeks by every means in his power to raise up hindrances and obstacles.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond)

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“Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”

THE Apostle Paul was solicitous that his son Timothy should not have disputes of words, which were unprofitable and subversive to the hearers; but that he should strive diligently to present himself approved of GOD, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth (2 Tim. ii. 14, 15, N. Tr.). That Timothy should hold and apply the truth in its right connection.

Such should be our aspiration, whether for our own edification and enjoyment, or for ministry to others. We should seek, by prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, so to read and learn the truth as to hold or minister it with clarity: not in confusion.—H.S.

Esther

BY THE EDITOR

(continued from page 100)

THE second value of the *Book of Esther* for the people of God in any age consists in the record of His secret providence seen to be working throughout the whole story on behalf of those whom on account of their position He could not publicly own as His people. They should not have been where they were; Jerusalem was their city, and to it by King Cyrus' proclamation full opportunity had been afforded them to return. Evidently they had no desire to return, no heart for Zion the city of God, and from one cause or another decided to remain where their sins and the sins of their fathers had brought them. If, however, they had no care for God, He still cared for them, and the story in *Esther* is a further revelation of the patience and grace by which He over-ruled circumstances in the case of this indifferent, neglectful, ungrateful people.

Then, as now, whatever the unfaithfulness of His people, God is faithful and never fails to care for them. So in the narrative we find the plot to utterly destroy the Jews there was completely foiled, not because they were worthy, but because God is good, supreme, unchanging, the protector, guardian and never-failing friend of all His people at all times.

The characters of the actors are all clearly shown in the story, but three things call for special notice. They are (1) *The importance of the individual* (ch. iv. 14). (2) *The importance of seeming trifles in life*. (3) *The opportuneness when things occur here*. Consider first, the importance of the individual. Mordecai's *confession* (chapter iii. 4.) "He had told them that he was a Jew"; his sturdy conviction as a Jew and *refusal* to bow to the age-long enemy of his race (iii. 2, 5); his *humility* (vi. 12) where at the end of that exciting episode, "Mordecai came again to the King's gate" returning to his lowly post. The importance of this man in any scheme of God's service is marked by a character in which *confession of faith, consistency of conduct and humility of mind* are blended.

Take, further, the character of Esther herself in the story and mark (in ch. ii. 7, 9, 10, 15, 20) simplicity, respect, piety, faith which fasts, prays and ventures (iv. 15, 16). Such are the characteristic traits of individuals whom God uses in His purposes of blessing to others. Yet (as in ch. iv., 14), while the importance of the individual is stressed, God's purposes of blessing do not actually depend upon the instrument He may at any time be pleased to use. And while there was the faith which fasted and prayed, which expected and obtained the blessing, there was the actual *venture of faith* on Esther's part "if I perish, I perish". It is always safe to have faith in God for the hearts of all are at His disposal. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will," and for the trusting soul God allays the natural fear, doing often far more than we ask, or indeed think possible.

In the third place, note the opportuneness of the moment when the things occur in the story, and the importance of seeming trifles. A wakeful night, an unusual soporific, and a neglected duty. "On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king." By this means a neglected duty was brought to his attention. The Jew who had saved Xerxes from assassination had never been rewarded, and the wakeful king orders that this neglect shall be immediately rectified, his wakefulness apparently lasting (we may assume from vi. 4) until the morning.

But brooding over the story of Mordecai lies the sinister figure of the inveterate enemy of the Jewish people, plotting their entire destruction and we must now digress to see the part he plays in the *Book of Esther*. He makes an early appearance (in chapter iii.) where his character is clearly portrayed, and suggests in every respect that of the Arch-enemy of God and man. He was probably of Amalekite descent, and one of such a race would instinctively hate Israel and every Jew. "Elevated by one of those sudden turns which are frequent in despotic states, where all depends upon the whim of the autocrat, he showed that jealousy of any omission of respect which is characteristic of upstarts. These two

motives account for his monstrous scheme of revenge whereby he intended to exterminate a whole nation for the affront of omission of respect on the part of the one individual, Mordecai; his wicked plot recoiled on himself; the honours which he designed for himself he, in spite of himself, heaped on the man he so scornfully hated; and the gallows on which he meant to hang Mordecai was that on which he was hanged himself." In the story the impatience of a bad man is seen, in the providence of God, to be over-ruled to reward the patience of a good man. The references to Haman and the Jews in the narrative are significant of names given in Scripture to the devil himself. He is the Jews' enemy; the accuser of God's people; the "adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman" as Queen Esther told him to his face, while Psalm vii, 14-16 might have been actually written of him, so closely does it describe his career. "*Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own pate.*" As to Haman's plot to cut off the whole Jewish people in the land, how strikingly Asaph in Psalm lxxxiii. 3, 4, makes a complaint of similar dangerous plots, "*They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee.*"

One wonders, did Esther and Mordecai base their prayers on such Scriptures? Whether this was so or not, while no open miracle could be wrought on account of the position of the people, yet then, as so often before and since in their history and our own, it became manifest by their deliverance, that as Cowper says:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm."

Whether in the turbulent sea of the nations with the problems they cannot solve, or in the storms of life with which we at times seem about to be overwhelmed,

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

So in the *Book of Esther*, ere the story closes, an unfaithful people have abundant cause to bless a faithful GOD Whose never-failing providence ordered their affairs aright, as indeed His people in all ages still find to be the same.

(*To be continued D.V.*)

The Kingdom

THE writer of the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of “the world to come” as a subject that we should all be familiar with; some aspects of it, doubtless, are more familiar than others, and it is good to remind ourselves of some of the prospects before us. The kingdom, for instance, as being that period when the LORD JESUS CHRIST shall reign, is something we all look forward to, and Scripture has some weighty truths to present in connection with it that will bear repetition.

The kingdom in this respect is part of the inheritance. It has been given to the SON (Ps. ii. 8), and the time is yet future when it shall be said, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST (Rev. xi. 15). We who believe are to-day under His lordship, and so in His kingdom; but what we are looking for is the time of His manifested glory, when we shall have our varying places in it—as, in the parable, “one was over ten cities, and one over five cities”. The SON has inherited its fullest glory through His pathway of suffering, and we shall likewise find our place according to our faithfulness in this world. It is well to be clear about this. We are translated into the kingdom of the beloved SON as a consequence of our owning JESUS CHRIST as LORD and SAVIOUR, but the measure of our glory there, as joint-heirs in the inheritance, is this, “if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. viii. 17). For this will be the time of reward—“that thou should give reward unto

thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great" (Rev. xi. 18).

Because we love the LORD, who humbled Himself and became poor for us, so we value the time of His exaltation. And any reward we may be given, will redound not to our praise, but to His; it will "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST: Whom having not seen, ye love" (1 Pet. i. 7-8). It is, therefore, love for Him and a desire for His glory that will lead us in the path to an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom.

Now the apostles used to preach the kingdom (Acts xix. 8, xx. 25, xxviii. 23). They left no doubt in the minds of their hearers that JESUS, who had been rejected, was in heaven waiting for the time of His manifestation, and that they, too, were called to give up their place here, just as He had relinquished all present claim. "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36). The saints thus take their place "in the kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST" (Rev. i. 9). So then, coupled with a coming kingdom, the apostles also of necessity preached a present tribulation. For the world in which we are, lieth in the wicked one, and the conflict is bound to be continuous while we obey another LORD in our lives day by day. For this reason we find Paul and Barnabas "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of GOD" (Acts xiv. 22). The Thessalonians were encouraged in their suffering, that it was "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of GOD, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of GOD, for which ye also suffer" (2 Thess. i. 5). These saints, then, whose fervent zeal and love for the LORD had produced persecution and troubles from their neighbours, could look forward to the recompense: they had nothing here, so they would have their place in the Kingdom. Along a similar line the LORD cheers His own disciples, as He exhorts them to commit to the FATHER their needs in this scene, with the assurance "Fear not, little flock; for it is your FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke xii. 32).

To these words of encouragement the SPIRIT adds words of warning. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom (1 Cor. xv. 50)—there is no entrance except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT; there is no place there, no reward nor inheritance for anything that derives from the flesh. There is this warning to believers, that they who sow to the flesh shall not inherit the Kingdom (1 Cor. vi. 9, Gal. v. 21). The glory of reigning with CHRIST may be lost by pursuing those paths which, as the LORD says in another place, have their reward here. That glory, those crowns, are reserved for those who faithfully follow their LORD and MASTER, Who suffered, and entered into His glory.

There is, therefore, a continual striving to be approved down here, whatever may be the immediate consequence (see 2 Cor. v. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 15). The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the LORD's name—a proof to them that they would reign with Him. How comforted was Paul with the thought that, because of his good fight, there was henceforth laid up for him a crown of righteousness. He knew that the grace of GOD had worked effectually in him that, in spite of the forsaking of all in Asia, he had built what would endure, even under the scrutiny of the righteous Judge. And he, who had suffered many things, exhorted Timothy to continue in the same pathway, with his eye on "the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1).

Let us, in our turn, have our eye on Him and on that time. The call to the saint of GOD to-day, even should he be as young in the faith as were the Thessalonians, is to "walk worthy of GOD, Who hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. ii. 12). And because the evil that above all characterises these last days is the giving up of precious truth once received and held, so the word for us all to-day, just before the LORD comes for us, is to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). The LORD's appearing, which we love, is near; then patient endurance shall be rewarded with an abundant entrance into the joy of our LORD, and an augmenting of His glory.

D.E.B.

Unity

(Résumé)

IN previous articles (June, July, September) first *God's plans for unity*, centred in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, His SON, were contrasted with man's efforts for unity, both in the political and in the religious spheres.

Then *the six practical necessities* which must characterize christians *individually* if unity approved by GOD is to be manifested in this world were considered in some detail (Eph. iv. 1-3). Thirdly, *the sevenfold aspects of divine unity* which are indestructible and eternal (Eph. iv. 4-6) were seen to be all-important, not merely as accepted doctrines but as active effective truths, if christians are to exhibit collectively the unity which is in accord with the will of GOD.

Separation From Evil.

Readers will, however, be aware that the same apostle whom the SPIRIT of GOD used to write so clearly about unity has also written equally clearly about separation, *separation from evil*. In 1 Cor. v. the christians at Corinth are told to put away from among themselves a wicked person (though he be called a brother—i.e. a fellow-believer). 2 Cor. ii. 6-11 shows that the particular individual concerned was indeed a fellow-believer and that his putting-away led to his repentance and restoration. Titus iii. 10 says that a heretic (i.e. a man who *chooses* his own ideas) after being warned, is to be rejected. 2 Timothy ii. instructs us that we are to purge *ourselves from the vessels to dishonour* in the "great house". The apostle John, also, writes of those who transgress (literally "go forward" beyond what the Scriptures teach) and do not abide in the "doctrine of CHRIST". He enjoins us not to receive them into the house nor even to bid them God speed (2 John 9-11). All of these *may* be true believers. On the other hand there was evidently much evil in several of "the seven churches in Asia" (Rev. ii., iii.), yet nothing is said about putting the individuals concerned away or of separating from them. How are these matters to be reconciled with one another and with the truths concerning unity? This is a question which puzzles many young christians, and older ones too, who desire to please and obey

the LORD. The difficulty arises, however, through confusion between what Scripture teaches in regard to the *body*, the *church*, and the *house*, on the one hand, and the instructions to christians as to their personal walk and associations and as to their coming together for the LORD'S SUPPER, or for "prayer, praise and thanksgiving", or for "edification, exhortation and comfort" on the other hand.

The Body, the Church and the House.

It is stated that the church is Christ's body (Eph. i. 23), and that the house of God is the church (1 Tim. iii. 15), but the terms are nevertheless not used in Scripture indiscriminately or interchangeably. The term "*body*" ("of CHRIST", understood) is only used of those who are truly believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They are baptized by one SPIRIT into one body, and are members of CHRIST, and members one of another. The term "member" is applied exclusively to a true believer, never to one who *only* makes profession, and it is always member of "*the body*", never of "the church", or of "the house". The term "*church*" is used in several ways in Scripture. It is used to include all believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST from the descent of the HOLY GHOST on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) until the coming of the LORD JESUS in the air when all who have believed in Him, whether "fallen asleep" or "alive and remaining" will be caught up to be for ever with Him. Examples are "the church which is His body" (Eph. i, 23), and "CHRIST loved the church and gave Himself for it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious church" (Eph. v. 25-27). Here and in many other places the church consists only of those who are truly the LORD'S. The term is also used for the company of believers gathered in a particular town (e.g. the church at Corinth, the churches of Galatia) and in this sense it can be used in the plural. In this sense also the company of the town or city is often addressed in Scripture as to its responsibility, and the word "church" then covers all who make profession of owning JESUS as LORD, holding the faith, and associating themselves with those who do so. Similarly with the word "*house*", the "house of God" in 1 Tim. iii. 15 is comparable with the "holy temple" of Eph. iii. 21, and the

“spiritual house” composed of living stones” of 1 Peter ii. 5, and consists only of true believers considered collectively as forming the dwelling-place of God, the place where HE is worshipped. But when our responsibility is the subject, we read of a building for God’s use into which we may have built wood, hay or stubble (1 Cor. iii. 9-15); a temple which can be defiled and so lose its character as God’s temple (1 Cor. iii. 17); a great house in which there are vessels to dishonour (2 Tim. ii. 20). Summing up we find (A) the three terms “body”, “church” and “house” each used in strictly limited sense which excludes all who are not truly believers in the LORD JESUS, and corresponds to the threefold unity of Eph. iv. 4 (see previous article); but we also find (B) the terms “church” and “house” (not “body”) used in the wider sense including all who profess to own the one LORD, to hold the one faith, and to associate with those who do so—the wider circle of Eph. iv.

Now it is quite clear that “purging out the old leaven”, “putting away”, “purging oneself from vessels to dishonour”, cannot properly be separation from either A or B above. If a person is truly a believer in the LORD JESUS he remains a member of CHRIST’S body, in the church, a living stone in the spiritual house, though he may be one of those with whom we are not to eat, who is to be put away from among us, from whom we are to purge ourselves. It is also obvious that such a person, though not a true believer, may remain a professing christian, and therefore cannot be put out of the *professing* church or out of the “great house”. This explains why nothing is said about putting away in Rev. ii. and iii. In the early days after Pentecost the LORD added daily to the company which continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrines and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts ii. 42, 47); and of the rest (i.e. those who did not believe) durst no man join himself to them (Acts v. 13). *In this period the body, the church and the house consisted of the same individuals* though considered from different aspects. But failure and corruption came in even during the apostles’ lifetime, so that Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude all wrote warnings and instructions as to individual or collective conduct, under the guidance of the SPIRIT of GOD. As the apostle Paul said to the elders of Ephesus “after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you

... also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx 29, 30).

Individual Separation

In the corrupt condition of professing Christendom as it exists to-day we are exhorted to *walk individually in obedience* to the Word of God. The epistles to Timothy are full of instruction on this point, and worthy of careful study. Though "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (N.B. this is *inside* professing Christendom) "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" and remember that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Purging oneself from vessels to dishonour and following righteousness, faith, love and peace with them that call on the LORD out of a pure heart are enjoined. There is nothing inconsistent in this with the unity that has been before us in Eph. iv. The six practical characteristics should still be exhibited by us, and the sevenfold unity should still be operative in power in our souls.

Collective Separation, and Unity

There is a kind of outward unity of all who profess to be christians, the outward unity of *all* the vessels in the great house, the outward unity of the building consisting of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. But *this kind of unity is not approved of God*. The SPIRIT of GOD has given us detailed guidance, especially in 1 Corinthians, about coming together, and it is only when christians come together in accordance with those scriptures that they can manifest in this world unity which is approved of God. Obedience in this respect, and to the scriptures quoted under the heading "separation from evil" above, is just as important as displaying individually the six practical necessities of Eph. iv. 1-3 and as holding in active power the truths as to unity of Eph. iv. 4-6. Such a company will purge out, as soon as it is manifested, any leaven found within it, whether the leaven is moral evil as in 1 Cor. v. or doctrinal evil as in Matthew xvi. 12 and Gal. v. 9.

If the company does not do so it is *united in an evil course* and ceases to be an example, in this world, of unity approved by God. We should therefore come together in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures, giving letters of commendation to, and receiving amongst us on letters of commendation from, other companies of christians also gathered in accordance with that teaching (see 2 Cor. iii. 1, and examples such as Rom. xvi. 1; 1 Cor. xvi. 10; Col. iv. 7-10). In gathering together thus we shall find ourselves separated from a large number of true believers, obedience to the Word of God preventing us from *manifesting unity* with them because of the unscriptural way they meet or because of their tolerance of moral or doctrinal evil. Nevertheless we ought to acknowledge every true believer as a member of the body of CHRIST in the truth of the unity of the body, and in our contacts with them individually we ought ourselves to be characterised by the six practical virtues of Eph. iv. 1-3.

A company of christians gathered according to the Scriptures cannot rightly be called *the church* (or *the "assembly"*) in the town or place because, in these days of confusion, there will be many real christians not included in the company who are equally part of the church, but the company so gathered will *represent* the church in the place, being gathered, as all the christians in that place should be gathered, according to the Scriptures.

May the LORD use these four articles on "Unity" to the end that unity approved by Him may be manifested to a greater extent in this day of confusion and failure. J. C. KELL.

The Last Words of David

(2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7)

THE previous chapter, which speaks of God's deliverances for David, is to be remarked for its length, but this song, which speaks of David himself, is very short. And so it is with us. We shall have to say through eternity, "What hath God wrought for us!" but we shall have very little to say about ourselves. As we go on we find, "He must increase"—a blessed thing—"but I must decrease."

David says, "*David the son of Jesse.*" He delights to recall the time when he was little in his own eyes. "*The man who was raised up on high*"—the man whom GOD exalted to the throne—"*The anointed of the God of Jacob*"—recalling the time when Samuel anointed him passing by the man head and shoulders taller than any of the people, and choosing the smallest of all. "*The sweet psalmist of Israel*"—he thinks of the praises to GOD from his harp, and the action of the SPIRIT of GOD. For in whatever state we are we can always praise. We have always something to praise Him for—something do I say? We have an *eternity* to praise Him for.

David looks at his history, but he sees it all blotted and stained. "*He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*"—"My house is not so with God." He would gladly have it effaced. As we think of our own little blotted and stained histories, we would gladly have them effaced. He does not speak of what he had done, though there had been faithful times in his life—he left all that to GOD. It is a relief to him to turn to the MESSIAH—"He shall be as the light of the morning." His eye rests on the covenant of GOD, steadfast and sure.

Let us turn to one place of many in the New Testament where we can find perfection. "These words spake JESUS, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER, the hour is come; glorify Thy SON, that Thy SON also may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life unto as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O FATHER, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." There was one Man—"over all, God blessed for ever," but let us also remember that He *was* a Man—Who could justly point to Himself as a sample of human perfection. "*I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*" These be the words of JESUS, what a contrast to the last words of the son of Jesse!

ROCHFORD HUNT.

Sparkling Gems

The LORD grant us that calmness of faith which is not occupied with self, but with Him who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree!

* * *

Resurrection settled everything in peace for the believer. Every cause for fear and unbelieving sorrow was buried in the grave of CHRIST. Every blessing overflows in Him risen. How much is made of this in the Epistles!

* * *

To believe GOD about the death of His SON because of our sin is to take GOD's part against ourselves.

* * *

The resurrection shows every hindrance gone. The angel acknowledges Him as LORD, "come see the place where the LORD lay"; but what a blessing to be able to say *our* LORD! What a joy thus to own that risen One Who was crucified as entitled in everything to command!

* * *

"When they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted"—"some doubted"—and *these* were disciples. How good is GOD! how above the thoughts of man! Men would have held back the fact. Why say that *some* of His disciples doubted? Would it not stumble others? But it is profitable to know the depth of our unbelieving hearts to see that even in the presence of the risen JESUS "some doubted".

* * *

Consider how many of the precious saints of GOD, of all ages and places, have gone before thee.

* * *

How little is all earthly greatness!

* * *

The joy of the LORD is only to be retained when we walk tenderly and circumspectly.

* * *

If we have been given to know that the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in CHRIST, our responsibility is to walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond)

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NOVEMBER, 1951

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“My Times are in Thy Hand”

(Ps. xxxi. 15)

To what glory and bliss,
Blessed GOD, I am come!
In a world like this
Thy child to become!
As fading as an autumn leaf,
Poor dust—of many sinners chief—
And yet so highly honoured!

In CHRIST I am view'd
With a FATHER's smile;
With raiment endued,
Like bridal attire.
In CHRIST, my Righteousness, I'm clothed,
To Him, Thine own dear SON, betrothed,
And call Thee, “Abba, FATHER.”

Come want, grief, or pain?
I take them to Thee;
Then nothing can pain,
When coming from Thee.
I am Thy child, O blissful thought!
And as Thine heir, to glory brought,
Shall reign with CHRIST in glory.

ANON. •

Esther

(continued from page 112)

IN *Esther*, the last historical book in the Old Testament, as in *Genesis* the first of these, we are shown what James in his practical epistle terms "the end of the LORD" in His dealings with those who truly trust Him, namely, how God always brings good out of evil. St. Paul in his glorious summary at the end of *Romans* viii. says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

In the striking story of Joseph with, at times, its apparently impossible situations, he clearly showed that he shared this conviction. At that interview with his brethren when they came cringing to him after their father's funeral, whining for kindly consideration and treatment from their injured brother, he said, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." In this noble reply there is an entire absence of any rancour or revengeful feeling. He is standing before God and conscious of His ever watchful unflinching providence. Like Nurse Edith Cavell, whose heroism in the first world war found explanation in her words to the evil men who ordered her unjust execution, "This I would say, standing before God and eternity, we must have no hatred or bitterness toward any one." So she died, "standing before God and eternity"; and it was the same position occupied by Joseph at that interview with his conscience-stricken brethren. They were apprehensive of richly deserved vengeance for their heartless treatment of their younger brother. But, as another has well remarked, "He had seen how God was handling the wrongs he had suffered to make them work together for good; working ceaselessly, taking the savage wrongs and building them up into the structure of a mighty purpose for Joseph and for the world." "God meant it," said Joseph, "unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive," multitudes of Egyptians then living being witnesses.

So in the *Book of Esther* the Unseen Worker is still seen to be engaged in this gracious task of bringing good out of evil.

This introduces us to the third value of this somewhat unusual book. For, while treating of historical facts with all their sordid realism of racial passions, a significantly prophetic character also attaches to the history. The Jew in the story is the Gentile problem, and still is so to-day. Until that problem is rightly solved there will be no universal peace or prosperity for mankind. Hence in *Esther*, where this problem is presented in a nutshell or as a thumb-nail sketch, are to be found all the elements of its solution in a kind of miniature forecast. The well-known couplet:

"The New is in the Old contained,
The Old is by the New explained,"

expresses more or less an expository truth.

In *Esther* there are four things which by New Testament references may be regarded as being of a prophetic character. They are:

- (1) The Captivity, great tribulation and final deliverance of the Jewish people.
- (2) The drastic punishment of the Jews' enemies.
- (3) The destruction of the Arch-enemy known as the Adversary and Accuser of the brethren.
- (4) The final position of the deliverer of his Jewish brethren.

Now the Jew as the Gentile problem is a continuous one in history. As a nation, the inspired description of them by Hosea the prophet still strictly applies. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim." (Hosea iii. 4). A nation, a religious nation, yet possessed of neither a national place, government, nor established place of worship. They knew not the day of their visitation and so rejected Him Who was born King of the Jews, Who died with the title over His head, This is JESUS of Nazareth the King of the Jews.

It is a matter of common historical knowledge that the captivities and tribulations of this marvellously preserved race have been many and bitter, yet prophecy speaks of worse

to come for them. In the days of Judas Maccabaeus they suffered greatly, but the siege of Jerusalem with its horrors far surpassed this earlier tribulation. Our LORD Himself prophesied in the gospel according to Luke of this, and also in Matthew and Mark the record quite distinguishable from that, of a yet future final great tribulation when the times of the Gentiles run out and a new age is about to commence. For it is clear that the times of the Gentiles (now present) run on after Luke's prophecy is fulfilled; and equally clearly that it is not so after the scenes of which Matthew and Mark foretell. There is only an analogy between the past siege of Jerusalem and the future desolation spoken of in Matthew. And in Revelation vii., we read of *the* great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. xxx. 7). Daniel in his prophecy refers to it even more explicitly, "At that time . . . there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. xii). And our LORD Himself refers to it: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. xxiv.)

Their tribulations under Antiochus Epiphanes, the Romans, Russians, and Germans of modern days, evil and bitter as they were, are eclipsed by what is commonly referred to as *the* great tribulation out of which a sealed company of repentant faithful Jews come as Rev. vii. 9 shows.

In the *Book of Esther*, the destruction of Haman, specially there shown to be the Adversary, the Accuser of the people of God, may suggest a reference to Revelation xii. 10 where the "accuser of our brethren" is cast down, he who is "your adversary the devil" as Peter describes him in 1 Peter v. 8.

Also the drastic punishment of the Jews' enemies recalls Matt. xxv. 31-46, When the SON of MAN shall come in His glory and deal with those as they have dealt with his Jewish brethren. "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Mordecai's position in the last verse in the book is, as already remarked, typically significant. "For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

Every book in the Bible speaks more or less plainly of the final restoration of Israel to be the joy of the whole earth, and the blessing of all the families of mankind. But first, as in *Esther*, comes the execution of judgment on the wicked, especially upon the Jews' enemies. The Jews then as here pass through captivity and the fires of great tribulation, in complete contrast to the Church which is to be kept out of that time of trouble, "the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. iii. 10).

Finally, the Arch-enemy is ignominiously destroyed, and CHRIST the true Jew, the real Deliverer of His brethren, is seen in the Kingdom as Heir of all (Rev. xx).

(To be continued D.V.)

Union, on Mutual Confession

(Phil. iii. 15)

A TIMELY REPRINT

This principle has a great repute and a very fair appearance; but it is profoundly evil and presumptuous. It supposes that the truth is at our disposal. Philippians iii. teaches quite a different principle: there is no idea of concession nor of any arrangement in expressing the truth so as to reconcile different views. It is said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." It is not, Let us lower down the truth to the measure of him who has not come up to it. Nor is it two persons ignoring which of the two has the truth, or content to suppose the possibility of error in giving up more or less what they hold, in order to express themselves so as to be agreed. All this is an infringement upon the authority of the truth on us. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God

shall reveal even this unto you." There is no question here of concessions, but of the revelation from God to enlighten him who is not perfect in the truth. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." There is no question here of concessions, but of walking together in the things we possess, with regard to which, because recognised as being the truth of God, there is no giving up anything, all being subject to it. In that case, there is no concession, either on one side or on the other; for all possess the same truth, having already attained to it in a measure, and they walk together minding the same thing. The remedy for the diversity of mind which may remain is not to make concessions (how deal thus with the truth?), but the revelation from God in favour of him who is ignorant, as we are all of us on diverse points.

But I shall be told, On that footing one will never come to an agreement. Where will you find in the word such a thing as coming to an agreement? To come to an agreement is not the unity of the church of God. The truth is not to be modified, and we are not called to force our imperfect views on any one. I must have faith, and one must have the same faith, to walk together; but in the things received as the truth of God by faith, I can make no concessions; I may bear with ignorance, but I cannot arrange the truth to please another. You will tell me, In that case how walk together? But why lay down grounds of unity which require either unity of views, or so evil a thing as concession on such or such a truth? As to the things on which we possess the truth, and with regard to which we have faith, we have the same mind, we walk in them together. If I acquire some knowledge more, I bear with the ignorance of my brother, until God reveals the thing to him. Our unity is in CHRIST Himself. If unity depends on concessions, it is only a sect founded on human opinions, because the principle of the absolute authority of the truth is lost.

They will tell me, that true Christians will never yield on fundamental points. I was going to say "I understand"; but it is not so. There are many who are agreed in spite of the errors which affect the foundations; I know that others would

not; but this does not prevent the fact, that the principle of concessions is in no wise authorised in the word, denies the authority of the truth on us, and pretends to be able to dispose of it for the sake of peace.* The word supposes the bearing with ignorance, but never concessions, because it does not suppose that men could make a rule different from itself, in order to come to an agreement.

I receive a man "weak in the faith"; but I do not yield anything to him as the truth, even on such a point as herbs; I might perhaps deny essential truths by so doing. Such a case may happen, where to observe days might lead to doubt of the Christianity of him who does it (see Gal. iv. 9-11). There might be another case where I could only say, On this very point, "let every man be fully persuaded" (Rom. xiv. 5, 6, &c). Sometimes the whole of Christianity depends upon something which can be borne with in other points of view (Gal. ii. 14). I repeat, there is no trace in the word of a system which suppresses a part of the truth so as to have a common confession, but the contrary. There was the perfect truth, and God revealed what was wanting, when it was otherwise. They were of one mind and they walked together, and there was no need of concessions. One did not pretend to such things as required them; that is, the Bible does not suppose what one has the pretension to do. It is to mutilate the truth that it may be adopted by many.

*Here is the thing better expressed than I could do it myself: "There is something which is more compromised among us than the truth; it is its value and its claims. We are less far from finding the same dogmas in the scriptures, than from giving them the same authority over us; and we may be allowed to affirm that the questions on which Christians are divided would soon be settled, if they drew near to the Bible with the intention of taking seriously all the truths it proclaims. Alas! while we read, the devil murmurs in our ears, All that is not equally pressing, equally obligatory; we are commanded to bear with the weak; Paul made himself all things to all, even consenting to offer sacrifice and to circumcise Timothy; on the other hand, edification goes before dogma; the principal dogma itself goes before the secondary dogmas, etc. One involuntarily opens the ear to a language which appears plausible and prudent: which appears not to attack a single truth, but which is only the more calculated to render them all powerless. From afar one bows before each truth; but if it comes near to us, if it requires us to act—to sacrifice anything, at once the present truth is ranked among the truths that are out of season."—*Archives*, September 22nd, 1849.

The word, therefore, and especially Philippians iii., condemns this arrangement of mutilated truths, with a view to get them to be adopted by everyone; for this is to dishonour God and His truth. These are means for forming a sect, composed of those who are agreed on the points laid down as grounds of union. It is never the unity of the church of God; it will be an orthodox sect, even if it should take in a greater part of a nation, because it is a body formed on the agreement to which men have come on certain truths; but it is not the unity of the church of God. In a confession of faith there is no question of bearing with individuals who are ignorant on certain points, nor of acknowledging together that one is lacking as to the knowledge thereof, nor of enlightening those who are so: they just declare the truth they possess, that others may, by agreeing with that declaration, join themselves to such as have adopted it as a ground of union. That all may adopt it, the profession of the truth must be reduced to the measure of ignorance of all those who come in, if they are sincere in that profession; but this is not bearing with others: it is persons, as I have said, who dispose of the truth of God by a human compromise. Is that the unity of the Spirit?

And, again, pay attention to this. If I know the truth and make a concession so as to unite myself to others in a common profession, my concession is just simply yielding the truth to him who will not have it. If I, with others, make concessions because we only have opinions and are ignorant of the truth, or have no certainty as to it, what a monstrous pretension to lay down, in that state of ignorance, a rule to be imposed on others as a ground of the unity of the church, under penalty of not forming part of it! I may be told, But instead of this you impose your views, as being sure of the truth. Not at all, because I believe in a unity which already exists, the unity of the body of Christ, of which every Christian forms part; whereas you establish union on views on which you have come to an agreement. You will tell me that I am indifferent then as to the truth! No; but you have used improper means to guard it, by imposing the profession of a part of the truth

J. N. DARBY.

The Apostle Paul and Christian Liberty

THE character and activities of the apostle Paul are so many-sided that he seems an example and an expert in almost every branch of Christian life. We may think of him as apostle, missionary, evangelist, teacher, pastor, theologian, martyr, and as hero of unselfishness. In this paper we consider him as the champion of spiritual freedom: the "liberty wherewith CHRIST makes free."

One of the burning questions among the Christians of the first century was the "Judaism question". At this distance of time we perhaps fail to realise its importance, but some knowledge of it sheds valuable light on the New Testament, especially on the Epistles to the Galatians, the Hebrews, and the Romans.

What was of permanent value in the old Hebrew faith, "the Jews' religion" as he calls it in Galatians, was carried over and incorporated into Christianity; and it was Paul who, above all others, was used of GOD to liberate the new spiritual religion from the trammels of a now dead legalism. His teaching, too, received emphatic historical confirmation when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies, for then it must have been patent to the most fanatical Jew that the GOD of his fathers had now forsaken the holy city and the outworn religion of which it had once been the Divinely-appointed centre.

Paul himself tells us that he was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews", and that he had always been most scrupulous in observance of all Jewish ritual. Matthew the evangelist is led to gather up our LORD's denunciations of the Pharisees of His day, which he records in the 23rd chapter of his Gospel. They were the proud and envious men of tradition and of ritual, and were popular because they represented Jewish nationalism. Their religion, however, emphasised the outside at the expense of the inside, and was in reality a dry, barren, lifeless thing, consisting largely of minute points as to food, dress and deportment. For instance they would sit in solemn conclave in order to discuss the tremendous question as to whether an egg laid on a festival day might or might not be eaten!

The outlook of some of the Pharisees, however, was saner and wider; and of one of these, Gamaliel, Paul was for a while a disciple. But during those early years of his life how Paul's intense spirit must have groaned under the yoke and bondage of the Mosaic law. For, try as he might to keep that law, he could find neither peace of conscience nor satisfaction of heart. No wonder, then, that when the light of the Gospel dawned on his soul, his heart was filled with an intense devotion to the freedom that CHRIST his Liberator had brought him.

In the first century Antioch in Syria was the great Christian missionary centre. But the prosperous church in that great city was not permitted to continue for long undisturbed. Certain false teachers from Jerusalem came down to Antioch and urged the converts from paganism to submit to the ritual observances of the Jewish law. So much unrest was caused by this evil teaching that the matter was taken to headquarters to be settled; and Paul, Titus, a convert from the Gentiles, and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to plead the cause of Christian liberty.

In Acts xv. we get an account of this important conference and of its result. The Jerusalem apostles and elders were men of two dispensations, and still clung in a measure to the forms of the old religion. Jewish pride was probably hurt at the idea that Christianity was to become the universal religion which admitted Jews and Gentiles on equal terms. However, thanks to the appeal that Paul's recital of success among the heathen had made, and to Peter taking the side of the apostle to the Gentiles, the conference, represented by James who presided, decided not to impose the ceremonials of the Jewish law upon the Gentile converts to Christianity, much to Paul's relief. The Gospel of true Christian liberty was recognised by the leaders of the church, and his dear Gentile converts could rejoice in the liberty wherewith CHRIST sets the believing sinner free.

The fight, however, was not over, and throughout his life Paul had to wage unremitting warfare against the would-be corrupters of the Faith. These evil teachers, Christians by profession, but really fanatical Jews at heart, busily sought to undo the apostle's work in Galatia. The Galatian believers were lending an ear to Paul's detractors and were beginning

to turn towards an outward and ceremonial religion. So serious was the situation that the apostle had to address to them his epistle in which he defends his apostolic authority, denounces the false teachers, and enforces the central doctrine of justification through faith alone. No wonder that to a kindred soul, Martin Luther, who, like the apostle, had laboured for years at the impossible task of making himself fit for God by his own efforts, the *Epistle to the Galatians* became the most precious portion of the Divine Library.

The battle has continued to our own day, the present Roman and Anglo-Catholic activities in this country being but another "push" of the enemy of souls in the age-long conflict between the religion of bondage and the glorious liberty of the Gospel of CHRIST.

Roman Catholicism is a gigantic religio-political system or machine, perfected after centuries of experience, a monstrous compound of truth and error and fraud. It has always flourished especially in Latin countries, the early leaders of the Roman church being ecclesiastical statesmen and virtually the successors to the rulers of the great Roman Empire; they inherited the Empire's traditions with its imperial outlook. The chief key to Roman Catholicism viewed as a hierarchy is that ruinous passion, the *lust of power*.

By its age, its traditions, its show of logic, its art, its gorgeous pageantry, and all the paraphernalia of its ceremonials and superstitions, the Roman Catholic church appeals to the desire for authority, and captivates the imagination and the senses. It uses its intimate knowledge of poor human nature to play upon the mind and the conscience, the hopes and the fears, and so holds multitudes of souls in the fetters of its despotic system.

The average Britisher resents the suggestion of foreign domination, so the name "Anglo-Catholic" appeals to ritualists in this country. But Anglo-Catholicism is the half-way house to Rome. It is futile to pretend that its ceremonials are merely "the idle gestures of men"; these things have a doctrinal significance, and are definitely Romanist in character.

Christianity was cradled in Judaism. The old prepares the way for the new, albeit the new wine bursts the old bottles, for

that which is universal and eternal must ever break through what is merely national, local and temporary. When the building is erected there is no longer any need for the scaffolding. Shadows disappear in the presence of the substance. The reality is better than the picture. Infancy is absorbed in maturity. The dragon-fly grub is an inferior creature to the dragon-fly, which leaves the lower element in order to enjoy its new-found liberty in a higher condition of life.

As we try to look through the eyes of the men of the first century, and view the problems of the early church, especially the Judaizing tendency to which we have called attention, we better understand and appreciate our New Testament. And we should rejoice anew in the glorious Gospel of the grace of God that removes guilt from the conscience and liberates the soul from the bondage and ceremonial of a dead religion. So shall we stand fast in the liberty wherewith CHRIST makes free.

E. ADAMS.

Remarkable Occurrences

(2 Kings viii. 1-6; Luke xxiv.)

MANY of us may possibly be able to recall an experience similar to the following:

Calling upon our friend (say, Mrs. Jones), we ask if she has heard of the extraordinary adventure of our old and mutual friend Mrs. Smith; and finding she has not, we begin to relate a story full of stirring incidents. Mrs. Jones is deeply interested, but also somewhat incredulous, and frequently punctuates our sentences with such remarks as "Never," "You don't mean to say so?" and "Really, Mrs. Brown, it's too miraculous to be true." Just at this moment, after a tap, the room door is opened, and to our amazement Mrs. Smith is announced. We exclaim, "How strange. We were just talking about your remarkable adventure. Mrs. Jones can scarcely believe it to be true. Perhaps you will tell us of it yourself."

Mrs. Smith does so. After she has left, Mrs. Jones remarks, "How very singular that she should come just then; for she has not given me a call for some time." Strange, maybe, but the facts were established and the doubts removed.

Now let us turn to the first of the remarkable occurrences mentioned above. This was a sad day in the history of Israel. The king and the people (for the most part) had turned aside from God, and neither His chastening hand nor His dealings in grace brought them to repentance. But if the king and the people were unfaithful, God was faithful, and He had His own witnesses, and most prominent amongst these Elisha, "the man of God".

Well, one day the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and he said to him, "Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done." So Gehazi begins to recount to the king the mighty deeds wrought by Elisha. We can imagine the king listening to Gehazi's account of the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal; to the story of the borrowed axe being made to swim: to the healing of Naaman the leper, etc., until last of all Gehazi says, "Why, he even restored to life the dead body of a Shunammite woman's son" (see 2 Kings iv. 18-38). And as the king listened to this remarkable story, probably with doubt expressed in his face, who should come upon the scene just at that very moment but the woman and her son, who had been brought back to life. What brought her there is simply but fully explained in verses 1-3 of chapter viii. One can understand the exultant cry of Gehazi at this astounding confirmation of the veracity of his narrative, when he exclaims, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life." The king is convinced, and the mission of the woman accomplished. A singular coincidence, do you say? It was God's testimony to His own work, through Elisha, of raising the dead.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Sparkling Gems

May we become like our SAVIOUR, Who wept over Jerusalem with eyes which were no strangers to compassion's floods: may we view the most guilty and impenitent with yearning hearts and grieve with mingled hope and anxiety over those who are under the sound of the gospel.

* * *

There are no gentlemen on board sinking ships: every man then is taken for what he is practically worth. When Christians are in the darkness of affliction, it is delightful to observe how "they that fear the LORD speak often one to another". Some poor old saint who knows the things of God by experience becomes of more value to you in your hour of grief than the dainty person whose company bewitched you aforetime.

* * *

When it is dark and misty abroad the traveller *longs the more earnestly to reach his home*; and it is one of the blessings of our heavy crosses, that they set us longing for heaven. When everything goes well with us we exclaim, like Peter, "LORD, let us build three tabernacles, for it is good to be here." But the mists cover Tabor's brow and we fear as we enter into the cloud and long to be away where gloom can never come.

* * *

Some Christians are favoured with constant sunlight, but others, like nightingales, sing God's praises best in the night.

* * *

We frequently keep aloof from the best of people for want of knowing them: if we could see them as they are we should love them. The fog of life so marvellously magnifies faults and distorts peculiarities—we think men dragons in the distance, when a closer view assures us that they are saints and brethren. We all need to be cautioned against misjudging one another.

* * *

When we think of the doctrines of grace; of the person of CHRIST, of the inward work of the Spirit . . . or of the glorious coming of the SON of man, how great does our ignorance appear and how small our knowledge!

* * *

Ours is a law of love; and if we cannot all think alike, we must all love alike!

(Selected by C. A. Hammond)

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convincing proof that could be given them that the grave could not hold Him? If the barred doors could not keep Him out, neither could the grave, even with its sealed great stone, hold Him prisoner. "It was not possible that He should be holden of it (death)." "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

H. SAMBROOK.

By looking to the work of CHRIST the standard of holiness is exalted; because, instead of looking into the muddied image of CHRIST in my soul, I view Him by the SPIRIT, in the perfectness of that glory into the fellowship of which I am called; and therefore, to walk worthy of God, who hath called me to His own kingdom and glory. I forget the things behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS; and my self-examination becomes, not an unhappy inquiry whether or not I am in the faith, but whether my walk is worthy of one who is called into His kingdom and glory.

J.N.D.

* * *

Time spent alone with GOD is not time lost in the interests of CHRIST; it is then that the streams flow into our tiny souls.

G.V.W.

Esther

By THE EDITOR

(continued from page 124)

THE great deliverance just experienced by the Jews in the Persian Empire was rightly felt by Mordecai to call for some special and grateful recognition by them. Human nature is, alas, proverbially forgetful of blessings received; and it had long since been placed on record of the nation by a Psalmist, "They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy."

A new feast of remembrance was therefore instituted and appointed by Mordecai, called the Feast of Purim, to commemorate their deliverance when Pur (that is the lot) had been cast against them by Haman, the Jews' enemy. It was to be for a yearly celebration of that dark time in their national history when so great a deliverance had been brought about by the secret working of God's providence on their behalf.

So the order issued was "they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, as the day wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." This Feast of Purim has been continued until the present time as an annual remembrance and joyous celebration of that ancient deliverance in the days of Esther.

While this is in no sense typical of our "new feast" as Christians, yet may we not see in it that which is at least suggestive of this. For the LORD's own service on the LORD's own day in the LORD's own way is at once a grateful remembrance, a solemn commemoration, and a joyous celebration of what was wrought out for our eternal salvation at such great cost to Himself.

And so the *Book of Esther* ends with a feast of grateful remembrance, a joyous celebration of the unfailing mercy of God. As old Matthew Henry says, "Though the name of God be not in it, the finger of God is." And Bishop Wordsworth's comment is a word of true wisdom: "By this history,

in which the Name of God is nowhere seen, but the working of God is everywhere apparent, the HOLY SPIRIT applies to us a moral test, and spiritual touchstone."

The Outward Business of the House of God

(*Nehemiah xi. 16*)

IN Nehemiah's days the Jewish people were but a remnant of the original nation. The house of God was still in their midst however diminished in outward magnificence from the days of Solomon. To it the hearts of the faithful turned in the darkest of days. Hence in this section of the Book of Nehemiah repeated references to it occur as "the House of our God," the dwelling-place then on earth of God, His holy habitation in the midst of His people. Then, and there, it was of course a building made of timber, stones and other building material. The outward business of this house of God therefore consisted in maintenance of its services, upkeep, and general care of the fabric.

We therefore find as in chapter x. the various persons necessary, and the appointed method for this purpose stated; also the object for which the house was built; the personal obligations and offerings of the worshippers; the financial responsibilities, and all summed up in the resolution unanimously adopted by those chosen for "the outward business of the house of God": "We will not forsake the house of our God."

Let us enquire first, Whose house is it? What becomes such a house? What kind of persons are they who have charge of its outward business? The inward exercises of such with a greater or lesser degree of true spirituality and sincerity are another matter altogether. It is "the house of our God," His habitation on earth to which this matter of the outward business solely refers. And written as it were in indelible characters over the entrance to it is seen, "*Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever*" (Ps. xciii. 5). This of necessity separated all who had real part in the outward business of the house

of God from the simple Paganism and mixed Samaritan superstitions then surrounding them and became the first step to be taken for "the LORD our GOD is holy" (Ps. xcix. 9). Hence, at the outset we read of "They that had separated themselves from the people of the land unto the law of GOD . . . every one having knowledge and having understanding," as those who now concerned themselves intelligently and energetically with this matter.

Following immediately upon this separation from evil is fellowship with, or attachment to, all who were thus separated for they "clave to their brethren" agreeing together to do all according to what had been written in the scriptures.

Noting these first two points in connection with the outward business of the house of GOD—separation from evil and fellowship with those thus separated, we may for a moment leave Nehemiah and his times, to consider what the house of GOD is in our own day and in what its outward business now consists.

Here we must consult the fuller record given in the New Testament where much mention is made of "a habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT"; and "ye are the temple of the living GOD and I will dwell in them;" also we read of "the house of GOD, the church, or assembly of the living GOD," this last reference showing what it is, and of what it is composed. Clearly it is not now *a material building* as of old, for says St. Peter "Ye are *a spiritual house*," a house in which GOD Who is SPIRIT may be spiritually served and worshipped. Over its, to us, invisible portals is engraved the same inscription as of old, for He Whose house it is has said, "I am the LORD; I change not" and "Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever."

In the New Testament addressed to the church of God we read, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY."

In Nehemiah's day it was only a remnant of the professing people of GOD which took the trouble to return from the Captivity in Babylon, the majority for various reasons, social and commercial, settled down apparently quite at ease in their idolatrous associations. There were some, however, who said, "When the LORD turned again our captivity we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and

our tongue with singing . . . the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." They were however, after all, only a tiny remnant of the covenanted people of God.

So in our own difficult days with its multiplicity of sects, some venerable from antiquity (which however does not confer sanctity), and others of more recent mushroom type of growth, how few seem to care sufficiently to separate themselves from religious associations which grieve the HOLY SPIRIT by the dishonour done to the Name of the LORD. Additions to what is written, or subtractions from it on one side or another, endorsed or ignored as to the outward business of the house of our God certainly mark the days in which we as Christians are called to worship, witness and work.

In Nehemiah's times there was obviously no kind of doubt as to what the house of God was built for, so we are given details of how the outward business was to be carried on. It was a place of worship where the God of Israel was to be served in the way appointed. Accordingly, having set themselves in order by separation from surrounding false worship, and by uniting in holy fellowship, it is the worship of God which engages their first thoughts. Israel, though sadly diminished and scattered, still in the eyes of God consisted of the twelve tribes. Hence, first in the outward service of the house of God they set out in order the twelve loaves of shewbread before God representing all the covenanted people in national unity. For however few the remnant engaged in this outward service of the house of God they were actually representatives of the whole nation before Him.

So, today, however scattered and divided God's church outwardly appears there is but "one body, the body of CHRIST" to be owned by separated believers and therefore "one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 17, R.V.) is the appointed symbol of this.

Next, is mentioned the continual "meat" or "meal" offering typical of CHRIST's perfect humanity in which He walked with God and pleased Him when here. This is followed by the continual "burnt" offering typical of CHRIST's life of perfect obedience to God, crowned by a death of entire devotion, and of His own voluntary will. "That the world may know that I love the FATHER; and as the FATHER gave Me commandment, even so I do" was CHRIST's own explanation of this.

To the provision for the shewbread, "meat" offering and "burnt" offering in the outward service of the house of God, were added sacrifices for the sabbaths, new moons and set feasts, also for sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, according to what was written in the book of the law of the LORD. Finally, the wood offering (Lev. vi. 12, 13) was specially mentioned for the ever burning fire on the altar, typical of CHRIST'S ever burning devotion to God. Everything, therefore, symbolically connected with the true worship of God is here seen as belonging to the outward service of His house. In all this CHRIST, Who is Himself the Substance of all acceptable worship today, was typified, and the true worshipper as St. Paul teaches (in Phil. iii. 3) worships God in, or by, the SPIRIT, and makes his boast in CHRIST JESUS. Also by the ever burning devotion kindled at the altar of "burnt offering," daily replenished by the members of the priestly family, the law of the burnt offering found perfection. It still does so in the highest spiritual degree in Christian worship.

Provision was then made by those engaged in the outward business of the house of God for certain private acts of devotion and personal acknowledgments of the goodness of God experienced in daily domestic affairs. These of course were, and are, always right and proper, but unsuited for the *corporate* worship of the house of God. For example: "the basket of the first-fruits" was an individual offering as is clear from the wording appointed to be used. "I profess . . . that I am come; a Syrian ready to perish was *my* father and now behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which Thou, O LORD, has given *me*." The general corporate acknowledgment of all the grace and goodness vouchsafed to the whole company of the people of God in no wise abrogated the individual "law of the first-fruits". So in the outward business of the house of God full provision was made for this then, and still has its own place to-day.

Two other important matters had to be taken in hand then and still have their counterpart in modern assembly life. The importance of the maintenance of the servants of the house of our God, and of fidelity to the house are now considered by Nehemiah and his workers.

The priests and Levites had to live, needed food, clothes and shelter, all of which then and now formed part of the outward

business of the house of God. So it was agreed that the tithings were to be strictly maintained; also a solemn undertaking was given, "We will not forsake the house of our God."

The spiritual application and significance of this for our own times was addressed by the Apostle Paul in (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14) to the Church of God and all that in every place call upon the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; also confirming this by a reference (Gal. vi. 6; Heb. xiii. 15, 16) where the same thing is enforced by other arguments. Tithes and offerings represented both obligatory and voluntary gifts. St. John in his 3rd Epistle highly commends one, Gaius, for attention to this very thing.

So the six great marks of the outward business of the house of God, whether in Nehemiah's time or in our own, are plainly set out as being *separation from evil, fellowship with such, corporate worship, private devotion and acknowledgment, the maintenance of God's servants, and fidelity to the house of our God.*

Also, in those days, in Nehemiah's own life, on returning from a visit to Shushan he was sorrowfully surprised to find the house of God forsaken and the Levites gone to attend to secular affairs because the outward business of the house of God had not been diligently done. The less we say about this to-day as regards ourselves perhaps the better. But it is still true that *failure does not cancel responsibility, and faithfulness becomes more precious in days of difficulty.* W.G.T.

A Hymnic Page

"The total number of Christian Hymns in the 200 or more languages and dialects in which they have been written or translated (up to 1891) is not less than 400,000. When classified into languages the greatest number are found to be in German, English, Latin, and Greek, in the order named."

Out of this large number, I wish to pass on a few details of the well-known and much-loved hymn, *Just as I am, without one plea.*" This was written by Charlotte Elliott, daughter of Charles Elliott, of Clapham and Brighton. Miss Elliott was born on March 18th, 1789; the first 32 years of her life were

mostly spent at Clapham. Afterwards she removed to Brighton, and died there September 22nd, 1871.

To her acquaintance with Dr. C. Malan, of Geneva, is attributed much of the deep spiritual-mindedness so prominent in her hymns, which number about 150. Though weak and feeble in body, she possessed a strong imagination and a well-cultured and intellectual mind.

Miss Elliott's brother, the Editor of *Psalms and Hymns* 1835 testified very touchingly to the great results arising from this one hymn. He says:

"In the course of a long ministry, I hope I have been permitted to see some fruit of my labours; but I feel far more has been done by a single hymn of my sister."

Another of Miss Elliott's hymns, which is of great beauty and especially helpful in sorrow and trial, is the following:

O holy SAVIOUR, Friend unseen,
 Since on Thine arm Thou bid'st us lean;
 Help us throughout life's changing scene
 By faith to cling to Thee.

When far from home, fatigued, oppressed,
 In Thee we found our place of rest;
 As exiles still, yet richly blest,
 We cling, O LORD, to Thee.

What though the world deceitful prove,
 And earthly friends and hopes remove!
 With patient, uncomplaining love,
 Still would we cling to Thee.

Though faith and hope are often tried,
 We ask not, need not, aught beside;
 So safe, so calm, so satisfied,
 The soul that clings to Thee.

Blest is our lot, what'er befall;
 What can disturb or who appal?
 Thou art our strength, our rock, our all,
 SAVIOUR, we cling to Thee.

(Adapted from Dr. Julian's Hymnology by C.A.H.)

Remarkable Occurrences

(continued from page 132)

NOW let us turn to that far more remarkable occurrence recorded in Luke xxiv., and elsewhere. Truly this was a much sadder day in the history, not only of Israel, but of the whole world than that recorded in 2 Kings, for both Jew and Gentile took counsel together against the LORD and against His CHRIST, and cast out the SON of GOD by way of the cross. They scoffed at the idea of His resurrection, but the thought of its possibility so troubled them as to cause them to seal the stone and set a watch. His disciples at this time knew not what the rising from the dead meant, so that we find some of the most devoted of them coming to the sepulchre with the spices they had prepared to anoint His body. But they were too late. The body is not in the sepulchre. The angels announce His resurrection. The women hasten to communicate the strange news to the apostles; but "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre and find it even as the women had said, but Him they saw not, and go back home. Mary and others remain on the scene and JESUS appears to them, as He did afterwards to Simon, and to the two on their way to Emmaus. Then in the evening of the same day many of them were gathered together in the upper room, with shut doors for fear of the Jews, talking of all the wondrous things which had happened during the day, when suddenly JESUS Himself stood in the midst of them. At first they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit, but JESUS shows them His hands and His side, and thus conclusively proves that He is the same JESUS Who lived and died, Who now lives again and for evermore.

Why did JESUS appear in this mysterious way? Do you say, "Because the doors were shut"? Quite true, they were; but why did not the LORD knock at the door, as did Peter (see Acts xii. 13)? Surely if the damsel recognised Peter's voice, there was not one in that upper room company but would have immediately recognised the voice of the GOOD SHEPHERD they knew so well. Was not His appearance in this way the most

(continued on page 2 cover)

Sparkling Gems

No man ever sank under the burden of the *day*. It is when *to-morrow's* burden is added to the burden of to-day that the weight is more than a man can bear.

* * *

In all our difficulties, perplexities, trials, it will help us to remember that we have to take but one step at a time.

* * *

There is no better way to finish the spiritual life than to be ever beginning it over again and never to think you have done enough.

* * *

Do everything without excitement, by the SPIRIT of grace. As soon as you perceive your natural impetuosity gliding in, retire quietly within, where is the KINGDOM OF GOD. Listen to the leadings of grace, then say and do nothing but what the HOLY SPIRIT shall put in your heart. You will find that you will become more tranquil, that your words will be fewer and more effectual and that, with less effort, you will accomplish more good.

* * *

The great way of resisting evil is by allowing the HOLY SPIRIT to pour into your heart the love of your LORD.

* * *

We should make a special point of asking God every morning to give us, before all else, that true spirit of meekness which He would have His children possess.

* * *

All our secular cares—the letters, the interruptions and other such things in the lives of the very busiest and most worried among us—can be used of God . . . The very things that seem threatening to crush us can be made stepping-stones, to lift us up to closer fellowship with God.

* * *

If we know ourselves we should not judge each other harshly.

* * *

Generally speaking, *the judging of others is the foul stain of social and church life.*

* * *

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth, because love is born of God and cannot rest but in God, above all created things.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond)

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